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# Irish Dragon Boat Association NEWSLETTER



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Edition 14

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## IRISH DRAGON BOAT ASSOCIATION LIMITED

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## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR



**Julie Doyle**  
Editor / IDBA Chairman

In Edition 14 we will hear some event reports from the Donegal Dragons, Dublin Vikings and Plurabelle Paddlers as they visit Liverpool, London and Florence accordingly. Also catch up with the facts from the BIGGEST dragon boat event ever, the IDBF Club Crew World Championships held in Szeged, Hungary in July 2018.

Are you up to date with all our social media "handles"? Check out the end of the newsletter for all our links. The social media team (Dympna & myself) will keep you abreast of the goings on.

Rumour has it a new club is on the horizon – The Wicklow Pirates!

Our next edition will be out before the year end as we have lots to update you with. Remember we are always looking for articles!

## 2 EVENTS/2 COUNTRIES/2 DAYS



The Donegal Dragons team in Athy, Co Kildare

Donegal Dragons recently enjoyed an incredible weekend of racing with participants attending regattas in Athy, Ireland and in Liverpool in the UK.

On Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> May the team of 18 women from Donegal travelled to Athy to take part in the Irish Dragon Boat Association's regatta on the River Barrow. This was very competitive event with teams from across Ireland taking part. Donegal Dragons finished a very respectable fifth in the Women's Competition just missing out on a place in the final.

After racing finished in Athy, six club members flew to Liverpool to take part in the Flowers and Dragons Regatta on Bank Holiday Monday. They joined forces with members of other clubs including Pool of Life, Liverpool, Pink Champagne, Bournemouth and Paddlers for Life, Windermere. The team were delighted to bring home some silverware, winning the Best International category for the second time.



The Donegal Dragons and Friends team which won the Best International category at the Liverpool Flowers and Dragons Regatta

Among those to take part in the Liverpool Regatta was Donegal Journalist Siobhan McNamara. She said "There was a great atmosphere of celebration, but also a day of very competitive racing. Our own Donegal Dragons and Friends team was made up of paddlers from four different clubs who had never even met, but we pulled together well, learned from each other and improved significantly from one race to the next.



“Best of all, many new friendships were forged. This sport is full of amazing people who have overcome huge challenges in their lives, people who inspire each other, who help each other to do the best they can and achieve far more than they ever thought possible. This was a very special regatta and it was a privilege to take part.”

It was a particularly special weekend for Dr. Bev Huss who completed her Race Helm training and is now certified to carry out the role of dragon boat Race Helm at international level.

*Siobhan McNamara – Donegal Dragons*



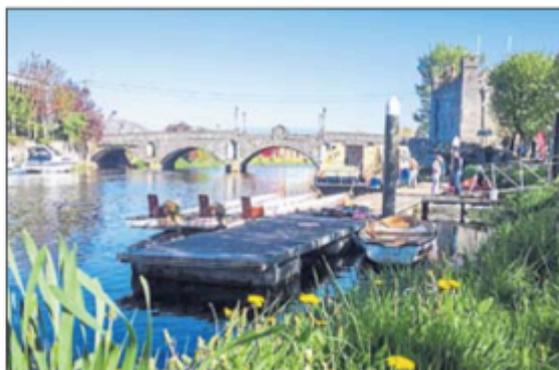
Deborah and Sandra staying hydrated between races



Back: Eimear Hayden, Michelle Ward, Sandra Perry, Jackie Rooney. Front: Mary Jo Stewart, Nuala Phillips



Dragon boat racing underway in the Albert Dock, Liverpool



The River Barrow in Athy, Co Kildare on Regatta day

**BOATS ALL ROUND**

It is not every day that an Association the size of ours can boast the arrival of 6 brand new dragon boats to Ireland. Congratulations to Lagan Dragons, Plurabelle Paddlers, Carlow Dragon Boat Club, Shannon Paddlers and Athy Dragon Boat Club on your new arrivals this spring.

