



# FOYNES YACHT CLUB

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## FYC AGM 2012 – Commodores Report – December 7<sup>th</sup> 2012

In preparing for our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we said that we would concentrate on the existing range of activities and seek to make the jubilee year one during which a special effort was made to make each activity more effective, more enjoyable and more widely supported. In this report I review how well we did in this regard and point out, where appropriate, how these activities support the overall strategic direction of the club.

Of course we did make one worthwhile exception to this approach at the very start of the season; a special Ceremony was held to honour the memory of all Foynes Yacht Club deceased members. This was superbly well organised by the Social Committee and very well received by all who attended. The important theme of the evening was to acknowledge that we, the current membership, are the guardians of a great legacy from 50 years of hard work, enthusiasm and achievement. It was a great opportunity to meet with the families of past members, renew some old connections and to reminisce over the old photographs and memorabilia that were on view that night.

After a flurry of activity preparing for Lift-In, all boats were in the water in mid April and the focus was immediately on the annual cruise to Limerick to support the Mayfest. This year, we were joined by Motor Cruising Clubs from upriver and together we enjoyed a Shannon Development sponsored reception in the Clarion and welcomed by the Deputy Lord Mayor himself. It is very important for the club to continue to foster a strong connection with Limerick in this fashion and this particular cruise has become a favourite will all cruising members.

The May Series followed and Liam has given good account of the level of participation. The Competent Crew training scheme, a new initiative this year, saw to it that new members were allocated crew positions and they were given good experience by their respective skippers. This idea attracted over 10 new members to the club and is a key strategy for the coming years.

Commodore's day was held on the third Sunday of the series. A special feature of this was the presentation of commemorative medallions to past Commodores of the club. It was a good family day, stretching into the evening, enjoyed by all and once again, it was well organised by the social committee. My abiding memory will be our own X-Factor style 'sing-off' between past commodores Floyd and Moroney as they raised the roof with a top class rendition of "There is an Isle".

The Munster Mermaids in the past had struggled to attract boats from Dublin. 2012 will go down as the year that this particular problem was sorted. A strategic decision to move it to the June weekend was a key factor in attracting a record number of 13 Dublin boats. The catering and entertainment was first class and the Dublin Bay Mermaid Association deemed the event a great success. In a post event review, our own committee identified key improvements which will be in place next year in relation to race organisation and safety management. The challenge for the fleet in 2013 will be to increase the number of Mermaids on the water and to keep the momentum going with the Dublin clubs to attract a similar number next year.

Of course, in the midst of all this racing the social committee managed to once again throw a parade float together for the Irish Coffee Festival. It was great fun and gave all involved a chance to show their theatrical side as well as showing the club's support for local community events. Between the festival and the 'Munsters', it was all a bit hectic that weekend and it was great to get back to work on the Tuesday for a rest.

As Peadar has detailed, the sailing school has had another good year with attendance levels up. Rob was back with us again and Eoin McGrath joins his father at Senior Instructor level for sailing. We are also particularly delighted to have Ciara and Brendan qualified to Sailing Instructor level; evidence that the school is now growing its own instructors and leaders for the future. A pilot effort to get a Sunday morning junior sailing routine going is currently going well with a small and hardy gang turning up each week. Youth development has to be a key club strategy for the future and next year we should learn from the Winter pilot idea and get regular youth activity going throughout the season.

Of course the special event for cruiser racing to mark our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary was the hosting of WIORA 2012. Last hosted by our club in 1998, a huge amount of work went into the promotion, planning and running of the championship and our efforts were rewarded with a

turnout of 28 boats on the starting lines for the first day. The following days provided a wonderful spectacle of yacht racing on the estuary and some great social evenings in the clubhouse afterwards. We also broke new ground in WIORA history by attracting 4 boats from the Lough Derg to take part. We have since received congratulations from the visiting clubs and from the WIORA committee and all involved deserve to be very proud of this achievement. The fact that both overall prizes were coveted by the home club was also satisfying and I would like to offer special congratulations to the skippers and crews Joyrider and Alpara for their great performances.

Notwithstanding this overall success, the committee carried out a constructive review of the event and have listed specific improvement ideas, should the event return in the future to our club. There is no reason to expect why this should not happen in the coming years. It is important to note that the WIORA was not just significant as a "one-off" Jubilee event. Thirteen yachts from Foynes competed and there has been an overall increase in club racing activity since. We need to build on this and convince other cruiser skippers in the Club to participate more regularly in club racing. We should aim to show up in Fenit next year with an impressive number of yachts and promote further our reputation as an active and enthusiastic cruiser sailing fleet.

After an earlier than usual lift-out in mid October due to tidal conditions, the season was rounded off by a great night out at the Laying Up Supper. The clubhouse was warm and decorated tastefully and was certainly looking its best. A special thanks is due to the Social Committee for organising the night and for adding so many special touches to the evening.

And so that was our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year. Returning to my opening remarks, I think we achieved our objective of increasing participation rates across the full range of our activities and we have established a good base to set forth into our second half century. Our finances are in order for sure but we have to take note of the 10% reduction in subscription income. While this is in line with national trends, it is still an issue to deserve serious analysis and corrective action next year. There are other issues of course to be dealt with relating to the maintenance and upgrade of club facilities and I am confident that we have the skills on the committee and the financial capacity to stay on top of these issues. Attracting new people to the club however, is an issue for each member to address. I would appeal to each member to take a look around them and to find one person from their workplace, neighbourhood, circle of

friends etc that may be interested in joining the club. We have an excellent low cost entry programme in place. If we were even 10% successful in this effort we would have a very sustainable situation.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to our dedicated committee for an excellent years work. The Social Sub Committee has also 'played a blinder' and I want to thank them especially for adding a sparkle to the social side of the club's activities. On behalf of all of us, I want to thank our Treasurer, Patrick, for his excellent stewardship of our financial affairs and I also want to thank our Secretary, Elaine, for efficiently keeping all matters in order throughout the year.

Wishing you all a happy Christmas and I am looking forward enthusiastically to our 51<sup>st</sup> year.

Tom Murray

Commodore