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WAITING FOR A FAIR DEAL

No end in sight to Ireland's penalty points saga. See pages 2-3



Gary and John Brosnan, Dingle onboard Cúilín T70 fishing crayfish around Dingle Bay and the Blaskets. (CREDIT: TOM BROSANAN)

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'They're just not interested in the fishermen having a fair deal in this country'



Dunmore East. (Credit: Cathal Ó hUallacháin)

No End in Sight to Ireland's Penalty Points Saga

By Lia ní Aodha

The sad thing I seem to think is that when fishermen seem to want improvement in the legislation in this country the government seem to think it's an affront to their authority. But, we have done many things through the official channels, and tried to get a better salmon legislation. But... actually sitting down with the government and with the salmon fisheries authorities, they're just not interested... They're just not interested in the fishermen having a fair deal in this country."

Barring the reference to salmon fisheries authorities perhaps, one would be forgiven for mistaking the above comment for one more contemporaneous than it is. Captured in the RTÉ Archives in a report by Michael Ryan it was made more than three decades ago on May 27, 1986, by Johnny Murray of Dunabratton, Co Waterford.

Chairman of the local fishermen's organisation at the time, it was Johnny's parting message to the camera as he was being picked up by plainclothes Gardaí implementing a court sentence handed down on account of failing to pay a fine, to be transported to Cork jail at a time of 'pitch battles at sea' and when fishermen from the South East were being jailed for fishing salmon and for 'obstruction'.

What's changed since then? If the never-ending penalty points saga in this country is anything to go by not much, says you.

Blindsiding the industry as they grapple with the ongoing fallout from COVID-19 along with the ever-increasing possibility that they

will be waking up to a sea change on account of a no-deal Brexit in just a few short months, on August 26 Taoiseach Micheál Martin signed into law a Statutory Instrument (SI) regarding a penalty points system for the fishing industry.

Containing much the same facets as previous attempts at a system devised by the last Government, ones that have not only met with vehement opposition (including from the Taoiseach's own party) but have been struck down in the Courts, not surprisingly the move has met with much incredulity from both the fishing industry and Opposition parties.

Just some of its most salient points, the SI would see the SFPA as the body to assign penalty points, and features an SFPA established "determining panel" with the purpose of determining whether a serious infringement has occurred and whether or not points are to be assigned. Points assigned to the holder of an Irish licence would remain regardless of any criminal proceedings pending or the outcome of any such proceeding with respect to the infringement concerned.

In response, the Irish South and West's CEO, Mr Patrick Murphy said his membership were "dismayed" as to why the Taoiseach signed the SI into law, when the same man, as leader of the Opposition, had put forward a motion to overturn the signing into law of a previous SI by former Marine Minister Michael Creed.

With a similar motion put forward by Sinn Féin and supported by a number of independents that attempt was historically rejected in the Dáil, explained Mr Murphy, adding that earlier legislation had

been challenged successfully by two members of the IS&WFPO in the High Court.

Calling on the Taoiseach to urgently amend the legislation, Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation (KFO) CEO, Seán O'Donoghue said the industry was livid that the Taoiseach had "enacted highly controversial penalty points legislation" and "with zero consultation with fishermen and in spite of having stridently opposed it, while in opposition."

"We are not against a penalty points regime since it is an EU requirement but there must be an equitable manner of administering this," he highlighted, adding that the signing of the SI had come completely out of the blue and "putting it mildly, is neither fair nor reasonable and runs contrary to the Programme for Government of introducing a fair system."

Sinn Féin's spokesperson on Fisheries and the Marine Pádraig Mac Lochlainn TD called on the Taoiseach to urgently clarify why he signed off on an SI that would impose penalty points on the fishing industry without consulting with the industry, describing the action as "deeply disturbing" considering the controversial history behind these enforcement measures.

Deeply flawed, not fit for purpose, and representing yet another example of the disconnect between the Department and those who fish for a living, was how the Social Democrats' spokesperson for Agriculture and the Marine, Holly Cairns TD described the Government's new system for the industry.

In their election manifesto, Fianna Fáil promised that if they

were elected they would "introduce a fair penalty points system that meets EU obligations while safeguarding the rights of Irish fishermen." Following the eventual hobbling together of a government, the Coalition's Programme for Government promises a more watered-down version – to implement "a fair EU points system in order to protect fish stocks and ensure the release of suspended EU funding."

In a comment to *The Skipper* on July 31, a Department spokesperson said that with respect the implementation of a penalty points system, as per the Commission's 'reasoned opinion' to the Irish Government on the matter earlier this summer, the Minister would be progressing the matter as set down in the Programme for Government.

Fair? Protects the rights of Irish fishermen and women? And where exactly does the source of the failure here lie? Not the EU bogeyman this time, if ever, the villain here, as is so often the case with the politics of fishing in this country as elsewhere, is the State.

In the Dáil on September 8, this Government's most recently instated Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue argued, "These new regulations are a requirement of EU law and, as has been the case since 2012, all other coastal member states have now implemented this EU points system. Ireland has been found to be in breach of its EU legal obligations as a result of our failure to implement them before this point."

What the Minister didn't say, however, is that there is no "this EU points system", rather the one in question is Ireland's very particular interpretation of an EU Directive with respect to the implementation of a points system.

As fishing representatives and Opposition parties (including Fianna Fáil themselves, now so intent of bringing the system in), however, have highlighted time and again, to date, all efforts by the Government to introduce a penalty points system for fishermen have failed on account of how the Government has attempted to devise the system.

In this regard, a meeting between the POs and the Minister on September 16 secured by Cork South West Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan yielded little results. As explained by Hugo Boyle, CEO of the Irish South and East Fish Producer's Organisation (IS&EFPO), "Unfortunately, we are back on the 'merry-go-round' of the Penalty Point saga. Obligation to Europe was quoted by the Minister at our meeting as the reasoning for the reintroduction of what we see as flawed law.

"We recognise that, yes, we are obliged to introduce a penalty point regime, but not as a big 'Irish' stick to beat ourselves with at the whim of an overzealous

control 'policeman', because that is what it is in the format that it has been introduced.

"We could have introduced it on the same basis as other countries, where the rule of law and the burden of proof takes precedence over a 'Kangaroo Court'. I hope it can be amended to reflect our concerns in line with a letter we sent to the Minister."

According to a statement from the Department issued following the meeting, the Minister listened to industry concerns regarding the SI, said the exchange had been "very useful" and that he intended "to continue this close engagement with the fishing industry going forward."

A post-meeting letter sent to the Minister and signed by the CEOs of the four POs, however, states that while the POs were "encouraged" by the Minister's support for the industry in the ongoing Brexit negotiations "unfortunately the same cannot be said of your response to our concerns on the Penalty Point issue."

"Overall the meeting was a disappointment, in that you were not prepared to countenance any deviation from the published S.I. to take our four main concerns listed below, 'on board'," they say.

The four main concerns listed by the POs are as follows:

- Section; 6(9) Where the burden of proof is less than that required in a prosecution, 'on the balance of probabilities' as in the SI text.
- Section; 8(1), Where points remain on a licence even in the event of an appellant being exonerated of any offence.
- Section; 10(2), Where points attached to capacity multiply in the event of that capacity being subdivided.
- Section; 12(14), Where a party may only apply to the High Court on a point of law.

"We expressed our views on these issues at the meeting and are now asking you to confirm whether or not you will reconsider them," they say.

At the time of writing, it is understood, however, that acknowledgement of receipt of the letter aside, no response has been forthcoming from the Minister. The Irish South and West say that it has been decided by their membership to challenge the constitutionality of the SI. And so, the 'merry-go-round' continues...

As was the case more than thirty years ago, it appears the government in this country, regardless of its make-up, seems to view it as an affront to its authority when fishermen want improvement in the legislation that shapes their day to day lives – even, or perhaps especially, when that legislation singles them out for treatment not dished out to other citizens of the State. Same as it ever was "they're just not interested in the fishermen having a fair deal in this country."



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MCIB believes Garda inquiry 'unlikely'

By Lorna Siggins

THE Marine Casualty Investigation Board has described as "unlikely" any Garda inquiry into matters pertaining to its work.

The State board has also said that the Garda Síochána had confirmed to it that no decision had been made to launch "any inquiry" into matters pertaining to it.

Several months ago, the Garda Press Office confirmed it was examining "allegations of misconduct in public office in relation to investigations into the seafaring tragedies and the implementation of maritime safety regulation".

The Garda Press Office said that was with a view to determining "if a criminal act has occurred where a criminal investigation should be undertaken".

The Garda Press Office said last month that this preliminary examination was still "continuing".

However, the MCIB said that "in the unlikely event that An Garda Síochána (AGS) launch an inquiry into any matter pertaining to MCIB investigations, the MCIB will provide whatever assistance is required by AGS".

Earlier this year, maritime lawyer Michael Kingston submitted a dossier to the Garda Commissioner calling for an investigation into the handling of accident inquiries by the MCIB and the Department of Transport.

The Garda Commissioner's office informed Mr Kingston in late July that his correspondence had been seen by Commissioner Drew Harris,

and he had directed that the matter be investigated by the Garda National Bureau of Criminal Investigation.

Mr Kingston's father Tim died in the Whiddy island *Betelgeuse* explosion 41 years ago. The lawyer maintains that all MCIB reports should be re-examined.

In a separate development, two civil servants have stepped down from the MCIB's five-person board, following a recent European Court of Justice ruling which found it lacked independence.

Ireland is not appealing the EU court judgment issued in July, according to the Department of Transport.

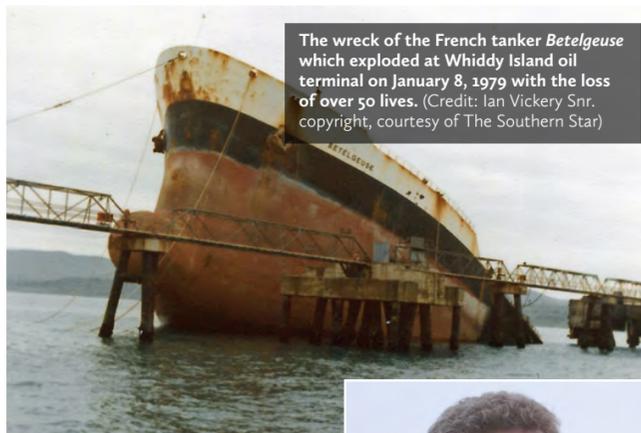
The EU had taken issue with the board's independence, as two of its five members are the State's serving chief marine surveyor and a nominee of the Department of Transport's secretary-general.

These two post holders have now resigned, but only after a court battle which Ireland lost.

The EU had referred the State to the European Court of Justice in 2018 on the grounds that Ireland had failed to "correctly implement European Union law establishing the fundamental principles governing the investigation of accidents in maritime transport".

The EU said that the responsibilities and activities of both the Department of Transport and the Marine Survey Office (MSO), headed up by chief surveyor Brian Hogan, could conflict with the investigative task.

Investigations include checking seaworthiness of vessels, and the MSO holds administrative and enforcement functions concerning seaworthiness of ships and fishing vessels, related equipment, and the



The wreck of the French tanker *Betelgeuse* which exploded at Whiddy Island oil terminal on January 8, 1979 with the loss of over 50 lives. (Credit: Ian Vickery Snr, copyright, courtesy of The Southern Star)



International maritime lawyer Michael Kingston

competence of mariners.

The EU court judgment found that Ireland was "not fulfilling its obligations under Article 8(1) of Directive 2009/18" governing the investigation of accidents in the maritime transport sector".

In its defence, Ireland had argued that the MCIB reports are independent.

Confirming the resignations of both civil servants, the MCIB said it had been "advised that vacancies will be filled in accordance with standing Government policy after the introduction of legislation to give effect to the recent decision of the European Court of Justice".

The Department of Transport said it has "sought legal advice on legislative and administrative options to address the court findings and the concerns of the EU Commission, and is currently examining same".

The MCIB is responsible under the Merchant Shipping Act and the Merchant Shipping Regulations for

conducting investigations into marine casualties in Irish waters and Irish-registered vessels.

It is a non-prosecutorial body which does not enforce legislation, and its investigations do not apportion blame or fault, but recommendations have regularly been made to the Minister for Transport.

However, almost 300 of its reports on commercial fishing and recreational casualties, and incidents involving ferries, ships and other vessels have been made public since its establishment 20 years ago.

Increased SFPA Scrutiny For Irish Fishermen

By Niall Duffy

"Another stick to beat us with!" was the reaction by fishermen to the announcement that the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) is nearing completion of its roll-out of a major new IT system designed to support increased compliance with sea-fisheries regulations. VALID, a fully automated cross-check system, will automatically verify data, including in real-time.

The system will be used to identify vessels with a higher risk of non-compliance, enabling the SFPA and its control partners, the Naval Service and the Air Corps, to focus resources on vessels and fishing activity requiring more targeted inspections. The new system applies to all Irish vessels fitted with an electronic recording and reporting system (ERS).

The *Skipper* sought clarification from the SFPA as to whether all vessels in the Irish EEZ would be monitored by this system and who would have access to this real-time data.

In reply the SFPA said:

"The VALID system covers only Irish vessels with Electronic Recording System (ERS) capability. In line with European legislative requirements, administrative cross-checks are carried out on all landings however VALID only cross-checks Irish vessels. Therefore the cross-checks on non-Irish vessels are undertaken manually. This system is for the use of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) and the Fisheries Monitoring Centre (FMC) only. The European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) or any agency outside of Ireland or within Ireland, will not have real time access to the VALID data."

Dr Susan Steele, Chair of the SFPA stated that the benefits of VALID will be felt across the



SFPA Fishery Officers checking a landing

fishing industry. "The majority of fishermen and buyers are compliant with the regulations, filling out their logbooks and sales notes correctly. The automated system is enabling us to gather better information on where there is a risk of non-compliance with fishing regulations, thereby allowing us to target our resources at those vessels and fishing activities that have a higher risk of non-compliance. Going forward VALID will aid us as we work to deter and detect any future illegal fishing violations," said Dr Steele.

VALID has been developed for the SFPA and the Defence Force's Fisheries Monitoring Centre (FMC) by the Department of Agriculture,

Food and the Marine's (DAFM) Information Management Team within the current Integrated Fisheries Information System (IFIS).

The SFPA and FMC can now automatically cross-check data information provided in the electronic logbooks by the vessel Master, the vessel's electronic monitoring system (VMS) as well as information provided by buyers on sales notes allowing immediate identification of inconsistencies, errors and missing information.

The SFPA/FMC will follow up on every detected fail that is notified by the system in relation to data to close them out. This may include them contacting the Master/Owner and notifying them of the action

that they may be required to take. More serious fails may result in infringement action being pursued by the SFPA/FMC. In recent weeks Masters, Owners and Buyers may have noticed this increase in communication.

In a comment to *The Skipper* with respect the new system, John Ward, CEO of the Irish Fish Producer's Organisation cautioned, "The fishing industry has to be seriously concerned about how these new IT systems are utilised as we all have seen that a desktop exercise by the SFPA resulted in FU16 being closed prematurely in 2018 and eventually resulted in a successful High Court/Supreme Court challenge by Industry."

EU must support Irish lobstermen following removal of US tariffs

Sinn Féin MEP Chris MacManus has called on EU authorities to announce financial supports for Irish fishermen and women to be introduced following the European Commission's decision to lift previously imposed tariffs on live US lobster imports.

Criticising the decision where no consultation took place with Irish fishing representative groups,

MacManus said, "This is already a hugely damaging time for Ireland's fishing communities. COVID-19 and an impending Brexit has left the sector struggling. The decision to now allow tariff-free imports of US lobster will have a major detrimental effect on Ireland's inshore small fleet fishermen whose livelihoods are undoubtedly now at risk."

The Midlands Northwest MEP

was critical of the Commission and Irish government. "The non-engagement of the Commission and the now resigned Fine Gael appointed Trade Commissioner Phil Hogan in advance of entering this free trade agreement is deeply disappointing. It's a real kick in the teeth for Ireland's fishers. It is yet another example of the now too familiar pattern of the Irish fishing sector being treated disgracefully

by successive Irish Governments." MacManus concluded: "I will be seeking additional information as to how this trade agreement came about, exactly what benefits European citizens can expect to get as a result of this 'deal' but most importantly I will demand details as to what financial supports will be now put in place for Irish lobster fisher who will suffer as a result of this deal."

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News Roundup from Killybegs reported by John Cunningham



Barbarella arriving back in Killybegs with a good haul of sprat. (Credit: John Cunningham)

There has been a more constant flow of vessels coming and going in the port of Killybegs this past month. Each Friday has seen the arrivals of French boat *Heliotrope* and two Spanish boats *Aveneira* and *Anchousa* unloading their catch to waiting lorries. With no time to waste, they refuel and stock up on provisions before heading back to sea.

There also has been a lot of activity around the harbour with the local pelagic fleet getting ready for the upcoming mackerel and horse mackerel season. Meanwhile, three other vessels, *Felucca*, *Genesis*, and *Brendelen* have made their way to Denmark for maintenance work.

SPRAT FISHERY

When the first catch of sprat was caught it caused a bit of excitement with other small boats getting geared up and ready for the fishery. The participating boats are *Westbound*, *Seabreeze*, *Faolean Ban*, *Barbarella*, *Rachael D*, *Johnny G*, *Ros Ard*, *Cadno*, and *Helen Mary*. The first week saw some decent hauls for the boats; however, things quietened down towards the third week of September.