Some of the clubs were awarded funding in the 2017 Sports Capital Programme run by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sports which allowed them to provide equipment to develop their clubs in 2018.

The boats are probably the biggest outlay for most clubs so these Government grants are invaluable.



## DUBLIN VIKINGS DO LONDON

"Many people die at twenty five and aren't buried until they are seventy five" - a famous quote attributed to Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding fathers of the United States of America.

Participating in an international Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival in London certainly rejuvenates those of us who can only look back on their youthful days with fondness. Based in Ireland, where dragon boating is still in its infancy in terms of participation numbers, it is a pleasure to come to London and participate with up to 50 other teams.

As part of the Dublin Vikings contingent, we came to London on the eve of the festival. To familiarise ourselves with the venue, we arrived around lunchtime for our practice. Despite the festival was not starting until the following day, there was an army of volunteers already assembling the various tents and gazebos. It's very easy when you turn up for a festival on the day, and are focused on your own performance, to take for granted all the organisation work that goes on in the background. Getting all the sponsors involved, organising the publicity across social media, getting all the relevant people together, and arranging for all the boats/buoyancy aids/paddles to be available is no easy task.

We woke up to a clear blue sky on the morning of the regatta. Water and sunblock were to be the most sought after commodities this day! Dragon boating may be a water sport, but having a bit of sun between races is always welcome and helps set a great atmosphere.

The venue was crowded with excited people. All the gazebos were now filled with the different sponsors and charities discussing their products and services to a captive audience. We were quickly directed to what can only be described as a competitor's village - a large tent containing anything up to 30 tables for all the teams to set up camp and comingle.



*Boat Marshalling at the London Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival*

Close to the competitor's village, there was a food market where you could purchase Indian, Chinese, Indonesian, Thai and other asian cuisine. Not to mention there were stalls selling crepes and ice cream for those needing a dessert!

In addition, to create a real festival atmosphere, there was a temporary stage providing entertainment to all festival goers. Starting off with some asian-themed entertainment like tai-chi and self-defense in the morning, it would later become the centre for song and dance in the afternoon.

When it came to racing, one can't help but be impressed by the set-up. There were no fewer than eight dragon boats available to participants. Each race comprised of four boats, and any of these four boats could be a charity, corporate or professional team. As one race would finish, the next four boats would be lining up at the start line for the next race. By ensuring that every race consisted of four boats, it made races very competitive and the efficiency achieved by having one race ready to begin as a second finished helped to reduce the waiting time between races.

Furthermore, the venue benefits from having a spectator area that spans the whole length of the race, which helps create a great atmosphere for participants and spectators alike.

The Vikings came second in the professional category, but it must be said on a day like this, with so many people attending and participating, the real winners were the organisers.

To end with another quote from Benjamin Franklin, "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." Safe to say, that such was the level of preparation that went into this regatta, failure was never on the cards!

*Gerry Callaghan – Dublin Vikings*



*Dublin Vikings in Boat No. 1*



*The Team*

## **IBCPC DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL, FLORENCE 2018**

'This is a participatory festival,' we were told. 'The emphasis is not on competition.' The last time we heard that was also in Florence and when we won at a festival there two years ago, we decided that while participation is good, winning is even better!

The Plurabelle Paddlers were one of four teams from the island of Ireland taking part in the IBCPC Festival in Florence in July. Held every four years, it is one of the biggest international events in all our calendars and it was great to see so many people from Ireland taking part.

The atmosphere in the team village along the Arno was fantastic. A very well organised festival, with 129 teams and over 4,000 people taking part, everything had to run on time. We were positioned at one end of the race village with the Wild Atlantic Warriors across the road, the Three Sisters next door and the Lagan Dragons were neighbours too.

We took the top place in our race on Sunday morning and the tiny time differences between all the teams showed how fiercely we fought to win. Overall, we worked out through the published race results, that the Plurabelle Paddlers got third place out of the 32 European teams behind two home/Italian crews.