BLUEFIN TUNA

Continued fishing of bluefin tuna has been rewarding for the *Leah C* and *Deep Blue*. So far this season, which comes to an end on November 20, they have tagged and released at least 200 tuna.

SEAQUEST SYSTEMS

SeaQuest systems are proving extremely busy during 2020. So far this year, the company is working on projects for delivery across the world. Included among these is a new crane for Mayo County Council, *MFV Antarctica* in Karstensens Skibsværft, *MFV Gitte Henning* at Zamakona, and *MFV Leila* at Cemre Marin, among others, with some of the largest cranes to date being manufactured for two Norwegian aquaculture vessels, *Gaerda Saele* and *Viking Atlantic*.

Currently in Killybegs, the installation of SeaQuest deck equipment vessels is being carried out on *MFV Ella* at Mooney Boats for the Atlantic Dawn group. The install of a live fish pump package for Aquaship onboard *Viking Caledonia* is also underway.

Two projects have recently seen SeaQuest cranes, fish pumps, water separators, hose reel and winches delivered to a customer in Oman, with one being fitted in Denmark before making the journey down.

Two other packages for the smaller side of the scale saw new 3-tonne trawl winches and net drums delivered to Gerry Smyth Boats in Kilkeel for *MFV Shazleah* and also *MFV Sharon Ann*.

For more information on any of these projects, please follow them on Facebook, or check out the project section of their website www.seaquest.ie



SeaQuest crane being fitted onboard the MFV Ella. (Credit: John Cunningham)

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Inshore representatives meet with Sinn Féin

At the beginning of September, the National Inshore Fishermen's Association and Organisation met with Sinn Féin's spokesperson on Fisheries Pádraig Mac Lochlainn TD along with several other Sinn Féin coastal TDs and councillors including Mayo's Rose Conway-Walsh, Galway West TD Mairéad Farrell, Kerry's Pa Daly, and Wexford's Johnny Mythen.

In the meeting, which was described by representatives as "productive", a number of the most salient issues facing Ireland's

inshore fishermen and women were discussed. Included among those was the economic impacts of COVID-19 on the sector, the response to date from the current and past Governments and future outlook.

Also discussed were some of the finer points in the Coalition's Programme for Government, among them the promise that "pair trawling will be prohibited inside the six-mile limit" and the commitments contained with respect Marine Protected Areas (aim 30% by 2030). Not unrelated,

the increasingly contentious issue of space to fish and competition from offshore renewables, alongside the aforementioned MPAs was also on the agenda.

Herring, access to quota, the sector's high dependence on brown crab, market access and profitability were also addressed, as was implementation of the *Inshore Strategy* published early last year – the first industry-led strategy for the sector in the history of the State.

Also on the agenda was the recently agreed trade deal

between the EU and US which would see tariffs removed from lobster imports from the US into the EU, and which last month was described by the inshore representative bodies "as another kick in the teeth."

It is understood that Sinn Féin gave a commitment to work to see these issues are addressed in a "meaningful" manner, and gave what the inshore representatives felt was a "genuine commitment" to helping the inshore representative bodies address any other issues going forward.

Two Greencastle boats detained for alleged fishing offences

Two Greencastle boats were detained by the Irish Navy approximately 75 nautical miles southeast of Cork Harbour for alleged breaches of fishing regulations on Thursday, September 10. It is understood the two vessels were fishing for prawns and whitefish in the Smalls at the time.

Both were subsequently escorted into Cork Harbour by the *LÉ William Butler Yeats* (P63), where they were handed

over to An Garda Síochána with the assistance of Sea Fisheries Protection Officers of the SFFA. It is understood the vessels were operating independently of each other and two separate cases will be forwarded to the DPP.

These latest detentions bring to 10 the number of fishing vessels detained by the Irish Naval Service for alleged fishing offences in Irish waters since the start of the year.



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Kodie Healy First Anniversary

As we lovingly remember Kodie on his first anniversary we, the Healy family, wish to express our heartfelt and sincere appreciation to all those who helped in any way during the search for Kodie, during his funeral and afterwards.

To the local fishermen and neighbours who were with us from the very beginning, and whose care, understanding, judgement and willing spirit will never be forgotten.

To Valentia Coast Guard Radio for their prompt mobilising of the massive search that followed. To Schull and Goleen Coastguard who were on scene almost immediately, coordinating and scouring the coastline.

To the Baltimore and Castletownbere lifeboats who responded so quickly, and were heart-lifting to see on the AIS when en route to the area. To the helicopter crews who swept the area that night and afterwards.

To the fishing trawlers and crews who joined the search that first night and all the vessels that joined through the following days including the Bantry Inshore Search and Rescue. To the Navy who arrived on scene and remained for the entire search.

To the crowds and crowds of people – neighbours, friends and family and the extended coastal community, who came from near and far to search for Kodie from the first night onwards.

To the volunteer diving units without whose skills, courage and

tenacity it is certain that Kodie would not have been returned to us so soon. To the Civil Defence who came out in force to join the search. To the Gardaí who helped support the search, and helped to keep people safe.

We would like to thank our families, neighbours and friends near and far, for their unwavering support, help and kindness.

To those who made houses available as search bases, those who provided and brought food and helped to distribute it, who helped with traffic management during the search and funeral, those who visited our home, including Fr Anthony and Fr Alan, those who attended the rosary, and to acknowledge the huge numbers who attended the removal, mass and burial and to the numerous Guards of Honour.

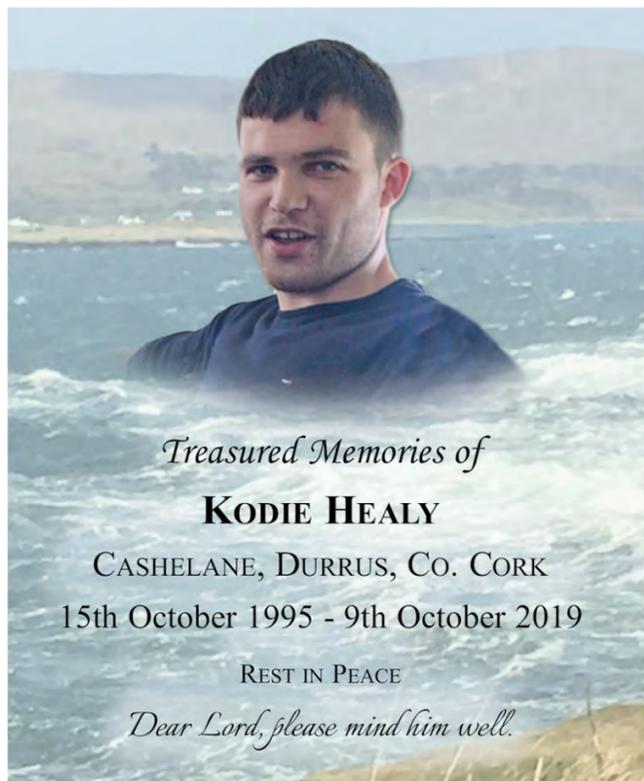
To those who travelled long distances to be with us, sent sympathy cards, mass cards, perpetual enrolments and messages of condolence, phone calls and texts.

To Deirdre for the beautiful floral arrangements and bouquets, and to those who had masses offered, lit candles and kept us in their prayers.

We are truly grateful.

We would like to thank Fr Anthony Buckley, Fr Paddy Hickey and Fr Liam Hickey who celebrated a very special funeral mass and all who participated in the mass, and to Derry and Terry for the music.

To Charles O'Sullivan Undertakers for their professionalism and care, the gravediggers – our close neighbours,



Donie and Denis Bowen and Tim Murnane for their forethought and help, and The Bunratty Inn for providing refreshments. We would also like to thank the LAST Charity.

We thank all who helped in any way. Your support and kindness was the strength that helped carry us through that week and the months that followed.

As it would be impossible to

thank everyone individually please accept this acknowledgement as an expression of our deepest gratitude.

Kodie's First Anniversary Mass will take place on Saturday 10th October at 8 pm in the Church of the Seven Sacraments, Lowertown, Schull, Co Cork.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass has been offered for your intentions.

Fisherman lost off Donegal Coast



The late James 'Dearg' Byrne's half decker, *Mirror of Justice*

Donegal's fishing community were left mourning last month, following the loss of local fisherman James 'Dearg' Byrne from Cashel in Kilcar.

A retired fisherman in his 70s who still spent a great deal of his time out on the water in his half decker *Mirror of Justice*, James' body was found in the water after his boat washed up onto rocks off Teelin on the evening of August 26.

Members of the Coast Guard and Rescue helicopter 118 were alerted to the scene around 8.30 pm when the boat was spotted without anybody on board.

Following a large scale operation coordinated by Malin Head Coast Guard, which included Arranmore and Bundoran Lifeboats, and

Killybegs Coast Guard Unit, James' body was located in nearby waters shortly before midnight. It is understood he was wearing his lifejacket at the time.

Following his recovery, James was subsequently transferred to Letterkenny University Hospital, where he was later pronounced deceased.

James' funeral mass was held on Saturday, August 29 in St Cartha's Church in Kilcar, with interment afterwards in Kilcar cemetery. On account of current COVID guidelines, both wake and funeral were private.

The Skipper would like to extend our deepest sympathies and condolences to the Byrne family and friends.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.

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IRISH SKIPPER EXPO 2021

Understanding the past to help predict the future

Climate change research in the Arctic onboard the *RV Celtic Explorer*

An Irish-led team of scientists onboard the Marine Institute's *RV Celtic Explorer* returned to Galway Harbour on Wednesday 16 September, after 24 days in the Nordic and Greenland Seas working to investigate past climate change in the Arctic region. Scientists from NUI Galway, University of Southampton UK, University of Bremen, Germany, and Bergen University Norway, have been monitoring and capturing a record of temperature, salinity and the carbonate system to improve our understanding of essential climate variables in the Nordic and Greenland Seas and how they are recorded in geologic archives. Lead scientist, Dr Audrey Morley, School of Geography and Archaeology, NUI Galway, said: "One of the key challenges in climate change science is assessing the magnitude of future climate change, due to our short observational records which are limited to the past 150 years. Our research is unique, as we are not only observing modern essential climate variables, but we will also look into the past to assess how essential climate variables have evolved since before pre-industrial conditions. This long-

term perspective is crucial and will help us to better understand our environment and the environmental consequences of human activities." The CIAAN survey (Constraining the Impact of Arctic Amplification in the Nordic Sea: A biogeochemical approach), aims to define a more comprehensive description of the Nordic Seas ecosystem and provide insight into how essential climate variables are recorded in geologic archives. Assessing the impact and magnitude of past (pre-industrial) climate changes is critical to further our understanding of how the climate system will respond to a rapidly changing Arctic ecosystem. Dr Morley, NUI Galway, added: "The Arctic is a sensitive and vulnerable environment with regards to global warming. The North Atlantic and Nordic Seas are a key region for the formation of North Atlantic Deepwater and the uptake of atmospheric carbon dioxide. Whether or not this region will remain a carbon sink during rapidly warming climates is a question that remains to be answered." As part of this research survey, the *RV Celtic Explorer* travelled to 79 Degrees North in the Greenland Sea, which is the highest latitude reached by the marine research



vessel. To operate in the Arctic region, the *RV Celtic Explorer* was required to obtain a Polar Code Certification. The *RV Celtic Explorer* is the first Irish vessel to receive the Polar Code Certification, greatly increasing the ocean research capabilities of the vessel. Dr Paul Connolly, CEO of the Marine Institute said, "There is a growing need for international scientists to work together to get a better understanding of the Arctic region, particularly in relation to what happened to climate variables in the past. The *RV Celtic Explorer* is crucial to facilitate this type of international research. This research in the Arctic region will deepen our knowledge of the region and will improve models that can forecast changes to our oceans and climate. This will inform effective policy and management decisions to meet the challenges posed by climate change."



The crew on the *Aoi bh Aine* SO160, Martin Pob Ferry, David Rodgers and Hugh Curran, fishing west of Scotland

Crew Shots

Over the past months, as the global pandemic continues to wreak havoc on daily life and global markets for fish, we've been asking you to send in your crew shots in an effort to celebrate those who fish and their resilience. We've had a huge response from right around the coast and all the way across to the other side of the Atlantic. Thanks to all who have sent in their images, many have featured either in *The Skipper* or on our social media accounts, with more to follow. As promised, we've one this month featuring on *The Skipper's* front cover – Gary and John Brosnan, Dingle onboard Cúilín T70 fishing crayfish around Dingle Bay and the Blaskets, which was sent in by Tom Brosnan. Skipper hats on the way!

Major Protest Planned For New Factory Trawler Launch



Photo: <https://www.fishermen4friends.nl/>

French inshore fishermen are planning a major protest to coincide with the launch party of the *Scombrus*, a pelagic factory trawler belonging to the France Pélagique company which will be christened on 25th September at the Port of Concarneau, the day after *The Skipper* goes to print. France Pélagique is a subsidiary of Cornelis Vrolijk, a major Dutch fishing company, which owns several trawlers and subsidiaries in other EU countries. The *Scombrus* is the

latest addition to the company's fleet: an 80-metre vessel, flying the French flag, but whose catch of herring, mackerel, horse mackerel and sardines will most likely be landed in IJmuiden in the Netherlands like the two other vessels in the France Pélagique fleet, the *Sandettie* and the *Prins Bernhard*. French artisanal fishermen are up in arms about this model of fishing, which they say monopolises quotas and has a strong impact on the stocks in French waters. The fishermen

also point to an alleged conflict of interest amongst several well-known leaders in the world of French fishing. Antoine Dhellemes, who created and directed France Pélagique, is not only the current vice-president of the National Fisheries Committee (CNPMM) but is also president of the Producers' Organisation (PO) FROM Nord, and president of the national association of POs. In order to address any conflicts of interest, Geoffrey Dhellemes, son of Antoine, has been appointed to run the company. Expected attendees at the launch party include the owners of *Cornelis Vrolijk* and their competitor *Parelviet Van der Plaas*, the Director of Fisheries, Minister of Fisheries, National Fisheries Committee and Producers' Organisations. The artisanal fishermen's association Pleine Mer have called on fishermen, associations, trade unions, and citizens to protest with them on September 25 in front of the France Pélagique office in Concarneau.

Reopening of National Fisheries Colleges

The BIM National Fisheries Colleges of Ireland reopened last month. The colleges, in Greencastle, Co Donegal and Castletownbere, Co Cork had temporarily closed due to restrictions put in place to help stop the spread of COVID-19 in March. The reopening coincides with the colleges' recent achievement of ISO 9001:2015 certification; the internationally recognised standard for quality management systems. This certification further ensures that the training received by learners will be of a consistently high standard across all training sites including the two colleges and mobile coastal training units. Additionally, BIM's updated Quality Assurance System, for the

delivery of programmes leading to awards on the National Framework of Qualifications was recently approved by QQI (Quality & Qualifications Ireland). Since March, BIM supported a range of students through a mix of online learning and project work. Earlier in the year, the Skipper Full Certificate of Competency Programme was adapted and made available online during the college closure. The full-time programme, comprising of nine weeks of online learning and an additional three weeks in the classroom in the National Fisheries College, Castletownbere will support four students to complete their studies and receive a skipper licence in 2020.



Extensive consultation has taken place to ensure the safe delivery of training programmes for students and staff of BIM in line with government and HSE advice, and the teams in the colleges look forward to welcoming students back to undertake a wide range of industry training.

Fishermen's lives placed in danger by Greenpeace stunt



Greenpeace dropping boulders in the North Sea

Greenpeace is dropping granite boulders into the North Sea, in a stunt designed to prevent fishing vessels trawling. The environmental charity says it wants to stop the practice of "bottom trawling" in the marine protected area of Dogger Bank in the North Sea. On Tuesday, September 22 activists dropped 15 granite boulders onto the sandy seabed off Dogger Bank. Greenpeace said the move would stop trawlers dropping their nets in the area but not harm the seabed's marine life. More boulders will be dropped in the coming weeks until the area is completely protected, the charity said. It stressed it had informed marine authorities of its actions in advance for safety. Fishing groups have condemned Greenpeace's actions as "dangerous" and "infantile". "Our

concern is for the crews of our vessels, should their gear become entangled in what Greenpeace are describing as 'massive granite boulders'," said Barrie Deas, CEO of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations. "That is extremely dangerous for the crews on the deck, and it can actually jeopardise the vessel's stability as well." Mr Deas went on to state that there was confusion among fishermen as to why the sandbanks of Dogger Bank needed protecting. "We can understand if it is coral reef or marl reef or particularly sensitive habitat, but what we are talking about here is a particularly large area of mobile sand. So we've never really been quite sure of the rationale for having the special area of conservation," he said.

Consultation on the expansion of Ireland's Marine Protected Areas

In August, Darragh O'Brien TD, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage and Minister of State Malcolm Noonan TD announced the commencement of a formal consultation process on the future expansion of Ireland's network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), beginning with a series of interactive stakeholder engagements hosted by an independent expert Advisory Group appointed in December 2019 and chaired by Professor Tasman Crowe of the UCD Earth Institute. Minister O'Brien stated, "Minister Noonan and I very much welcome this process of stakeholder engagement which is being supported and facilitated by our department. This represents the first stage of a broader, comprehensive consultation process on Marine Protected Areas which will continue in the coming months and which we committed to get under way in the first 100 days of Government." Commencing August 18 and concluding September 18, engagement with various representative bodies and organisations, included among them several fishing organisations, has been taking place through an online questionnaire and series of moderated online meetings, seeking, for example, their views, ideas and perspectives on MPAs; the future expansion of Ireland's MPA network; and the preferred approach to selecting,

designating and managing MPAs in the short and longer term. This input will subsequently go on to inform the work of the MPA Advisory Group in finalising its technical report and recommendations for the Minister in the Autumn. As the second stage of the broader consultation process, Minister O'Brien and

Minister of State Noonan intend to publish the final report of the Advisory Group upon its receipt, and to invite comments and views from the public on the future expansion of Ireland's MPA network. If you would like to be notified when the public consultation begins, please send an email to: marine.env@housing.gov.ie



The SFFA's Port Office at Dunmore East now features an eye-catching fisheries themed mural, thanks to the creative inspiration of Ardscoil na Mara, Tramore 5th year student, Sarah Rogers whose design was the winning entry in a special art competition to recognise and celebrate the region's deep ties with the fishing industry, which the SFFA ran with the assistance of Waterford Walls.

Red Seaweed could help cut methane emissions from cattle

By LORNA SIGGINS

SCIENTISTS testing a type of red seaweed to reduce methane emissions in cattle have recorded successful sea cultivation trials in west Cork.

“Very exciting” is how Dr Julie Maguire of Bantry Marine Research Station describes the recent breakthrough by her team in growing the species in seawater.

Bantry Marine Research Station, which is now owned by veterinary pharmaceuticals company Bimeda, has already invested some considerable time in testing the effectiveness of the red seaweed species *Asparagopsis armata* in reducing harmful emissions in cattle here.

By incorporating the seaweed into animal feed, cuts of between 40 and 98 per cent in emissions have been achieved in trials in the US, Australia and New Zealand.

That international work, pioneered in Canada, involved using *Asparagopsis taxiformis*, a red seaweed type most common in the southern hemisphere.

It is similar to *Asparagopsis armata* which was discovered in Irish waters about 60 years ago in small quantities, and was successfully cultivated in the late 1990s in Ard Bay, Co Galway by research company Taighde Mara Teo.

The red seaweed type would have to be farmed here to meet sufficient quantities for the animal feed industry, Bantry Marine Research station’s general manager David O’Neill points out.

The advantage is that it can be grown on land as well as in the sea, and the research station recently managed to attach *Asparagopsis armata* gametophytes to a string.

As Dr Maguire explains, this

allows it to be grown in the sea. The station is building up cultures of free-living plants, and the next trial involves growing the seaweed in wastewater, she says.

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) has been supportive of its work, while Údarás na Gaeltachta and the State’s agricultural research authority Teagasc have also shown interest in the research.

The appointment of three marine ministers in quick succession in the current government has frustrated efforts to arouse interest at political level, as the research work will require considerable investment.

A Canadian farmer’s observation that dairy cattle feeding near shorelines seemed healthier and produced more milk led to widespread use of seaweeds in animal feed.

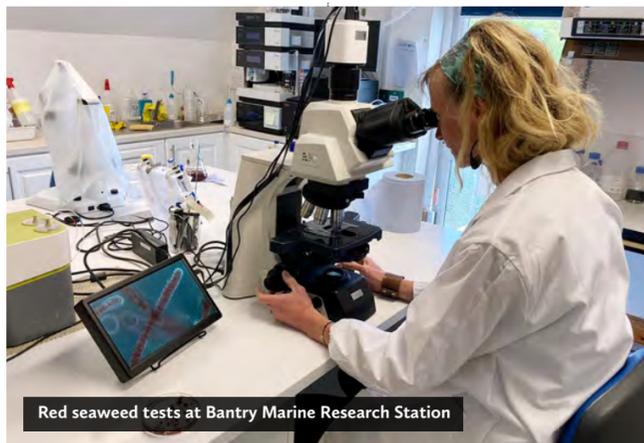
However, the discovery that a particular red seaweed could have a positive impact on ruminant animals’ digestion was made by Canadian scientist Dr Rob Kinley some three years ago.

His research in Canada and latterly in Australia showed that *Asparagopsis taxiformis* could reduce methane emissions by up to 99 per cent if added in small quantities to animal feed, as hydrogen, rather than methane, was produced.

It was estimated that if just 10 per cent of global ruminant producers used it as a feed additive, it would have the climate change equivalent of removing 50 million cars from roads.

Dr Kinley, who undertook his research with the Australian Common Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), has since visited Ireland and has been collaborating with the Bantry Marine Research Station for some time.

Bantry Marine Research station general manager David O’Neill estimates animals fed with the constituent here could reduce



Red seaweed tests at Bantry Marine Research Station

emissions by 50 to 60 per cent.

As he explains, the constituents in the red seaweed inhibit the bacteria in the cattle’s rumen from producing methane.

“Methane production has no benefit to the animals and is a waste of fodder,” he points out. While cattle don’t particularly like the taste of seaweed, it can be flavoured with molasses, he suggests.

The marine research company is co-operating with Údarás na Gaeltachta and Teagasc, and hopes to raise funds for more animal trials.

Údarás na Gaeltachta Director of Enterprise, Employment and Property Dr Mark White said there could be a double benefit for both farmers and climate change targets if the Bantry station’s work on the red seaweed additive does prove fruitful.

Earlier this summer, it was reported that Swedish start-up, Volta Greentech, had closed a 500,000 US dollar funding round to expand pilot production of a product derived from the red seaweed, *Asparagopsis*, to reduce methane emissions in cattle.

The journal *Feednavigator.com* reported that Volta Greentech

has been working with academics based at the Swedish University of Agricultural Scientists on feeding trials in cattle.

The journal reports that the Swedish company has identified two main challenges – the first being the creation of economic incentives for the food industry to adopt the produce to reduce methane emissions generated from beef and milk production.

The second is ensuring that the red seaweed type can be produced in sufficient quantities. Volta Greentech has already been trialling land-based systems for growing it to scale.

The Swedish company favours using seawater which can be recycled, while also using waste heat from a nearby oil refinery on the Swedish west coast to ensure water can be maintained at an optimal temperature.

Teagasc principal research officer Prof Sinead Waters, who is also adjunct professor at the Ryan Institute, NUI Galway, said that while initial results from Australia and elsewhere are positive, “further research is warranted”.

Prof Waters and Teagasc colleague

“The Irish government will be facing fines and sanctions for breaches of climate change targets set at international level, and this produce could reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and bring us back into line with government commitments.”



Red seaweed may help reduce methane emissions in cattle if added to feed



All images courtesy of Bantry Marine Research Station



Researcher Dee McElligott identifying seaweed species

Dr Maria Hayes, are involved in two projects testing various feed additives for ability to reduce enteric methane emissions from ruminants – “Meth-Abate” funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine, and “SeaSolutions” an EU-funded project with other Irish, EU and Canadian partners.

“There are a lot of caveats, such as bromoform, a compound within seaweed which is known to reduce methane emissions but is also a known carcinogen. We need to ensure that if seaweed is fed to ruminants that no bromoform or other residues appear in the end meat and milk products,” Prof Waters has cautioned.

Sustainability, cost-effectiveness and appropriate mode of delivery to animals are all factors which have to be investigated, she has said.

“The research by Dr Kinley is very exciting, but we need to understand the long term impacts of any potential methane abatement product on production, on the rumen and any negative effects which may also affect human health or the environment,” she said.

Bromoform and dibromochloromethane,

two compounds found in seaweed, are produced by marine plants as a defence mechanism. The International Agency for Research on Cancer has said that both compounds are not classifiable as human carcinogens.

However, the US Environmental Protection Agency has suggested bromoform is a potential human carcinogen, following studies carried out on mice and rats.

The Voltech Greentech research has not found bromoform traces in any significant quantities in animal milk, urine, tissues or organs in trials conducted as of early this summer.

David O’Neill says that the research at Bantry could support a sustainable beef, sheep and dairy sector meeting “Origin Green” credentials, as advocated by Bord Bia.

“The Irish government will be facing fines and sanctions for breaches of climate change targets set at international level, and this produce could reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and bring us back into line with government commitments,” he says.



Researcher Silvia Blanco at work at Bantry station

A multi-billion dollar industry

Ireland has a long history in hand harvesting a small number of the almost 600 types of seaweed growing along the 7,800 km Irish coastline, and its value has been in its gelling agent, used in everything from ice-cream to “heads” on beer.

The many health benefits of seaweed are now fuelling a multi-billion dollar global industry that is focused on increasing cultivation of marine algae.

BIM has been working with industry and researchers from Queen’s University Belfast and NUI Galway to develop cultivation techniques for farming native seaweed, particularly *Laminaria digitata* (kelp).

BIM stresses the potential of its use in “high value products such as medicines, cosmetics and functional foods”.

At its workshop on farming seaweed in Ireland last year, it estimated that there were 130 hectares of seaweed licensed capacity in Ireland, with “more coming on stream”.

State seaweed company Arramara was sold to Canadian multinational Acadian in 2014 for an undisclosed sum which was the subject of a ten-year confidentiality clause.

Several politicians, traditional harvesters and a former Arramara chief executive were critical of the deal, which took place at a time when the company was making a profit.

Údarás na Gaeltachta had concluded a five-year capital investment programme with Acadian Seaplants in the seaweed company before its privatisation.

Minutes of Údarás na Gaeltachta board meetings obtained under the Freedom of Information Act by Irish language news website tuairisc.ie recorded how concerns were expressed about the sale by Enterprise Ireland chief executive Frank Ryan to then Minister of State for the Gaeltacht Dinny McGinley in July 2013.

The many potential biopharmaceutical benefits of marine algae have been highlighted in numerous scientific studies, such as a paper published by Dublin Institute of Technology scientists Emer Shannon and Nissreen Abu-Ghannam in 2016.

Their paper noted that organisms such as algae, molluscs, sponges, corals, and tunicates have evolved to survive the high concentrations of infectious and surface-fouling bacteria that are indigenous to ocean waters.

Both macroalgae (seaweeds) and microalgae (diatoms) contain “pharmacologically active compounds such as phlorotannins, fatty acids, polysaccharides, peptides, and terpenes which combat bacterial invasion”, they reported.

Given that the resistance of pathogenic bacteria to existing antibiotics has become a “global epidemic”, marine algae derivatives have “shown promise as candidates in novel, antibacterial drug discovery”, they have said.

Their paper included a comprehensive analysis of the many qualities of marine algae. They noted that some algae types, such as three types of edible Irish brown seaweed, could be used as preservatives to help reduce incidence of food poisoning.

They also noted that marine algal compounds have potential for use as components of antibacterial films made from biodegradable materials which are widely used in active food packaging applications.

They found that antibacterial algal extracts can also be incorporated into animal feed to improve the safety and nutritional profile of animal products destined for human consumption. As an example, extracts of *Laminaria digitata* fed to pigs up to three weeks before slaughter improved the quality of pork meat.

Seaweeds have also been shown to have antibacterial properties against many species that infect farmed fish.

This in turn “reduces the occurrence of pathogenic bacteria in the final food product”, the DIT study noted.

‘Antibacterial Derivatives of Marine Algae: An Overview of Pharmacological Mechanisms and Applications’ by Emer Shannon and Nissreen Abu-Ghannam, was published in the journal *Marine Drugs* in April 2016.

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NORTHERN IRELAND NEWS *By Dick James*

THE FISHERY

The fishery, like BREXIT, is in transition. The north Irish Sea summer bonanza is behind us and the hard drag to Christmas lies ahead, and who knows what will happen after that? Looking back, this season was good in terms of catch but disappointing in terms of grossing due to reduced price and restricted time at sea.

At the time of writing (mid-September), there is still a prawn fishing in the western Irish Sea but more promising signs are showing on more distant grounds. The Bristol Channel Smalls ground is showing signs of a resurgence with some Kilkeel boats joining the Irish fleet taking opportunities in that area, but the Clyde has shown most promising first for the Portavogie faithful and then joined by the Ardglass fleet.

Latterly, the small boat Portavogie fleet found a local fishing on adjacent ground where the better size ratio of prawns probably made it easier on crew, better for marketing and cost-saving for fuel use. There were one or two Kilkeel men working to the north in the Minch area but, as yet, no movement to the North Sea.

There has been little mainland UK interest in area VII prawns this year, probably due to COVID related problems, which has left surplus quota available for swap or lease which the Northern Irish POs are sopping up without any real idea for what lies ahead this Autumn/Winter...

but best to have it anyway.

There has been a rise in small boat participation (under 10 metre) within the Irish Sea prawn fishery this year; due to a downsizing trend brought on by crew difficulties as well as a switch by the bigger crabbers into prawns on account of the collapse of the brown crab market and a falloff in the fishery. On the other side, some of the larger boats are finding Guardship work more lucrative this year which eases things in that sector.

The three Northern Irish pelagic boats started up this month, with the Kilkeel-owned *Havilah/Stefanie M* pairing using Belfast as a base to supply the factories in Ardglass and Kilkeel. Working local ground in the western side of the north Irish Sea, they started off on their daily landings rota working days about for a four day week, and hardly missing a beat with landings from day one on a modest landing to increasing landings as they found the rhythm and the marks. A fishing routine which harks back to a more gentle period when weekends were for home time.

Douglas Banks has yet to come, with the fishery there due to close on the 21st September whereupon the Irish fleet are due to start their season on non-spawning areas. This year, to date, there has been no interest shown in the fishery by the Plymouth-based *Wiron* duo of freezer boats, which may leave



Sea Mourne returning to Ardglass after a day's fishing. (Credit: Chris Feenan)

quota available for the local pairing to extend their season or return after the Autumn mackerel run to finish off the year.

The Kilkeel supertrawler *Voyager* has been working the North Sea herring landing mainly into Shetland but also once in Norway. There has been no west coast fishery this year due to regulation closure, but that boat's Irish Sea allocation has yet to be fished.

On the whitefish front, markets have largely dictated this year's activity – although things seem to be improving. Limited activity in the Irish Sea has left once fought over quota uncaught, and there may be an option for prawners to diversify later in the year if needs must.

The *Ribhinn Donn* has worked the North Channel for the usual mix of fish found there, whilst *Mylarose* and *Sparkling Sea* have kept to the local haddock grounds. *Unity* is, at present, putting a shift in on grounds

south of Newlyn in Cornwall where haddock availability and quota is readily available – but again market seems susceptible to volume within a local setting. *Maracestina* works away for prawn on the Porcupine with fairly regular tripping since lockdown. OK for this year but what does the future hold?

The inshore fleet are working away with little enthusiasm as markets limit what is possible, and the grounds are getting some respite after the last few years frenetic activity.

The local scallop season is due to start on November 1st, with no idea as to what the market (reputed to be dire) will be like and what new regulation may be brought in by over-enthusiastic managers. As yet, there seems no forward planning to participate in that fishery but if one could it will be dictated by what goes on elsewhere, which has been a regular theme this year.

FISHERIES BILL

The UK's Fisheries Bill was back before the House of Commons in September for its second reading after passing the House of Lords with amendments. This Bill is forerunner for recovery of authority for the management of fisheries and related environmental issues prior to full release from the EU's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)

Apart from the Scottish Nationalists and Plaid Cymru, who voted to rejoin the EU and trust to redefining the CFP, there was little dissent from the Bill with Labour declining to vote and the rest of the House in support.

Significantly during the debate, there was some mention of the amendments made by the Lords, many of the Conservatives generally pledging to revoke the amendments and Labour, predictably, taking the opposite view.

This now leads to the stage where the detail of the proposals are considered and the

amendments reconsidered. Thus, the stage has been taken forward one more step and the reality of shift from CFP transition to UK control becomes closer, the implications clearer and the focus of detail becomes more of an issue.

Within the debate on the Bill two interventions by Northern Irish MPs were heard. MP Carla Lockhart (DUP) representing Upper Bann, speaking as DUP fisheries spokesperson spoke on a whiting avoidance program for the Irish Sea, but perhaps more tellingly spoke in support of further devolution issues, specifically shifting the powers over environmental authority in respect of Marine Protected Areas in Northern Irish offshore areas to the Northern Irish Assembly.

This would directly apply to the muddy basin *Nephrops* ground in the South Rigg areas, which have been a bone of contention for the Northern Ireland fleet being an area known for high-quality prawns prized in

particular by the Portavogie fleet. It would also cover the Queenie Corner ground which Northern Ireland fishing interests have volunteered as a suitable area for designation as a mud habitat.

Jim Shannon (DUP) MP for the Ards Peninsula which covers Portavogie spoke also, claiming support from the South Down constituency port of Kilkeel (and, presumably, Ardglass) and supported the Bill, although not the Lords' amendments raising the conflict of those amendments with the policy driver of sustainable fishing within the Northern Ireland sector.

The MP also raised the issue of non-EU fishermen in respect of manning needs of the local fleet although, how that became an issue under the Fisheries Bill was not clear.

Eventually, the Bill passed through the second reading after the SNP amendment failed with 6 of the DUP MPs voting for the Bill, the rest of Northern Ireland's MPs being listed as absent.

TIE-UP OR NOT

The much anticipated and promised tie-up scheme for the Northern Irish fleet, due to commence on the 15th September, is to be put before the Fisheries Minister on the 14th September and with time taken for approval (or otherwise), issue of application forms, consideration of terms, perusal process and issue of approval it is now beyond doubt that the initial start date is likely to be missed unless some retrospective action or Doctor Who type magic can be found. Who will tie-up on the chance that something might happen and where will the boats be or where might they be going to in this difficult year full of unknowns?

To recap; the scheme is to be based on 50% of average earnings over the last three years for the trawlers on a monthly basis in two periods of 6 weeks starting with the fleet being split to avoid oversubscription, and to allow markets to continue based on 50% supply. This, no doubt, will be a challenging administrative process fraught with appeal, conflict and uncertainty.