*BCS Crews Racing on the Arno River*

Plurabelle Paddlers also had members on the Melbourne Dambusters composite team and the Shannon Dragons had members on the Dragon Boat Atlanta, Steel Magnolias composite team. A big change from four years ago when there was only one team from Ireland, made up of paddlers from all over the country. If ever one needed convincing that dragon boating is the fastest growing water sport in the world, the IBCPC festival in Florence proved it.



*Plurabelle Paddlers on Route to Florence*

And in the world of dragon boating for breast cancer survivors, the celebrity everyone wants to meet is Dr Don McKenzie who started it all in Canada, twenty years ago. The Plurabelles were thrilled he came by our tent, we got a group photo and presented him with our club memoir, where of course he gets a mention.

In between our practice session, our races, the pink parade, opening ceremony, Congress and various meetings we still found time to swap race tops, club badges and make many new friends. Some of those new friends have already been to our training session at the Grand Canal Docks and paddled with us.

All the hard training paid off for us - the slog through the winter, the gym sessions, the pilates, the extra coaching (thanks Julie), the team coaching (thanks Rosemary Phelan) and the huge task of fundraising for the trip all were worthwhile. And despite being absolutely flattened by the races, the heat and the ever-present mosquitoes, there was mention of piggy banks being dusted off for the next festival in four years' time. Wonder where that will be?

*Mairéad Ní Nuadháin, Plurabelle Paddlers*



*Opening Ceremony of the IBCPC Participatory Dragon Boat Festival - Florence, Italy 2018*

## **CLUB CREW WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS, SZEGED 2018**

This past July saw the the 11<sup>th</sup> IDBF Club Crew World Championships held in Szeged, Hungary – The biggest dragon boat event EVER held. Well done to Peter Jarosi and his team from the Hungarian Dragon Boat Federation for pulling it altogether along with the International Dragon Boat Federation.

The Event was circa 60% of the size of a summer Olympic Games; the facts will blow your mind!!

- 6000+ Athletes from 30 nations
- 62 International Race Officials
- 6 days of racing = 60 hours of racing
- 451 Races
- 119 Finals
- 6732 Medals were awarded



*Are You Ready? Attention! Go! Electronic starting buckets made starting easy, especially with 8 boats.*



Birds Eye View from the Finishing Tower



The Flags of the Championships



The Medals

**DATES FOR THE DIARY**



**30<sup>th</sup> November – 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2018**  
**EDBF Dragon Boat Forum**  
 Seville, Spain

**25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> July 2019**  
**18<sup>th</sup> EDBF European Club Crew Championships**  
 Seville, Spain

**20<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> August 2019**  
**14<sup>th</sup> IDBF World Nations Championships**  
 Pattaya, Thailand

The IDBA event dates to be confirmed in Jan 2019.

## THE BARROW AWARDS SCHEME 2018

We are delighted to announce that the Irish Dragon Boat Association has won 2nd place in the Commercial Operators section of The Barrow Awards Scheme 2018. The Awards are organised by Carlow Tourism, Kildare Tourism, Kilkenny Tourism, Laois Tourism and Wexford Tourism and supported by the County Councils of Carlow Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois and Wexford, Waterways Ireland and the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland.

The objective of this annual competition is to focus attention on the many aspects and assets of this important Waterway, the River Barrow and its adjacent environs. Given the investment of commercial operators in the development of the river a new category was introduced in 2014 to represent their interests.



## IT IS ALL ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA!

*Don't forget to follow us on social media.*



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Irish Dragon Boat Association



*Twitter:*

IDBA@IrishDragonBoat



*Instagram:*

Irishdragonboat



*Website:*

[www.dragonboat.ie](http://www.dragonboat.ie)

We would like to issue our Newsletter 3 times a year, so if you have any news, articles or dragon boat photos you would like to contribute to the next edition, please email the Editor – Julie Doyle at [info@dragonboat.ie](mailto:info@dragonboat.ie).