The inshore potting fleet will have a scheme based on costs incurred previously with little detail on this, and if an option to continue fishing and claim reduced grant is unclear. It is

reported that some gear is being brought ashore in anticipation of such a scheme whilst others are waiting to see what happens.

GHANAIA FISHMEN JOIN GAA

Ghanaian fishermen have been a feature within the Co Down fleet for several years now, taking over from the Filipinos as recruits of choice for the local boats due to difficulties in hiring the popular Asian men. They have fitted in well within the communities they are based in, and benefit from the facilities set in place for them with toilets and shower facilities provided by the Harbour Authority, and laundry and rest facilities by the Fishermen's Mission.

The COVID situation, however, has disrupted the Mission's involvement as the centres are closed in Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie, and their facilities are now unavailable. In Ardglass, the Ghanaians have joined the local GAA club where shower and laundry facilities are available on a limited basis, and they have been taken in by the club which has laid on training into the art and rules of Gaelic football and social events with African food and music. Other social services such as iAssistNI, a best friending service for ethnic minorities, have also been

involved and there is hope that an integrated Gaelic team may evolve.

FISHERIES AND SEAFOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

In 2018, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs commissioned a 2-part study into the sea fisheries of Northern Ireland, as a strategic review looking to future needs of the industry and how best to accommodate them. The study was to be undertaken by Poseidon fisheries consultants' Rod Cappell, and part 1 was completed and duly submitted in November 2019.

At that point, there was no Stormont Assembly so no Minister to sign off the report and it lay dormant within the Department. Since then, there has been a succession of delays and the report has still to see the light of day. There are now a number of projects which fall within the strategic umbrella of the subject matter under consideration and awaiting its publication for justification for making grant application to take them forward (or otherwise). And still the report awaits Ministerial approval and sign off, with questions now being asked on the report's release and reasons for delay by the SDLP's Colin McGrath.

NEPHROPS QUOTA MOVEMENT

At the start of September, there was significant movement in Area VII *Nephrops* quota, as unfished quota held by Scottish and English interests was acquired by the Northern Ireland Producers. In the past, Government passed on any such problems by encouraging these small boats to join a Producer Organisation (PO), with 55 tonnes gifted to the Government managed non-sector to boost their holding.

This year, the TAC set by

Brussels was cut substantially and, subsequently, uptake by the local fleet ran the limits close, despite COVID shutdown and consequential restricted activity limiting potential uptake. Although the main season has nearly finished, more quota was thought necessary to avoid potential closure (never mind any tie-up scheme).

The Government non-sector vessel fleet have been particularly hit, with additional fleet members in the under-10 metre class boosting that

grouping and bringing no additional quota with them. On top of that, vessels in the under-10 sector working as crabbers in the past have now in some instances switched to prawn trawling again, putting pressure on the non-sector quota.

In the past, as stated, Government avoided any such problems by encouraging the under-10 metre trawlers to join a PO and pass on the responsibility of quota management. This year, quota demand by the under-10 metre

non-sector fleet has been such that limits were set high an around 5 tonnes a month. Reduction to 3 tonnes in September was relieved by the gift of 55 tonnes, which allowed the limits to be reset at 5 tonnes per boat per month.

What will happen next year is unknown. A cut in the overall assessment would pose difficulties and the new UK/EU balance of the opportunity post-Brexit for division of Area VII *Nephrops* quota will also come into play....

NEWS in brief

MOURNE HERRING FISHERY

The Fisheries Department of the Department of Agriculture has called for applications for licences to participate in the Mourne Shore herring fishery, due to open on 7th December although in practice the fishery tends to open later after the closure of the Douglas Bank fishery on 21st September. The fishery is open to boats not exceeding 40ft (12.2 metres in new money) using drift nets with a minimum mesh size of 54mm. Weekend fishing is not allowed and a quota of 58 tonnes has been allocated to the fishery. Application forms are available from local Port Offices.

NEW CATCH OPPORTUNITIES

The appearance of unmanned (drone) research vessels within the Irish Sea has been ongoing now for a few years. Deployed from Carlingford these vessels have been a regular feature within local waters and, apparently, their use has spread worldwide. Recently, one such drone was lost sunk off the coast of eastern Ireland and rumours of high-value salvage prompted some local boats to rig out for anticipated rich rewards on recovery.

FISHING FOR LITTER

The Northern Ireland Fishermen's Safety has announced a Marine Litter Management project to tackle the issue of marine litter through a *Fishing for Litter* initiative. Funded by the South East Area FLAG initiative using EMFF funding, and backed by match funding by Seafish and the Northern Ireland Fish Producers' Organisation, the Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority is the grant recipient as lead applicant.

DREDGING ACTIVITY AT ARDGLASS

The Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority dredger *Kilmourne* is now stationed at Ardglass removing detritus and mud build from the outer harbour, in particular at the quay walls to level off depths throughout the harbour to designed norm. After, the dredger will turn its attention to the Marina outwith NIFHA boundaries to deepen the access channel to the Marina where water depth in the past has attracted criticism, even though water depth in the surrounds is nominally shallower than entrance depth.



UK NEWS

FISHERIES BILL AMENDMENTS

Following a vote in the House of Commons, the UK government has removed 'sustainability' as the key objective of the Fisheries Bill.

Currently passing through Parliament, the bill provides a framework for fisheries management after the Brexit transition period ends and the UK is no longer part of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

Among several amendments introduced as the bill passed through the House of Lords earlier this year was the inclusion of (environmental) sustainability as the bill's primary objective. The amendment at the time was opposed by the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO) for placing the environment above social and economic goals.

With the bill now back in the House of Commons, on September 8th—in a move which has since been critiqued by a number of environmental groups—the government voted to remove the amendment alongside several others and clause one of the bill, within which a number of the Lords' 'sustainability' amendments were included, has reverted to its original form.

During debate on the matter, Fisheries Minister Victoria Prentis said, "Proposing to revert to the original wording is not about the government going against environmental ambitions – absolutely the opposite. Our amendment reverts to the very carefully drafted original wording, which gives equal weight to environmental, social and economic considerations."

UK SEA FISHERIES STATISTICS JULY 2020

Published in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to provide timely evidence on impacts on commercial sea fishing activity, on August 25 the MMO published its *Ad hoc statistical release: UK Sea Fisheries Statistics for July of this year*.

According to the MMO's figures, prior to COVID-19 restrictions impacting the UK fleet, landed volumes and values for UK vessels were higher in 2020 compared to 2019, with values 10 per cent higher in January 2020 compared to January 2019 and 43 per cent higher in February 2020.

From March, however, the fleet started to be affected by COVID-19 impacts, with a more severe impact in April, the first full month of lockdown in the UK. Though volumes began to recover in May, values were 26 per cent lower, and June saw volumes fall back again 13 per cent compared to the same month last year.

Compared to last year the cumulative value of landings is down 18 per cent, while cumulative volumes are down 5 per cent. At 35,500 tonnes for July, volumes were down 8 per cent compared to the same month last year. At £51,600,000 the value was down 32 per cent.

Throughout lockdown the shellfish sector, which in July was down in value by 49 per cent, has been hardest hit. In comparison, the value of demersals fell by 18 per cent, while the value of pelagics increased by 59 per cent compared to July 2019, with the month seeing an increase of around 50 per cent in herring volumes landed on the same month last year, with a value that increased by 150 per cent.

The under 12m fleet continues to be most impacted, in particular 10-12m vessels. Though both segments have been hard hit, since June, under 10s have seen a better recovery than the 10-12m fleet, with quantity and value of landings down by 23 per cent and 39 per cent respectively in July.

This can be explained by the reliance of the 10-12m fleet on shellfish and the decrease in its quantity and value. On top of this, 10-12m vessels also catch a lower proportion of pelagics than the other size categories, so they have not benefited as much from the strong recovery there.

By vessel nationality, in July Wales saw the greatest decrease in the value of landings (57 per cent) and quantity landed (42 per cent), which can be attributed to the fact that the Welsh fleet is proportionately smaller than in other areas around the UK, and relies heavily on shellfish.

The fishmonger who refuses to sell the 'top 5' fish and shellfish species



Aarik in the new fish shop, Cormacks Seafood

'There isn't a day that goes by when I don't get asked for at least one of the top five species of seafood (tuna, salmon, cod, haddock and prawns), but I am determined, even as a brand new start-up business, to educate our consumers on why it is important to eat local.' – Aarik Persaud

Cormacks Seafood, a new fish shop based in Totnes, Devon is one of the many seafood businesses in the UK which has turned its head to a domestic market using locally landed seafood. Before the COVID-19 crisis, 80 per cent of the UK's seafood was exported, whilst most of the seafood consumed in the UK was imported.

Explaining the premise of his business chef turned fishmonger Aarik Persaud says, "We exclusively sell seasonal, locally caught day boat fish and shellfish, with one exception, ChalkStream trout, which is farmed using organic feed in freshwater ponds."

"We have been running as a seafood product-focused business since 2018 and have always only bought from small-scale fishing vessels that use traditional fishing methods. These fishermen are the backbone of coastal communities and are custodians of their small patch of the sea," he says.

With over 20 years' experience working as a chef, Aarik has led kitchens across the world, such as Toronto, Sydney, Bali, Hong Kong, and London. In Asia, he owned a series of butcheries, which operated on a nose-to-tail mantra of using the whole animal. Furloughed during lockdown from his executive chef position in a high-end restaurant in Soho, London, Aarik was determined to get back to work and so developed the plan for Cormacks.

At the shop, Aarik brings his culinary experience and knowledge to transform the seafood into a range of ready to cook products. "There are some amazing parts of a fish which are often discarded, such as the cheeks,

ribs, and head. I think the seafood industry does need a shake-up. We have been eating plain battered white fish for too long. Don't get me wrong, it is great, but where are the new seafood products?"

Cormacks Seafood started its life a few years back; canning day boat mackerel, marinated in international sauces, such as miso ginger, Korean BBQ, pastrami spice and puttanesca.

Having the shop allows Aarik to build and develop a far more extensive product range. The fridge is always stocked with a range of products that have been given a bit of additional flavour – jerked cuttlefish, hake stuffed with harissa and couscous, trout en papillote, to name a few.

The frozen food products Aarik makes include soy and yuzu infused katsu fillets, inspired from his many years of eating Japanese curry in small 'mom and pop' restaurants across Asia, Fish 'n' Chip fish fingers, first born in one of Aarik's restaurants in Hong Kong, as well as a Brixham Lobster Mac and Cheese. He also has a salt fridge which is used to dry age the larger fish, reducing the moisture content and concentrating the flavour.

"For me, one of the most important things that I can do is to show my local community the importance of supporting their local fishing fleet and teaching them about the abundance of fresh, delicious seasonal seafood that is landed right here. We are fortunate enough to be able to access seafood that is fresh off the boat, so why would I promote anything else?"

For more information visit www.cormacksseafood.co.uk

Brexit: SFF and NFFO reaffirm support for UK's negotiating stance

With Brexit talks in deadlock and fisheries remaining a contentious sticking point between the EU and UK, the two largest fishing federations in the UK last month reaffirmed their support for the UK's negotiating stance.

Elsbeth Macdonald and Barrie Deas, chief executives of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF) and National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO) respectively, said:

"For the fishing industry in the UK, leaving the Common Fisheries Policy has always been about redressing a fundamental issue: the woefully unfair allocation of quota shares in our waters, where the EU fleet has an unfettered right of access to the UK's rich fishing grounds and fish five times more in UK waters than we fish in theirs.

"The only satisfactory means of ensuring that this is achieved is for the UK, as a sovereign coastal

state, to maintain full control over access to our waters. That does not mean denying EU vessels access to fish in the UK Exclusive Economic Zone. Rather, that such access would be negotiated annually – as is the norm for the EU and Norway and other non-EU fishing nations.

"Under international law, this will be the default position if a Fisheries Agreement cannot be reached. Evidently, it would be preferable if the right deal could be agreed, meeting the industry's objective of control of access to fish in the UK EEZ and fairer quota shares based on zonal attachment, but if an acceptable deal cannot be reached then the catching sector would prefer these issues to be addressed through the annual negotiations process. This is in line with the government's negotiating position, which we fully support.

"Ultimately, it is up to the EU which of the two routes it wishes

to take towards the UK becoming a coastal state – through a stable framework agreement that respects UK sovereignty and follows similar arrangements that the EU has with other coastal states in the north-east Atlantic, or via a more uncertain route for the EU where everything is done through annual negotiations with no framework agreement in place."

The comments from the SFF and NFFO come amidst stark warnings and growing pessimism that a deal will be reached by the two sides before the end of the year. In a keynote address just days earlier to the Institute of International and European Affairs, the EU's chief Brexit negotiator, Michel Barnier said, "Since the start of these negotiations, the UK has not shown any willingness to seek compromises on fisheries.

"Contrary to media reports this week, the UK government's position has not evolved in past months. No new legal texts have

been tabled by UK negotiators. Where the EU has shown openness to possible solutions, the UK has shunned our offers.

"Yet the UK government's position would lock out Ireland's fishermen and women from waters they fished in long before Ireland or the UK joined the European Economic Community in 1973. And of course, the fishermen and women of many other EU countries. That is just not acceptable."

Mr Barnier went on to state, "We fully understand and respect that the UK will become an independent coastal state, outside the Common Fisheries Policy. But we will not accept that the work and the livelihoods of these men and women be used as a bargaining chip in these negotiations."

"Without a long-term, fair and sustainable solution on fisheries, there will simply be no new economic partnership with the UK," he said.

New lobster hatchery and research lab opens in Bridlington

Holderness Fishing Industry Group (HFIG) recently opened a state-of-the-art community laboratory and research hatchery in Bridlington—'The Lobster Capital of Europe'—to conduct vital research on fishing grounds in the North Sea.

The Yorkshire Marine Research Centre's build was implemented by HFIG and funded by the West of Morecambe Fisheries Fund and the European Marine Fisheries Fund. The project aims to undertake studies on ecology, marine science and fishery biology.

In a collaborative approach, many of the facility's projects have been suggested by HFIG fishermen, with a number of them being funded by offshore wind developer, Ørsted and its East Coast Projects Fund (ECPF).

Founded in 2011, and as previously reported in *The Skipper*, HFIG aims to protect and promote the local fishery grounds and to facilitate co-operation and coexistence with other marine sectors, including companies such as Ørsted.

Having worked with HFIG for a number of years and with four offshore wind farms located within the group's remit reach, Ørsted's East Coast Projects have committed to a 10 year research sponsorship, to better understand the impacts of offshore wind on the North Sea ecology.

In 2013, Ørsted funded a long-term study led by HFIG fisheries scientist Mike Roach that examined the ecological effects of the construction and operation

of their offshore wind farms, with data collected within Ørsted's Westernmost Rough site.

The study had been the first of its kind to be conducted anywhere in the world and soon proved to be of significant value in easing fishermen's concerns about offshore wind developments.

Attending the opening, Benj Sykes, Head of Market Development, Consenting and External Affairs for Ørsted said: "As a company that's committed to building a clean, sustainable future for us all, it's imperative that we listen to our moral compass when it comes to constructing and operating offshore windfarms.

"We make every effort throughout the planning process to ensure that we minimise our impact on the environment and other sea users, and we're keen to continue making improvements to the way we work as our projects progress.

"The partnership between HFIG and Ørsted has had a very positive impact on the way the two organisations work together. It's fantastic to see our partnership flourish on a project like this innovative facility. We're both hoping to better understand and minimise impact on the North Sea's ecology, and the new research will show us how best to accomplish this together."

Whilst the new centre will not be open to the public, it will publicly display research findings for passers-by to view. A schedule of live Q&A sessions with scientists will also be promoted throughout the year for anyone to attend.



The town of Bridlington lands 310 tonnes of European lobster each year

The brand new laboratory within the facility boasts the latest in digital microscopy, a continual supply of filtered seawater, and larval rearing equipment allowing the scientists to investigate early life stages of lobster and crab that would not be possible in the open sea.

The pioneering project will see important research being undertaken on the precious habitat of native marine species. Upon completion of the various studies, healthy juvenile shellfish will be released back into the sea, acting as a form of stock enhancement.

Dr John A. Terschak, laboratory manager and facility marine scientist said, "The Yorkshire Marine Research Centre, being a quay-side laboratory, complements the at-sea program taking place aboard our dedicated research vessel, *R/V Huntress*. Combining these resources will allow us to conduct robust and relevant scientific investigations into the North Sea's ecology, biology, and

the extremely important fishery. "The results from these studies will make a real difference in supporting evidence-based decision making for our region. We appreciate the commitment Ørsted has made through its East Coast Projects Fund to not only the YMRC but also, in general, to our Holderness Coast and its people who rely upon a healthy coastal ecosystem for their prosperity."

Courtney French, Ørsted Commercial Fisheries Manager, said, "Through the ECPF, HFIG and Ørsted are fast becoming the centre of excellence for crustacean fisheries and wind farm development research.

"Through scientific collaboration such as this, we are able to fill data gaps and feed into the knowledge of impacts which can be shared around the global markets. It is hoped that the research undertaken through the ECRF will provide significant value in easing fishermen's concerns about offshore wind developments."

SCOTLAND NEWS

MAIB Report: Fatal man overboard from *May C* Safety Flyer to the Fishing Industry

The Marine Accident Investigation Branch's report on the investigation of the fatal man overboard from the *May C*, at Loch Carnan, Outer Hebrides, Scotland last year was published at the beginning of September.

At about 12.30 on 24 July 2019, the owner/skipper of the single-handed creel fishing boat, Michael Monk, was found face down and unconscious in the sea by the crew of the fishing boat, *Sparkling Star*, another small creel boat that was working the same area.

Despite being recovered by *Sparkling Star's* crew, the *May C's* skipper could not be resuscitated. A post mortem examination later established he had drowned.

Though the exact circumstances of the accident are unknown, according to the MAIB, it is likely the *May C's* skipper fell overboard when trying to clear the boat's propeller of weed or other fouling.

In terms of key safety issues identified, the report goes on to state that the skipper could not swim, was probably tired and was not wearing a personal flotation device (PFD), nor was he carrying a personal locator beacon (PLB).

This meant that his chances of survival were very low when alone and falling into cold water. Wearing a PFD and carrying a PLB aids survival and ensures you have a reliable method of raising the alarm to get help.

Given the industry initiatives to increase awareness of the



importance of wearing a PFD, and previous safety recommendations made by the MAIB, no further recommendations regarding single-handed fishing have been included in the report.

The safety flyer to the fishing industry identifies the following lessons:

The exact circumstances of this accident are unknown because the skipper's fall overboard was not witnessed. However, the boat's engine was found in the raised position so it is most likely that he fell overboard and drowned while trying to clear weed or some other obstruction from the propeller. To get to the propeller the skipper had to climb onto *May C's* narrow transom, which circumvented the only significant safety barrier to prevent him falling overboard, the raised guardrails, specifically in

place to prevent crew falling over the side.

The skipper was not wearing his PFD or carrying his PLB when he fell in the sea; indeed, neither piece of safety equipment was on board. Wearing a PFD significantly increases the chances of keeping your head and face clear of the water when falling into the sea, preventing seawater ingestion during the gasp reflex associated with cold water shock. Equally, the carriage of a PLB will provide an immediate and effective means of raising the alarm in an emergency, and it will guide the search and rescue assets to the location.

Single-handed fishing operations are extremely hazardous, primarily because there is no-one there to help if you get into difficulties. It is important

to recognise the severe hazard associated with falling overboard. The best way to combat this is to ensure that every precaution has been taken to prevent going in the sea in the first place, and if that does happen, then measures are in place to increase your chances of survival and rescue.

Every fishing vessel should have a method of recovering a man overboard back into the boat. The fact that the two crew of the fishing boat who found *May C's* skipper were unable to immediately recover him out of the water is testament of the extreme physical effort required to haul someone out of the sea. For that reason, it is very important to have a ready means of recovering a person from the water and to conduct regular manoverboard recovery drills.

Scottish Processors call for review of Seafish and Seafood Scotland remits

Scotland's seafood processors are demanding an urgent review into the role of the government-supported industry bodies Seafish and Seafood Scotland.

According to the Scottish Seafood Association (SSA), which represents processors, Seafish has become remote to many in the sector.

In a paper designed to kick-start debate on the issue and encourage the UK government

to embrace change, the SSA notes that Seafish's role has become blurred with that of other organisations in the sector such as Seafood Scotland "leading to a confused landscape of bodies with overlapping remits".

SSA chief executive Jimmy Buchan said: "The seafood industry is on the cusp of new opportunities for all sectors: more fish caught, more landed, more processed and transported and sold across the UK and around the world.

"To seize these opportunities and allow every part of our industry to thrive, we must ensure that our marketing of this world-class products is equally world-class. "That is why we need an honest appraisal of the structures, functions and funding of Seafish and Seafood Scotland."

In relation to funding, which is currently via a levy paid by the processing sector, suppliers of imported seafood, farmers of shellfish and third-party

commissioned projects, SSA is seeking reform.

Instead, a percentage of turnover from stakeholders who choose to subscribe—processor, harvester or grower—would be levied.

It would then be "optional to join the organisation and use the marketing and brand, the technical resources, responsible fisheries management, environmental schemes and R&D programs", the paper states.

Aquaculture contributes to long-term viability of coastal communities

The aquaculture industry contributes to the long-term viability of many communities, according to a new report, which also highlights the importance of a skilled workforce to the future of the sector.

Commissioned by Marine Scotland, the report found the sector provides year-round, well-paid jobs and supports economic growth in rural, coastal and island areas.

It said UK aquaculture—the majority of which is located in Scotland—also supports a wider and more geographically dispersed supply chain including processing, distribution, feed supply and export.

Rural Economy Secretary Fergus Ewing said: "This report highlights once again just how significant aquaculture is to Scotland's rural economy and the viability of our island and coastal communities.

"The level of annual earnings for employees in these remote and island locations is significant and often not readily available from other jobs in these locations.

"Having a skilled and flexible workforce will be a key factor in the future success of Scottish aquaculture. That's why we continue to work with our partners to promote skills development and to encourage new entrants to consider this crucial sector as a viable career path.

"Given the significant impact

of the COVID-19 pandemic the Scottish Government will continue to work to preserve the future of Scotland's aquaculture sector and the social fabric of our remote and rural communities."

The *Supporting the Economic, Social and Environmental Sustainability of the UK's Marine Sectors* report—by economic and social research group ekosgen—also highlights key challenges, which include employers recruiting and retaining the skills they need in areas

such as engineering, science, fish husbandry, fish health, feeding and biology.

The report found part of the challenge in attracting employees was linked to limited infrastructure and lack of access to local services and amenities. Employers in Ullapool and on the Isle of Rum have tackled this by developing their own housing in partnership with local communities.

Completed in January 2020, the report's publication was delayed on account of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Up-to-date statistics on the size of the aquaculture sector in Scotland are due to be published in October, but Scotland currently accounts for around two-thirds of total employment in the UK.

According to the publication *Marine Economic Statistics*, there were 2,240 people directly employed by the aquaculture sector in Scotland in 2017. A further research report on the wider economic impact of aquaculture in Scotland is due to be published this autumn.



Kilkeel's 86.4m *Voyager N 905* pulling away from the Morrison dock in Lerwick, heading up to Pelagia Shetland to land the 600 ton of herring aboard. (Credit: Charlie Umphray)



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Skipper

SHETLAND NEWS By Hans J Marter and Chris Cope / www.shetnews.co.uk

Discarded fishing gear a growing problem

LOCAL fishermen have again raised concerns about the amount of rubbish such as discarded gear they come across when fishing the waters around Shetland.

They say they constantly haul up stripped back gill nets and large quantities of long lines, bundled up and thrown overboard allegedly by European fishing vessels.

The issue is not new but appears to have become worse over recent months around Shetland.

Shetland Fishermen's Association (SFA) said discarded nets not only pose a navigational

food wrappers on the seabed. "This type of incident is not isolated to our vessel, all trawlers operating up and down in the areas where these longliners/gill netters have operated find large amounts of discarded rubbish."

All fishing ports in Scotland provide skips for fishermen to get rid of their domestic waste, and most ports are also participating in the *Fishing for Litter* initiative which encourages fishing crew to take ashore any rubbish they haul up in their nets.

The number of Spanish- and French-owned gill netters operating mainly to the west of Scotland as far north as Shetland is a constant source of dispute, and occasional confrontation, as large areas of sea are covered by gill nets.

They usually land at Scrabster, Kinlochbervie or Lochinver from where their catch is taken by truck to southern Europe.

SFA executive officer Simon Collins said they have been discussing their concern with government agencies such as Marine Scotland and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA).

He said one part of the solution will be to limit the amount of gill netters allowed to fish in UK waters, and that is something Marine Scotland is in the process of working out proposals for when the Brexit transition period has come to an end next year.

Collins added: "It is a growing problem around Shetland simply because of the increased presence of these vessels.

"One particular thing that might help is the idea of marking nets



Discarded gear

so that you know where it comes from when found discarded. The issue is to find a technical way of doing that.

"There have also been stories of aggressive behaviour and closing off vast areas of seabed. "One of these alleged incidents was videoed and well publicised recently. The problem does not seem to be going away, even one of our own ferries, the *MV Filla*, has wound up in this gear in recent months.

"In a short time period, I was able to obtain many photos taken by local vessels of gear they have either trawled up or have been fouled with. Some of these are included with this agenda.

"With the condition of the marine environment being of paramount importance to Shetland, I would like to move that the Shetland Islands Council makes official representation to Marine Scotland, the MCA and the Scottish Government to address this growing problem."

Meanwhile, Shetland Islands Council is to make a formal representation to the Scottish Government and the MCA on the issue of discarded fishing gear. North Isles members Duncan Anderson and Alec Priest won the support from fellow councillors when their motion to take action was discussed in the council chamber earlier in September.

The motion highlighted the problem of the "increasing level of marine pollution from discarded fishing gear, primarily of the type utilised by mainly

French and Spanish owned long liners and gill netters which operate in the waters around Shetland".

It added: "There have also been stories of aggressive behaviour and closing off vast areas of seabed.

"One of these alleged incidents was videoed and well publicised recently. The problem does not seem to be going away, even one of our own ferries, the *MV Filla*, has wound up in this gear in recent months.

"In a short time period, I was able to obtain many photos taken by local vessels of gear they have either trawled up or have been fouled with. Some of these are included with this agenda.

"With the condition of the marine environment being of paramount importance to Shetland, I would like to move that the Shetland Islands Council makes official representation to Marine Scotland, the MCA and the Scottish Government to address this growing problem."



Shetland fishermen have raised concerns about the amount of discarded gear they are hauling in

hazard, but they also pollute the seas with plastic, damage marine life and undermine the reputation of the local industry when pictures of beaches littered with rubbish make the rounds.

One local fisherman who preferred not to be named said: "It is well known fact that when these [EU] vessels land their catches, they never take ashore any rubbish."

A number of photos taken by crew on various vessels illustrate the extent of the problem.

The fisherman added: "The lorries which come from Spain to fetch their catch always load large bails of new gill netting, but none is ever taken ashore for discard.

"No authority seem to check whether or not these vessels have any rubbish to land ashore when they come to port. A vessel with 15-20 men at sea for two to three weeks will be generating a lot of rubbish. We constantly find Spanish



Shetland's 70m *Adenia* leaving Lerwick heading north ready to start the search for this year's herring quota. (Credit: Ivan Reid)

Delays add extra half a million to Toft Pier bill

DELAYS to rebuilding Toft Pier are set to cost Shetland Islands Council over half a million pounds extra.

The project, originally priced at £2.9 million, has faced a melting pot of delays including trouble gaining consents and licences, weather and the COVID-19 lockdown.

A report to the harbour said that "despite significant effort to minimise additional costs, the weather related delays, unforeseen ground conditions and COVID-19 restrictions have resulted in

increased costs of approximately £525k on this project".

Lerwick councillor Amanda Hawick said the increased cost was "just not good enough" and she expressed concern over where the extra half a million may come from.

The timetable for completion of the project is now winter 2020.

The project to rebuild and extend the run-down pier was approved by councillors last year, with the hope that it could attract more fishing traffic.

The work is being carried out by

Devon-based contractor Teignmouth Marine Services.

Around one-third of the £2.9 million cost is being covered by grant money from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

Marine and airport infrastructure manager Andrew Inkster told the meeting that work was meant to start in June last year but unforeseen problems with obtaining licences meant it only got underway in August.

With the start date slipping, a

large chunk of the summer weather had been missed.

Piling works took place from late August to November, and as a result of Christmas and the weather the contractor demobilised in December and only returned in March – just before the lockdown kicked in.

Inkster said he was "very disappointed" with the additional cost but was comfortable the council had done what it could.

Inkster said he was "absolutely satisfied that the contractor priced the job correctly".



A welcome sight amongst the modern day under 10m jiggers with new technology auto lines. An old-style Shetland built wooden boat out trying for a mackerel fry for lunch. (Credit: Ivan Reid)

Carmichael bids to make fishing safer by adding to MCA's responsibilities

NORTHERN Isles MP Alistair Carmichael is hoping to introduce an amendment to the post-Brexit Fisheries Bill with the aim of giving the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) powers to investigate safety breaches at sea outwith the 12-mile boundary.

The Shetland and Orkney MP's move comes after several such alleged breaches occurring in the waters to the west of Shetland and, although reported to the authorities, they were never investigated and always left as "somebody else's problem".

"I want to bring forward an amendment that would make clear that the MCA not just has the right but the responsibility to police safe practices for all those fishing within the UK territorial waters," Carmichael said.

In June this year, the crew of

the Lerwick registered whitefish trawler *Alison Kay* posted video footage of a confrontation with the German registered fishing boat *Pesorsa Dos* in which the crew of the Spanish owned gill netter allegedly tried to run a rope through the *Alison Kay's* propeller, 30 miles west of Shetland.

At the time the incident was reported to Marine Scotland, the MCA as well as the German authorities.

However, because the incident was not deemed a fishery offence but one that had the potential to endanger the lives and safety of fishermen, Marine Scotland had no powers to act.

Scottish Fisheries Secretary Fergus Ewing said in response to a recent parliamentary question that the government agency had sent one of its patrol vessels to diffuse the incident.

Safety at sea is one of the roles

of the MCA but the agency's enforcement powers do not go beyond the 12-mile limit.

At the time, both the MCA and the German Federal Bureau for Maritime Casualty Investigation described the evidence circulated as "dangerous" and said it "could have had serious consequences".

The German police, meanwhile, are quoted as saying that there was no suspicion of a criminal offence under German law.

Carmichael said the Fisheries Bill was the appropriate mechanism to ensure fishermen were protected.

"We already know that we could and should have been enforcing better behaviour in fisheries even before Brexit, as recent cases have demonstrated. After we leave the transition period on the 31st of December there will be no more excuses," he said.

The Fisheries Bill, which had

its second reading in parliament earlier in September, will set the framework as to how fisheries will be managed within the four nations once the UK has left the EU.

"The government needs to think seriously about how we will practically manage our waters and enforce the law in future. There needs to be a clear mechanism for enforcement and clarity on the agency with jurisdiction.

"If ministers just sit on their hands then even after we take back control of fisheries we will still face dangerous incidents like the case of the *Pesorsa Dos*, with local fishermen the ones to suffer. That has to change."

Executive Officer with the Shetland Fishermen's Association, Simon Collins, welcomed the move to close the safety gap at sea, adding that there had been "a lot of close shaves" over the years.



ORKNEY NEWS *By Craig Taylor*

New tugs steam into Stromness

Orkney's two new tugs arrived in Stromness on September 16, after a long sea journey from Turkey.

The vessels set off 17 days earlier from the shipyard where they were built, and on arrival had completed a non-stop voyage of 3,500 nautical miles, which has taken them through the Mediterranean, past Gibraltar, along the coast of Portugal, across the Bay of Biscay, through the English Channel and up the east coast of Britain, before crossing the Pentland Firth and heading into Scapa Flow.

During their passage through the Flow, they were flanked for a time

by the three older tugs that have operated from Scapa for more than 30 years. The new tugs will replace two of the current fleet.

"All involved are delighted to see the tugs arrive in local waters," said Graham Sinclair, Chair of Orkney Islands Council's Development and Infrastructure Committee.

"Scapa Flow is internationally recognised as a pre-eminent location for a broad portfolio of maritime activity.

"The tugs will play a vital role at the heart of our harbour operations, helping us make the most of current and future marine business opportunities and maintain the



service we've provided for the Flotta Terminal over many decades."

The design and build contract for the 32-metre tugs was secured by Sanmar Shipyards of Turkey after a competitive tendering exercise. Sanmar operate a specialist tug building facility.

The tugs were named *Odin of Scapa* and *Thor of Scapa* after a

public poll and will each cost £6.1 million.

They will be handed over to Orkney Islands Council after sea trials have taken place and, until then, will carry their temporary Turkish names, *Kocacay* and *Kocacay II*.

A naming ceremony will take place at a later date.

Orkney Harbours officially launches ambitious vision for a sustainable future with £230 million Masterplan

The Orkney Harbours Masterplan Phase 1 considers five main locations on the Orkney mainland. Proposals focus on harbour infrastructure enhancements over a 20-year period that will generate jobs, additional revenue and attract new business. It represents the first step in a review of Orkney Harbour Authority-owned infrastructure to create a base for innovation and secure the long-term future for the community.

The Masterplan embraces decarbonisation and transition away from fossil fuels. The infrastructure proposals have been designed to enable Orkney to manage this transition while continuing to generate social and economic benefit from ongoing oil and gas activity.

An Outline Business Case commissioned by Orkney Marine Services found that the proposals will have a transformational impact on Orkney's economy and society, with as many as 115 new jobs created. In addition, there will be a substantial number of job opportunities during the construction phase.

Harbour users and key stakeholders were consulted from the outset to help gain an understanding of the issues, constraints and

opportunities associated with harbour infrastructure around Orkney through workshops and interviews. The range of stakeholders includes local communities, harbour users, potential funders and environmental bodies such as Scottish Natural Heritage.

Phase 1 focuses on the Scapa Deep Water Quay; Hatston Pier; Kirkwall Pier; Scapa Pier; and Stromness. Phase 2 will ultimately develop the Islands' smaller harbours and piers across the archipelago. Orkney Islands Council, the Statutory Harbour Authority, has overall responsibility for the project.

Central to the project is the unique geographical advantage of Scapa Flow, the largest natural deep-water harbour in the northern hemisphere, as the potential setting for internationally significant marine logistics to serve the new and emerging sectors including low carbon fuel transition and offshore wind developments.

Scapa Deep Water Quay is seen as the optimal location for construction and Operations & Maintenance activities associated with offshore wind, as well as for a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) storage and distribution hub. At the same time,

this infrastructure has the capability to accommodate semi-submersible platforms of all types, giving Orkney a unique UK competitive edge within the existing oil and gas market. The project team believes it could be delivered by 2025. Other proposals, such as Hatston and Kirkwall could take three or four years to deliver.

Orkney Islands Council Leader James Stockan said: "Our vision is to build a truly sustainable business that is a core economic asset for Orkney, but also a first phase in enabling a scale of investment and logistical capability for the UK which will be of international significance.

"Prime Minister Boris Johnson clearly welcomed our ambition and Orkney's potential during his recent visit to our islands. Describing as a 'fantastic idea' our vision for Orkney as a low-carbon, zero-emissions hub of innovation, with Scapa Flow at its heart.

"We believe the time is right to maximise the incredible natural assets and geography of Scapa Flow and Orkney to ensure a long-term sustainable future for our communities. We are open for business now and ready to work with potential investors and operators to

develop the significant strategic and international opportunities Scapa Flow offers.

"The Scapa Deep Water Quay proposal has been included in the Islands Deal list of projects that has received funding commitment from the Scottish and UK governments, and we are continuing to ensure that the funding earmarked for this will be secured."

Chairman of the council's Development and Infrastructure Committee and Harbour Sub Committee Graham Sinclair said: "The Masterplan seeks to build on the decades of marine expertise and activity across Orkney and create new facilities which will consolidate Orkney's position on the maritime map for the 21st century."

Harbour Master James Buck said: "Tackling decarbonisation is the strand that binds these proposals together providing infrastructure and knowledge for renewable energy developments around our waters will allow us to reach climate change targets. We will also look at the potential for net environmental gain through habitat reinstatement and enhancement."

More information is available at: www.orkneyharboursmasterplan.com.

Portable building donated to trust



The portable building in place at the Longhope Lifeboat Museum. (Credit: Mary Harris)

LONGHOPE Lifeboat Museum Trust have had a portable building donated to them, which will enable the organisation to extend a display area in the future.

Trust members said they would very much like to thank Jim Buck, Richard Wild and the Orkney Harbours Department for donating a building to the trust, as a replacement for the old one.

The trust added: "This will allow

us, in time, to extend our much needed exhibition and display area, which we hope will enrich the visual experience of visitors to our museum.

"We would also like to thank all those involved in the transportation of it, to its present location, by the museum at Brims.

"Although closed at the moment due to COVID-19 restrictions we look forward to opening again next year once it is safe to do so."



ICELAND NEWS *By Guðjón Einarsson*

Mackerel retreats from Iceland

Lately, the North East Atlantic mackerel stock has been altering its summer migration pattern. Instead of taking a westward turn towards Iceland and Greenland, as it did to a considerable degree during the period 2010-2017, most of the stock has now been heading straight north to the Norwegian Sea, avoiding Iceland.

Down to 4%

As late as in the summer of 2017, around 38% of the total mackerel stock was registered in Icelandic jurisdiction. For the next two years, the rate reduced to 17-18% but this summer it dropped to 4%, according to multinational research expeditions. Scientists at the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute of Iceland do not have an explanation for this, and point out that there have not been any dramatic changes in sea temperature or supply of food for the mackerel in Icelandic waters during this period.

Small boat fleet hard hit

The absence of mackerel from the coasts of Iceland has been especially disappointing for the small boat fleet which relies on inshore fishing. The total mackerel catch of small boats peaked in 2016 when it amounted to 8,300 tons. Then it gradually diminished to 2,000 tons last year and only eight tons were caught this summer. Many small boat owners had been gearing up for this new fishery in recent years at great expense. Their investment has now come to nothing.

66% caught in international waters

The pelagic fleet, which possesses

most of Iceland's mackerel quota, is in a better position. It can operate freely in international waters east of Iceland in a situation like this. And so, it has done. The Icelandic mackerel quota this year amounts to 168,000 tons. In early September, 140,000 tons had already been harvested, 94,000 tons (66%) of which were caught in international waters and the rest in Iceland's jurisdiction.

Important contributor

Ever since the mackerel started migrating to Iceland in 2006 this newcomer has played an important role in Iceland's economy and has become one of the country's most important fish species. This year it will generate around 25 billion Icelandic kronas, the equivalent of 150 million Euros. That is almost 10% of the total value of seafood exports.

No general agreement

Iceland shares the mackerel stock with the EU, Norway and the Faroe Islands as well as Greenland and Russia. Since 2014, the EU, Norway and the Faroe Islands have had an agreement allocating themselves 84.4% of the total allowable catch advocated by ICES (the EU gets 49.3%, Norway 22.5% and the Faroe Islands 12.6%). The rest, 15.6%, is left behind for Iceland, Greenland and Russia. Iceland has not complied with this arrangement and still claims 16.5% of the total quota, based mainly on the distribution of the stock during summer. It is too soon to predict whether the change in the current distribution of the stock will be persistent and whether it will influence future negotiations.



Mackerel fishing in Iceland

New fishing year

The first of September marks the beginning of a new fishing year in Iceland. The number of vessels with fishing quotas continues to shrink. This time 421 ships and boats were allocated a quota compared to 466 a year ago. The number of small boats with quotas is now 290 (down from 848 fifteen years ago), there are 41 stern trawlers in operation (compared to 66 in the year 2005), and the rest of the fleet numbers 90 vessels (down from 197 one and half decades ago).

"Free" fishing

In addition, small boats without fishing quotas can take advantage of a system which allows "free" fishing in the summer but only with two reels, for a limited number of days and a limited daily catch. This summer, over 600 boats took part in this fishery, sharing a quota of 11,000 tons, mostly cod.

The allocation of quotas this time around amounted to 359,000 tons, 202,000 tons of which were cod, the most valuable species.

The cod quota was slashed by 6% compared to the previous fishing year. Pelagic quotas are excluded and will be allocated later.

Largest quota holders

With 9.4% the largest quota holder is Brim in Reykjavik. Together, the five largest companies possess 32% of the total quota, the ten largest own 52%, the twenty largest hold 73%, while the fifty largest have 90% of the total quota at their disposal.

SEAN ÓG

Arriving back into Skerries pier

All images by Cathal Ó hUallacháin



NEW BOAT

NEW CYGNUS CYCLONE FOR SKERRIES SKIPPER

FACT FILE

NAME: SEAN ÓG
REGISTRATION: D688P
HOME PORT: SKERRIES
SKIPPER: EOIN DUFF
CREW: FISHING WITH 1
YARD: FM MARINE SERVICES, FITTED OUT BY G.SMYTH BOATS LTD
TYPE: CYGNUS CYCLONE
LENGTH OVERALL: 7.92M
BEAM: 3.4M
DRAUGHT: 0.9M

By Lia ní Aodha

Built by FM Marine Services Ltd and fitted out in Kilkeel by G Smyth Boats Ltd for skipper-owner Eoin Duff, *Sean Óg* D688P is the latest Cyclone to be added to Ireland's inshore fleet. Renowned for their stability at sea, the newest addition to

Skerries pier is 7.92 metres in length, with a beam of 3.4 metres and a draught of 0.9 metres.

Named after his thirteen-year-old son, Seán, the vessel is a replacement for Eoin's previous vessel, a 2012 G Smyth built GM7M of the same name which was recently bought by a buyer in Ballywalter, north of Portavogie.

Speaking to *The Skipper* on

the pier, the Skerries native, who has been fishing all of his life, explains that despite the GM7M's excellent handling abilities and efficient working platform he wanted to upgrade to a faster boat that would maximise the capacity that he had.

With plenty of deck space for working and gear, and known for their capacity for speed with their

planning hull, it's not surprising then he went for the Cygnus Cyclone.

The first Cyclone to be fitted out by G Smyth Boats, Eoin explains that since having his last boat built at the yard he and Gerry have become lifelong friends, and deciding to go to Kilkeel with his latest vessel was an easy decision.

Echoing those sentiments,

Ceara Russell of G Smyth Boats says, "Being a previous customer of G Smyth Boats, the first *Sean Óg* was a GM7M, Gerry was keen to complete this Cyclone model for Eoin."

With respect the build itself she says, "The team worked closely with Eoin to customise the vessel to his fishing style. Eoin was very much the designer of his finished vessel and all the equipment, engine and hauling systems were researched by Eoin."

Powered by a Kirwan Marine supplied Iveco FPT 67 MNT 24V with live PTO main engine, connected to a twin-disc MG5050A 2:1 ratio gearbox, powering a Clements 19" x 25.5" 5BL RH hyperform propeller, the vessel is finished to an extremely high standard throughout.

William Boylan of Skerries Marine Electric Ltd did the electrics onboard, with work also carried out for the yard by Ashley Maginnis Electrics. The vessel's pumps were supplied by Killybegs' SeaQuest Systems, the steering system by Helmsman Systems, while the hauler onboard was supplied by KK Hydraulics.

Much of the impressive wheelhouse kit onboard was supplied by Eoin himself – some off his previous vessel, with additional new kit supplied by Macduff's Echomaster Marine including a Simrad AP60 Autopilot Package with FU80 Steering Lever and PR15 Reversible Pump, and a Simrad NSS12 Evo2 Multifunction Display with HALO20+ Radar and SS75H Transducer.

After careful planning, the vessel was successfully launched early this summer, and following final fit-out and sea trials made her way home from Kilkeel to Skerries on June 24. With plenty of praise for the build team, Joel Chambers who led the build deserves special mention, says the Skerries skipper.

In terms of the oftentimes arduous processing of licensing a new vessel, Eoin is quick to

highlight that over the years and course of his boats, Pat O'Regan in the Department's Fishing Boat Licensing Division down in Clonakilty has always been extremely helpful. The new *Sean Óg* was no exception, he says, and the vessel has had plenty of time to prove her fishing credentials since arriving home.

Designed for potting, Eoin fishes alongside his brother Johnathan for crab and lobsters that are sold locally. In conjunction with speed and efficiency, comfort was at the fore of both of their minds with the new boat. Less physicality and less lifting, says Eoin. "We're not getting any younger," says Johnathan.

The roller system and self-shooting doors onboard certainly help with that, while the new landing derrick makes landing into Skerries (which is difficult at the best of times) much more straightforward, explains Eoin.

Insured by Aquabroker Ltd, safety equipment onboard was supplied by Eoin himself, alongside Kilkeel suppliers KTS Sea Safety, while much of the gear onboard was supplied by Cavanagh Nets and Swan-Net Gundry.

Reflecting on the build for the North County Dublin skipper further, the yard's Ceara Russell continues, "It was a pleasure to complete the build for Eoin, he has been a friend from the time we completed his GM7M. It was our first Cyclone and his research and planning made our job as a boat builder much easier."

"The boat has been finished to a very high standard. A lot of care has been taken to use marine grade stainless steel were able for fittings and finishes," she says. "We hope that Eoin gets another 10+ years from this vessel and if he looks to upgrade again we will make room for him at G Smyth Boats."

The Skipper team would like to wish Eoin, Johnathan, and their families every success and safe fishing with the new Sean Óg.



Plenty of deck space



L-R Johnathan and Eoin Duff

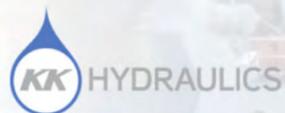


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Skipper Eoin Duff on the pier in Skerries



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New harbour basin for newbuilds ready in Thyborøn

Port also boasts new state-of-the-art discharging quay facilities

The Port of Thyborøn has its roots in fishing, and fishing remains very important for the port. Overall, the fishing industry here accounts for about half of revenue, and we're ranked third among the largest Danish fishing ports. Therefore, it's also strategically important to ensure that our port facilities continue to support fishing activities and the work of the fishermen, and that we generally keep pace with developments," explains Jesper Holt Jensen, Managing Director, Port of Thyborøn.

With fishing the pace of development is rapid, fishing vessels continue to grow in size, and new demands are being made of the industry. Therefore, the Port of Thyborøn always engages in close dialogue with those using the harbour basins before new port facilities are planned to ensure that the best possible solutions are found and that the infrastructure takes users' needs into account.

In line with this, the Port has renovated 402 quay metres in the Vestre Inderhavn basin, and in doing so has created brand-new facilities for the construction of new fishing vessels for the two companies behind Thyborøn Shipyard – Kynde & Toft A/S and Thyborøn Skibs & Motor A/S.

The water depth in the basin, which originally dates back to 1935, has been increased from four to six metres, which means that considerably larger fishing vessels than before can now be built here, and companies can now also carry out heeling and stability tests in the same basin in which the vessels are built.

"This is considerably more efficient, and reduces costs when all the work involved with a newbuild can be carried out without having to move the vessel at any stage. As a port we're very happy to contribute to cost optimisation by building the right infrastructure for the companies based here," says Jesper Holt Jensen.

In conjunction with the project, 167 metres of new quay with good vehicular access has been built for fishing activities at Isværkkaj, in particular for transit fishermen from the Netherlands and Belgium, as well as Danish fishermen landing fish for human consumption.

With a constant stream of newbuilds and non-stop work at Thyborøn for years, there were no stoppages at all during the renovation work on the harbour basin, and the first vessels have already been built and subsequently commissioned. Included among them is the recently delivered *Aalskere* (which featured in the May issue of *The Skipper*). Built



Newly renovated harbour basin for newbuilds ensures efficient workflows as the work takes place on the quay directly opposite Thyborøn Skibs & Motor A/S and Kynde & Toft A/S.

for Orkney skipper Iain Harcus and partners, the vessel was designed by Ove Kristensen and fitted out by Kynde & Toft A/S.

In total, DKK 97 million has been invested in new port facilities at Thyborøn. Where DKK 22 million has been invested in the Vestre Inderhavn basin, which is used for fitting out new fishing vessels, DKK 75 million has been invested in new state-of-the-art discharging quay facilities at the fishmeal factory TripleNine A/S.

The Port of Thyborøn has invested DKK 40 million in the new 290-metre-long quay, while TripleNine A/S has invested DKK 35 million in brand-new landing facilities. The result is a modern and highly efficient discharging plant for fishermen.

Everything has been designed with fishermen in mind to provide perfect working conditions at the port. The approach to the quay has been simplified, as the old discharging piers have been removed and replaced by 160 metres of brand-new quay.

The layout of the new quay area allows fishermen to restock their vessels and even have service work carried out at the same time as their catches are being discharged. The new quay provides easy access for maritime service companies, which can perform work during discharging operations.

The harbour basin has been deepened so that the water depth at the new quay is now nine metres. The quay has been prepared for a water depth of 10 metres as a future-proofing measure, and the Port is still working hard to have Thyborøn Kanal deepened to a depth of 10 metres during 2021.

The construction work, which



The 160 metres of new landing quay provides fishermen with plenty of space and working conditions which are second to none.

started in 2018 and was completed in summer 2020, has proceeded as planned without any stoppages, and fishermen have been able to discharge fish at the fishmeal and fish oil factory throughout the entire construction period, with production running without interruption.

The new discharging facilities have resulted in an increased pace of activity. Discharging is considerably faster today, with two parallel draining plants which can remove as much as 400 tonnes an hour. By comparison, the factory used to receive 150 tonnes an hour. The increase will make a big difference in terms of how quickly vessels can return to sea.

Supplies can also be delivered much faster. The local water company is now able to supply fresh water at an impressive 160 cubic metres an hour, while the bunker fuel supplier Nordic Marine Oil has built a new MGO

tank system that increases capacity by 1,900 cubic metres and links the existing plants together.

In addition to the 160 quay metres of discharging quay, which has been named Sperlinskaj, a further 130 metres of new quay, called Oliekaj, have been built in connection with the construction project, which can be used for bunker fuel deliveries, but also as a waiting berth for industrial fishing vessels when there are no imminent fuel deliveries on the way. Therefore, there is now plenty of space in the port for large pelagic fishing vessels in Thyborøn.

"It has required detailed planning of the building process to avoid stoppages, and we're delighted that this has succeeded in full. Today, we have a fully upgraded harbour, where even the oldest of our basins meet current needs," says the Port's Managing Director.

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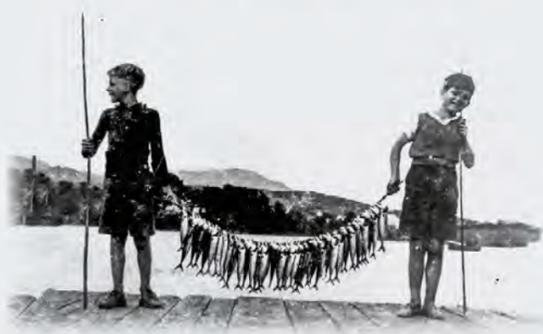
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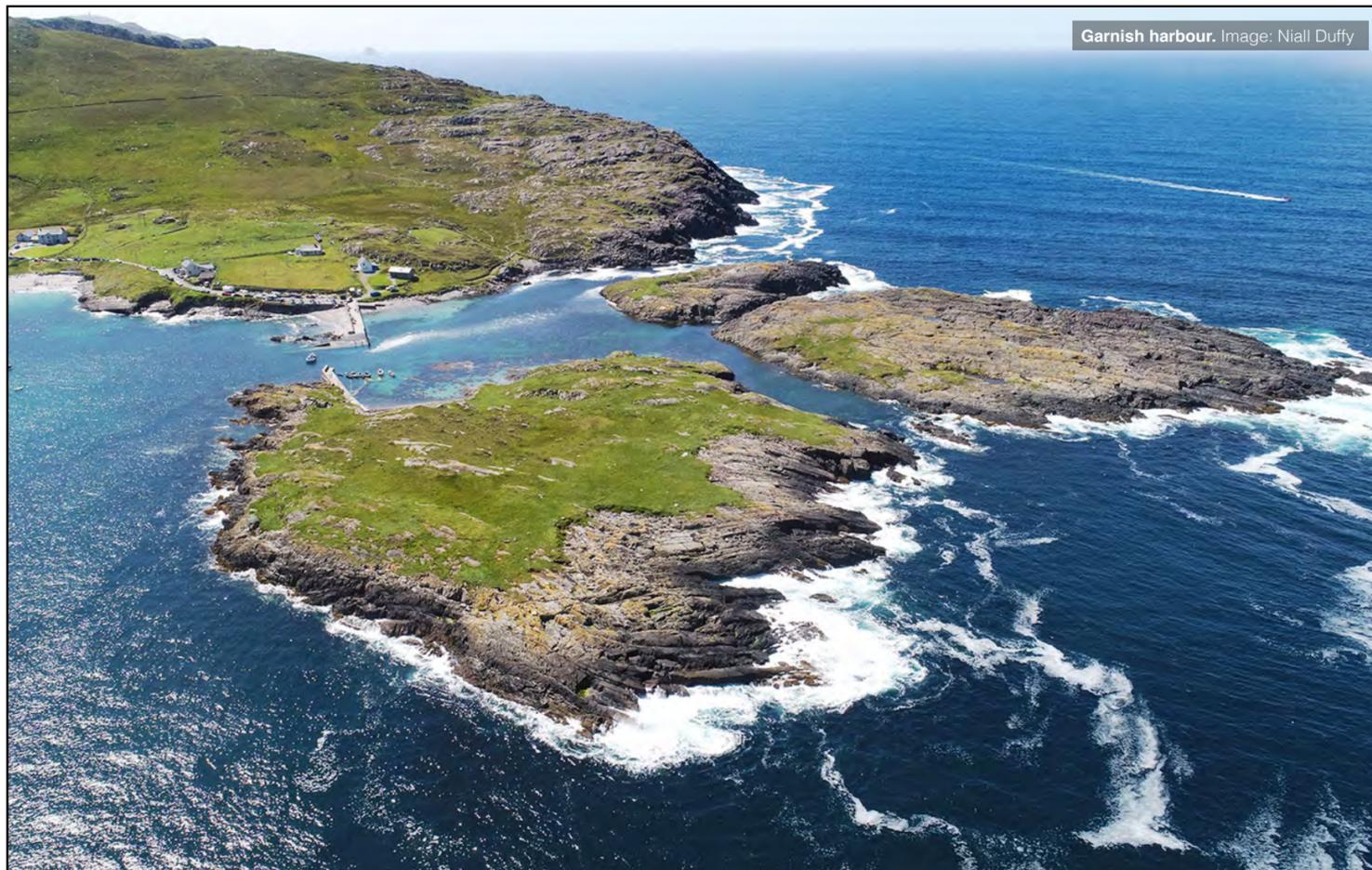


People of the Sea

A Maritime History of Beara



MARC O'SULLIVAN VALLIG



Garnish harbour. Image: Niall Duffy

“The O’Driscolls, along with a generation of fishermen that included Frank Downey, Joe Joe O’Sullivan and Mick Orpen, drove the industry to new heights, employing hundreds and spearheading the development of a new pier and harbour facilities in Castletownbere and Dinish Island.”



Big Mike Hanley on the Pier, Castletownbere (early 1970s)

People of the Sea: A Maritime History of Beara

By Niall Duffy

Marc O’Sullivan Vallig’s new book, *People of the Sea: A Maritime History of Beara*, is among one of the first to describe the evolution of the West Cork fishing community over the course of the 20th century, and up to the present day.

The book is in two parts, the first a series of essays on fishing, trade and warfare in Co Cork’s most westerly peninsula, the second a collection of interviews with local fishermen, boat owners, dealers and agents, along with representatives of the Coast Guard and RNLI.

O’Sullivan Vallig, whose family fished in Beara for generations, is the former Arts Editor of *The Irish Examiner*, and writes clearly and accessibly, favouring anecdotal history over dry academic research. His subjects include

Dónal Cam O’Sullivan Beare, exiled to Spain after the defeat of the Battle of Kinsale in 1601; the French Huguenot entrepreneur Jacques Fontaine, who ran a fish business outside Castletownbere in the early 1700s; and the five Sullivan Brothers of Waterloo, Iowa, sibilings of Beara descent who perished when their vessel, the *Juneau*, was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine in November 1942.

Where the book really comes alive is in the contemporary interviews. The first is with the Bere Island historian Ted O’Sullivan, who describes the island’s associations with the British Navy, which continued post-Independence by virtue of Berehaven’s status, along with Cobh and Lough Swilly, as a Treaty Port. It was not until 1938 that Britain relinquished control of the ports to the Irish government. As Ted O’Sullivan tells it, the British unwittingly provided cover for Irregulars vacating the Beara

peninsula during the Civil War; they took shelter in safe houses on the British side of the imaginary Red Line that partitioned the island, and escaped on coal boats serving the garrison to Leeds.

The Second World War is recalled vividly by Jerome Harrington of Blackball, at 87 the eldest interviewee, who competed with neighbouring children to collect foodstuffs and other material brought in on the tide: “In ’44, the last year of the war, I remember there were fifty-three men taking wreck on Cahermore strand. Food, biscuits, chocolates. Tobacco. Tablets of every description. All sealed up in containers.” What the beachcombers and their families did not consume themselves, they sold on; a bale of rubber could fetch as much as £10, at a time when a new bicycle might cost a pound.

Harrington, like several others in the book, refers back

to the seine boat system of fishing for mackerel, a practice that, buoyed by American demand, thrived in Beara from the 1880s to around 1924, when the market collapsed.

Thereafter, Castletownbere was largely a port of call for Spanish and French vessels until the 1950s, when Biggs of Bantry, faced with striking crews, sold their small fleet of trawlers to a group of ambitious fishermen that included the O’Driscoll brothers of Sherkin Island. The O’Driscolls, along with a generation of fishermen that included Frank Downey, Joe Joe O’Sullivan and Mick Orpen, drove the industry to new heights, employing hundreds and spearheading the development of a new pier and harbour facilities in Castletownbere and Dinish Island.

Also covered in the book is the boom at Garnish in the 1970s, when a tiny pier at the very tip of the Beara



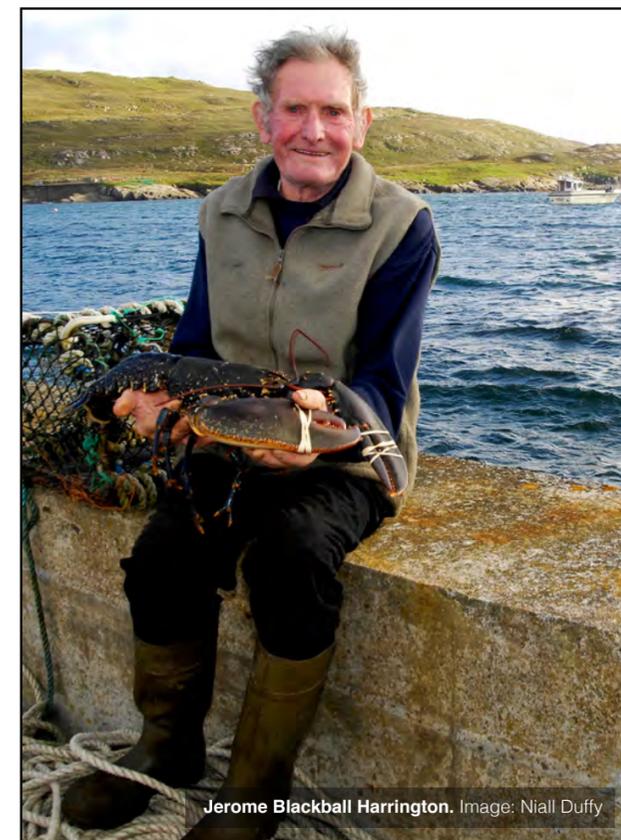
O’Driscoll brothers

peninsula became an epicentre of mackerel, salmon and lobster fishing. Fortunes were made – and often squandered – over the course of a decade, before a downturn in the viability of inshore fishing variously attributed to the exhaustion of stocks, the advent of larger vessels breaking up the shoals of fish, and/or the end of a natural ecological cycle that no longer brought the fish so close to shore.

Today, the pier at Garnish, like so many along the coast,

is almost deserted, while those larger vessels go further afield for their catch, but Castletownbere is generally acknowledged as one of the busiest fishing ports in the country and it is clear that the sea continues to provide the Beara community with the greater part of its livelihood.

People of the Sea: A Maritime History of Beara is available at bookshops and Amazon.co.uk. Signed copies (€20 plus postage) are available from marcsull@gmail.com.



Jerome Blackball Harrington. Image: Niall Duffy



Socially distanced launch ceremony. Image: James Hardisty, Yorkshire Post.

NEW BOAT

RELIANCE III

Reliance Placed On Fishing's Future!

By Niall Duffy

This month saw the latest build by Parkol Marine, *Reliance III*, launched and handed over to her new

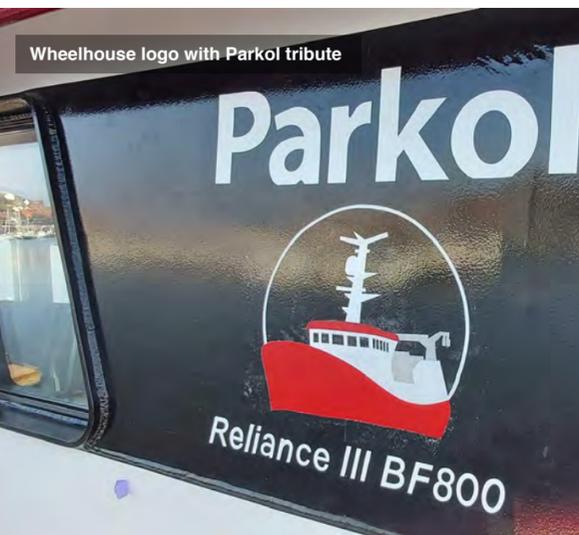
skipper/owner, Banff fisherman John Clark.

The *Reliance III* replaces the 2009 Parkol built *Reliance II* which was preceded by the original *Reliance* built by MacDuff in 1988.

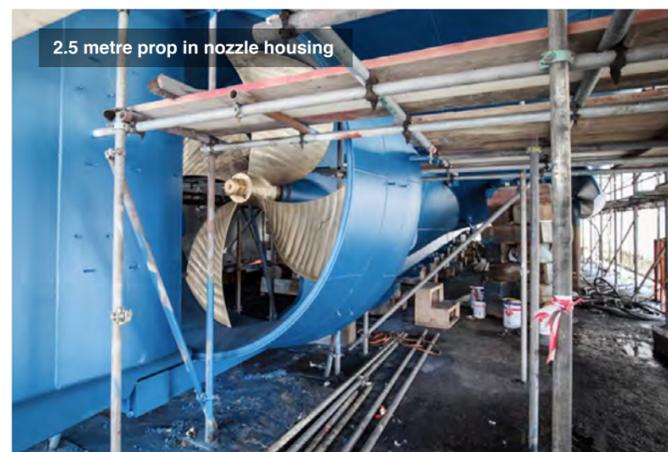
Reliance III is powered by a Mitsubishi S6R2 T2-MPTK-3 main engine (555kW @ 1,350rpm) coupled to a Reintjes WAF 474 gearbox with 7.476:1 reduction driving a 2,500mm diameter propeller

housed in a high-efficiency fixed nozzle. 2 auxiliary Mitsubishi gensets, a 6D16T & 6D24T supplied by Padmos power the onboard systems including the refrigerated 1,000 box capacity fish room and Geneglace 11/2 tonne a day ice maker installed by Premier Refrigeration.

The wheelhouse electronics were supplied and installed by Woodsons and feature 3 X 55" split screen monitors so John will not miss a minute of his beloved Formula 1 Grand Prix



Images supplied by the yard, skipper John Clark and Gareth Sparks Tolip



Congratulations to John, David, family and crew with your new Reliance III. We wish you safe and successful fishing.

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FACT FILE

NAME: MFV RELIANCE III
REGISTRATION: BF800
HOME PORT: BANFF
COMPANY: RELIANCE FISHING COMPANY
SKIPPER: JOHN CLARK
CREW: CAN ACCOMMODATE 8
YARD: PARKOL MARINE ENGINEERING LTD
DESIGNER: IAN PATON - S C MCALLISTER & CO LTD
TYPE: TWIN RIGGER
LENGTH: 16.49 METRES
REGISTERED, 20.40 M
OVERALL
BEAM: 7.7M
DRAUGHT: 4.85M

racing when at sea.

Designed as a versatile single / twin rigged trawler *Reliance III* will target whitefish and prawns using a selection of scraper trawls made and rigged by John and his son, relief skipper David Clark and a set of gear from Strachan Trawls.

John Clark worked closely with Ian Paton of SC McAllister & Co Ltd and Parkol engineers to bring to fruition some ideas gained from experience on his previous vessels to enhance stability and crew safety as part of the new build.

The *Reliance III* has a round bilge hull, transom stern, soft nose stem and bulbous bow with a more flared forepeak than her predecessor for a smoother ride in rough seas. She has a full length shelter deck and John requested that any unused free space on the decks be moulded over for comfort.

Crew safety was a primary concern with the design of a innovative new safety rail, highlighted in bright yellow paint, that encircles the top of the shelter deck and stern rails with an additional safety rail aft of the net drums. This enables

the crew to clip on their safety harnesses when shooting or hauling back and provides an extra level of security to the crew when working topside.

Another feature to the build was the placing of the 6 fuel

tanks with 2 located forward by the fish room and 4 midships by the engine room so with constant trimming as the fish room fills during a trip, the vessel will obtain optimal stability and remove any lists

during rough weather.

John also worked with his machinery supplier Thistle Marine to design a new protection mesh guard system for the boat's 33 tonnes - three barrel winch which when fitted

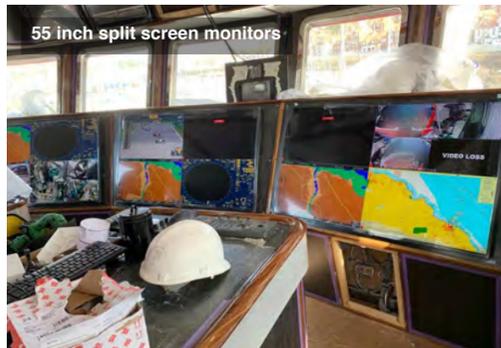


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55 inch split screen monitors



Reliance III touches water for the first time



Parkol Director, Andrew Oliver presenting a scale model of Reliance III to Skippers John and David Clark

topside reduces the possibility of crew getting entangled during fishing operations. The winches also utilise a new hydraulically actuated braking system linked to the trawl console in the wheelhouse which is a first of its kind for Thistle Marine. The dog clutches and dogs can also be removed without stripping the winch for ease of repair and or renewal.

Parkol Director and Project Manager Sally Atkinson told *The Skipper*, "During the build of Reliance III Parkol faced one of its most challenging times when the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to temporarily close the yards. However, when we could safely return to the yards we pulled out all the stops to ensure we would deliver Reliance III on time. It was a pleasure working with John and his team, and we're very proud of the feedback we have had from him. We wish him, his family and crew much success and safe fishing."

At the handover Parkol Director, Andrew Oliver presented a scale model of Reliance III, made by Ron Harker, to skippers John and David Clark.

Speaking to *The Skipper* after the launch, John Clark was full of praise for the Parkol team:

"The way the Parkol workforce reacted to the pandemic lockdown was unbelievable. From rotating the staff working on the boat and the sanitization of areas on a regular basis they kept the build on schedule when other

industries were still shut down. "They went above and beyond to give us the quality boat we dreamed of and myself, my family and crew will always be grateful for their dedication and commitment."

As a mark of his gratitude to the yard workers John commissioned a signwriter to incorporate the Parkol name into a logo on the sides of the wheelhouse and had a tribute plaque designed and cut on a CNC machine to be displayed beside the helm console.

The Skipper wishes John, David and crew good fishing and calm seas with their new venture.

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Landing sprat into Inver's Port Pier

Inshore piers like the one in Inver are vital to the continuation of the local (and often low impact) fishing communities they serve. According to Ireland's *Inshore Strategy*, however, one of the key issues facing the country's inshore sector is poor infrastructure at smaller inshore ports and harbours, which has implications for the profitability, efficiency, safety and attractiveness of the sector. Sadly, Inver is no different and needs investment, with local fishermen looking for a new slip and to have their pier upgraded. (Photo Credit: Gary Kennedy)

Further FLAG grant awards announced

On September 21, the Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue T.D., announced the award of further grants worth €1.2 million to 56 local community groups and micro enterprises by the seven Fisheries Local Action Groups established under Ireland's European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Programme.

Announcing the grants McConalogue said, "I am delighted to announce today a further 56 coastal projects to benefit from EMFF funding through the seven Fisheries Local Action Groups established as part of my Department's EMFF Programme supporting the development of our seafood sector and coastal communities. These latest grant awards mean

a total of €2.7 million FLAG funding has been awarded this year alone to 155 coastal projects".

The Minister added: "Many of the projects benefitting from EMFF FLAG funding are non-commercial projects benefitting the whole community in their coastal area. Such projects can often secure up to 80% of the project cost, making a real difference to the viability of such projects. This is just one of the ways in which my Department's EMFF Programme is making a real difference for our coastal communities".

Whether or not the grants make a real difference to those fishing in those communities is another question, however. Pointing to the breakdown of individual grants announced at

the end of July by then Minister for the Marine Dara Calleary, the National Inshore Fishermen's Association and Organisation were quick to question the direction in which funding was being funnelled "at a time of unprecedented crisis for the fishing industry for which it is getting very little or no meaningful support".

Is there anything more meaningful for the catching sector in the detail of the individual grants announced this morning? Barring a couple, a quick glance the list of awards suggests otherwise... Details of the individual grant awards can be found by at <https://bit.ly/2G11Lhu>

Details of the FLAG scheme and how to apply can be found at www.bim.ie/schemes/

Irish 'real-time' fisheries chart now available

Skippers and crew working on the 2,022 registered fishing vessels in Ireland can now access an interactive digital fisheries chart which provides guidance on a vast number of conservation and fisheries management regulations which shape their day to day activities.

The chart, developed by BIM in partnership with the Marine Institute and the Sea Fisheries Protection Agency (SFPA) and funded under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund provides guidance on European and national regulations concerning closed areas, mesh size and restrictions on the use of certain fishing gears.

The online version of the fisheries management chart can be accessed at www.fisheriesmanagementchart.ie. The print format of the Fisheries Management Chart produced annually, will continue to be distributed and is available to download from www.bim.ie.



Online Fisheries Management Chart with real-time information on quotas and regulations now in use by industry. Pictured L-R: Niall Connolly, MFV Patrick C and Val Reilly using the fisheries management chart online, October 2019

NEWS in brief

Aquaculture workshop moves online

The BIM aquaculture workshop, run by aquaculture accelerator Hatch and funded under the EMFF, is taking place in October and will be held entirely online. Fifteen participants from 10 Irish-based companies have been selected and will have access to investors, fin-tech and other specialists throughout the workshop.

The third such workshop to take place since 2018, it is hoped companies participating, which cover areas as diverse as sea lice treatment, aeration technology and blockchain analysis, will in time provide products and services to Ireland's aquaculture sector leading to greater efficiencies and profitability.

Two New Directors Announced at BIM

Kevin Honan has been appointed as new Director of Development and Innovation Services at BIM. Holding a B.Sc. (Mgmt.) from Trinity College Dublin, and an Advanced Diploma in Marketing Techniques from Technological University Dublin, Kevin has a wealth of experience in developing businesses and introducing commercially successful innovation with Boyne Valley Foods and C&C Group.

Dominic Rihan has been appointed as new Director of Economic and Strategic Services. Working in BIM for 30 years in the fields of fishing gear technology, stakeholder engagement and provision of policy support and advice to Government and the seafood industry, Dominic also spent 5 years working in DG MARE.

Discrimination or forgotten entirely?

Fishermen and women applying for the Future Growth Scheme were left scratching their heads last month when they found there was no code applicable to them on the online application form for the scheme, currently one of the main COVID support schemes available to SMEs (and for primary seafood producers we know there aren't many).

Did this mean they were ineligible to apply? Apparently not. However, an administrative error meant that Ireland's catching sector had fallen off the list of codes entirely. In response to a query from *The Skipper* a spokesperson for the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation said code listings to include fisheries had been compiled and would become live on the application form in the next few days. The SBCI website, according to the Department of the Marine, has since "been updated to more accurately reflect the eligibility of fishers for this long term investment finance."

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MONTHLY COMPETITION

Send in your best fishing related photo and you could win a *Sotra Fleece* by Guy Cotten plus the chance to win overnight accommodation at the Irish Skipper Expo 2021.

The subject of the picture must be related to the Fishing Industry (your vessel, your catch, a stormy day at sea...etc). Each month, the best photo will be published in The Skipper and the winner will receive a prize, courtesy of Swan Net Gundry Ltd and Guy Cotten. Images sent in might also be used in other areas of the magazine if suitable.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES: Simply get your phones and cameras out, and send us your hi-res photos by email to editorial@maramedia.ie and don't forget to mention your name and details, as well as a brief description of the scene depicted. The photos must be taken by the person sending it to us, and it is understood that they are free of copyrights.

SEPTEMBER WINNER: ANDREW REID

SOMEWHERE UNDER THE RAINBOW. PATHWAY PD165 AND TAIT'S FR 229 TIED UP IN PETERHEAD.

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New crew geared up and ready to go. Scene from Portavogie harbour circa 1920s. Image courtesy of Dick James



True Token, built in 1965 for David Hugh Adair and sons of Portavogie, at Nobles, Girvan. Image courtesy of Leslie Campbell



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The Archives - OCTOBER 1987

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TRAGIC LOSS

IT IS with deep regret that we record the loss of the four fishermen from Glengad in the drowning tragedy off Malin Head. The four were members of a highly respected family in the area. Patrick McDaid (32) and cousin David McDaid (27) were buried on 22nd of September, but several days search by a large fleet failed to locate the bodies of Patrick's father, Barney McDaid, and brother, Charley McDaid (22). Inadequate harbours in the area compel the use of small boats which are often not adequate

FRENCH FEAR IRISH ARRESTS

SO CONCERNED are the French about the number of arrests of their vessels off the Irish coast that an Irish agent has been appointed to handle the affairs of those who find themselves in this situation. Mr Patrick MacCarthy, "a lawyer who has a good knowledge of French," according to the French newspaper "Le Telegramme", has been appointed as Irish mediator on their behalf by a delegation of Breton fishing organisations. By this, it is hoped to improve communication, and reduce legal difficulties with the Irish authorities as experienced by Breton vessels in the past, the report states. Mr MacCarthy is said to be a regular visitor to the south Finistere region, and is president of the twinning committee between the towns of Skibbereen and Penmarch. The fishing organisations are also issuing documents outlining the procedures to be followed by French skippers, in the case of arrest.

I.F.O. TO MEET
The Irish Fishermen's Organisation will hold its annual general meeting at 2.30 p.m. in the Burlington Hotel, Sussex Road, Dublin, on October 3rd. All paid up members are welcome.

THE NEPTUNE RETURNS WITH A BIGGER SPLASH



NOW GALWAY STAKES CLAIM TO INSTITUTE

Season poor for inshore salmon men

Cork's demand challenged

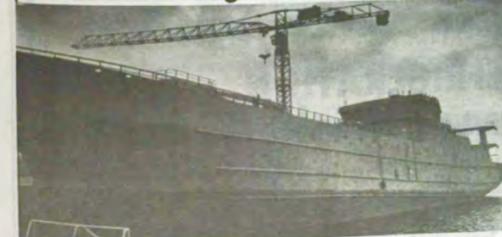
WHILE inshore fishermen had a poor salmon season in the north-west, boats working further offshore are reported to have had excellent catches. Many of the smaller boats changed over early to lobster and crab, as the lobster prices all round the coast have been at very high. Not for the bigger boats though, many of them worked up to 100 miles off the north coast. One pair of boats — working in twos to allow transport of fish back to port as well as having the gear constantly monitored — is said to have grossed over IRE80,000 on the offshore salmon stocks. When the season wound up salmon were fetching £2.99 per lb.

FOLLOWING closely on the heels of Cork's claim to have the planned Marine Research and Technology Institute located in the south, comes a new claim made in the form of a video from Udaras Na Gaeltachta setting out Galway's case. "Galway — Sea Centre of Ireland" is the title of this presentation. University College, Galway, is put in the limelight by the production which features an interview with college president Dr. Colm O hEocha, who outlines the work done by the 50 people in his organisation who are presently engaged in marine related research. Last year the college spent £1.2 million in total in this area. Udaras, the development authority for the Irish-speaking areas, is not shy about telling viewers about their success in attracting fish-farming projects to the area. Much of the argument for the Galway siting of the new institute is related to the presence there of 14 salmon farms and 40 separate shellfish farms.

horse, but despite this failing, the producers certainly can be given credit for the imagination shown in putting their case forward. At the end we are told that Galway has the tradition, experience, expertise and commitment to merit the siting of the new institute in the city of the tribes. Six local bodies came together to represent Cork's strong claim to site the institute.

The Neptune makes a big splash after lengthening and alteration work at the Dutch yard Niestern Sander B.V. near Groningen. Similar work was carried out on the Golden Rose, another Co. Donegal boat. Niestern is a member of Conoship, a partnership of 12 shipyards in the north of Holland. Skippers John Oglesby and John Gallagher both had their vessels lengthened by 9.2 metres. The relaunched trawlers have new refrigerated seawater tanks fitted, three in all, giving a total capacity of 310 cubic metres per boat. The existing R.S.W. tanks were converted to dry holds which will have chilled storage capacity for over 1000 boxes. Both the R.S.W. and dry chilling plant were supplied by Promac through Barry Electronics Ltd. New sounders and radio equipment were also supplied by Barry Electronics.

It's too long for the lens!



The 300-foot trawler Veronica which is now being fitted out in Norway for Kevin McHugh. More photographs on page 9.

BRIEF MENTION
Although fishing does get a brief mention in the video it doesn't get the merit it deserves. The viewer is shown the packaging of crab in a local processing plant and one is told that the west coast has vast stocks of non quota horse mackerel and blue whiting. Nevertheless, the accent is from beginning to end is primarily on farming rather than fishing. The fisherman couldn't be blamed for thinking that this is putting the cart before the

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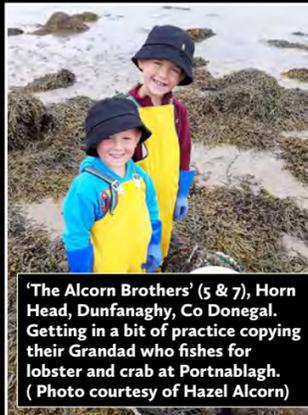
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PJ Ellis (9) sorting Cockles on the Jessica Lee, Dundalk Bay. (Photo courtesy of Gavin Ellis)



The Conlon's on their Aisling II heading out from Spiddal. (Image courtesy of Niall Conlon)



'The Alcorn Brothers' (5 & 7), Horn Head, Dunfanaghy, Co Donegal. Getting in a bit of practice copying their Grandad who fishes for lobster and crab at Portnablagh. (Photo courtesy of Hazel Alcorn)



George Anderson, Adenia skipper meets with Kristofer Reiten, Vikomar AS Norway after landing herring.



Western Viking in Frederikshavn, Denmark. (Credit: Martin Doherty)



Ailbhe Marie SO 614 landing into Bunbeg harbour. (Credit: Seamus Greene)

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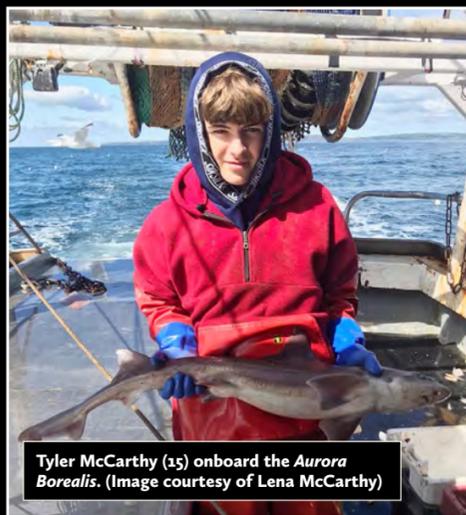
4.9kg male lobster caught west of Duck Island, Co Galway on September 6 by Sorcha Ridge (in picture) and Richard McDonagh.



Audacious fishing at the Smalls. (Credit: Patrick Smith)



Seán Óg O'Driscoll's (Schull) recently purchased Shauna Belle. (Credit: Pierce O'Driscoll)



Tyler McCarthy (15) onboard the Aurora Borealis. (Image courtesy of Lena McCarthy)

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Annagry, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.
(Photocopies not accepted).

ACROSS

1. Hosted (TV show)
5. Cocktail, ... colada
7. Small pool
8. Storms
9. Is that so?
12. Boss
15. Torrent
19. Paris' ... Tower
21. Speaking unclearly
22. Masterpiece, ... Lisa
23. Length unit
24. Hogwash

DOWN

1. Pickled buds
2. Cycle (bike)
3. Shabby
4. Reduce in rank
5. Irritated
6. Allocate
10. Intends
11. Tibet's Dalai ...
12. Fuss, ... & cry
13. Italian sparkling wine
14. Bungle
15. Placidly
16. Searched every inch of
17. Pattern
18. Gratify
19. Encourage (3,2)
20. Charmer, ... fatale

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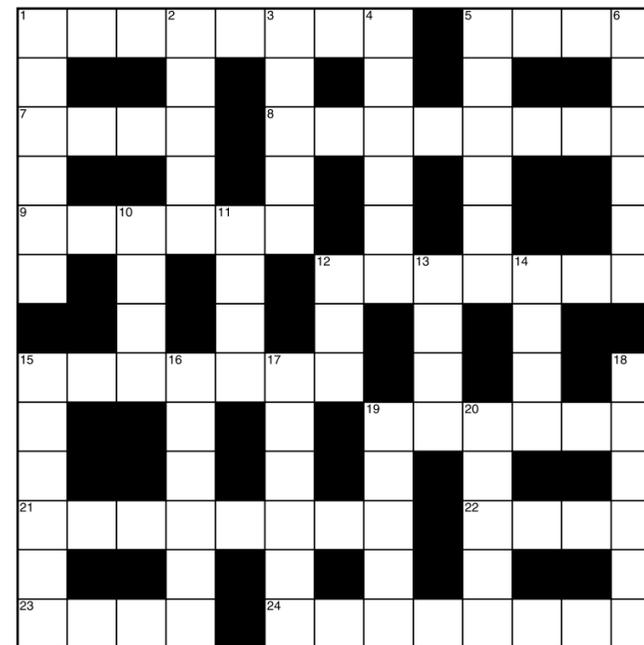
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IMPORTANT PLEASE INDICATE JACKET SIZE:
SMALL ■ MEDIUM ■ LARGE ■ XL ■ 2XL ■



*Failure to select jacket size will result in void entry

SEPTEMBER SOLUTION

D	E	M	A	N	D	S	M	O	B	S	
I	R	B	U	N	T	I	E	A			
T	U	B	A	L	R	M	O	B	Y		
T		T	L	E	A	V	E	Y			
I	M	P	E	L	S	I	N	A	I	L	
E											
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V	N	C									
L	E	V	Y	R	M	O	B	I	L	E	
R	B	R	A	K	E	I					
T	A	R	O	T	R	T	O	M	B		
G											
S	E	X	Y	H	L	A	Y	O	U	T	

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SHANE MC ALEER,
BALBRIGGAN, DUBLIN
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MICHAEL SAUCY O'MAHONY
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Fishermen Scientists During COVID



As COVID-19 impacts fishing and markets worldwide it also has impacted the collection of fisheries scientific data. Many nations across the world have reduced levels of scientific sampling and some have halted sampling completely because of health and safety limitations. In Ireland, the industry and the fisheries scientists are working together to reduce as much as possible the negative impacts of COVID-19 on the scientific data collected.

Following COVID-19 restrictions the Marine Institute had to suspend the At-Sea Sampling Program, where scientists join fishing vessels to sample the catch during a fishing trip (>24hrs). To mitigate for the loss of data associated with the suspension of this programme the Marine Institute and the Irish fishing industry have developed an At-Sea Self Sampling program, where the skippers and crews collect data and samples from a subset of hauls. On landing Marine Institute staff collect, measure and input the data for later analysis.

“This new At-Sea Self Sampling Program is a great initiative by the Irish fleet as it ensures that we have some at-sea data where we would have zero due to COVID-19” says Macdara Ó Cuaig, Fisheries Liaison Team Leader, Marine Institute, “it is great that the skippers and crew can continue to provide useful data in these strained times. The skippers are very aware of the need for appropriate data to help assess the stocks and

wish to help plug possible gaps where they are emerging. We are very grateful for the help to date and hope to expand on this.”

It is not only at sea where the fishing sector is working to mitigate for COVID-19 related loss of data, processors ashore have also been working hard with the Marine Institute to ensure that sampling of fish/shellfish can be carried out safely ashore. Processors have facilitated out of hours sampling for scientists and other initiatives to reduce possible social contacts during sample collection. While the close co-operation of the industry is not new to scientific data collection in Ireland, the quick implementation of COVID-19 mitigation measures and the adaptive response highlights the importance of this relationship.

“We all wish to manage our resources in a sustainable way and fishermen and scientist collaborating like this is essential in order to collect the appropriate data to achieve this”, says Ó Cuaig. The Marine Institute scientists are working with international colleagues through ICES to track the inevitable data gaps that are emerging during this crisis. The full extent and implications of this reduction in data collection on stock assessment and advice will not be fully known until next year, when the stock assessments will be carried out using the 2020 data. While COVID-19 has been difficult for us all, the collaborative response of Irish fishermen and scientists is a reflection of the ability of the industry to adapt in order to safeguard our future.

Ag Méadú Eolas Muirí
Ag Soláthair Seirbhísí Mara

Building Ocean Knowledge
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Foras na Mara
Marine Institute

So long and thanks for all the fish...



Lia ní Aodha and Niall Duffy

As some of you will already be aware, for the next couple of months *The Skipper's* (at this stage) editor-for-life, Niall Duffy will be back at the helm, while Lia heads off to catch up on some reading... and whatever else maternity leave may entail.

Thanks to all for their support,

contributions and assistance in putting the last 20 issues of *The Skipper* together. No doubt, you'll be in capable hands with Mr Duffy, who, on account of a poor year's fishing, needs a good (albeit temporary) home for the winter.

And so, until next year, so long and thanks for all the fish...

BE SAFE AT SEA - WEAR YOUR PFD

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12-13th

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