

Dublin Bay Area Report to the January 2021 ACM

Storm Covid devastated Dublin Bay's sailing, racing and regatta plans throughout 2020. Events were deferred, rescheduled and ultimately cancelled as the storm continued unabated despite a few ridges of high pressure appearing between its relentless depressions. The committee grappled to interpret a variety of rules, restrictions and guidance provided by the Irish Government, the Irish Sailing Association and marina operators. Despite the temporary availability of some relaxing of the restrictions through the use of "bubbles" and "family hubs", the committee took the view that civic duty, common sense and a weather eye on our membership demographic required the cessation of all of our organised events for 2020.

Fortunately, a nimble handful of our members were able to take advantage of these rule relaxations to facilitate some extensive cruising notably Mark Sweetnam's *Don Carlos* circumnavigating Ireland, Sean Walsh's *Tir na nOg of Howth* exploring every inlet and creek from Kinsale westwards to the Mizen and Adrian Spence's *El Paradiso* cruising the west coast of Scotland. These cruises were amongst the highspots of an otherwise very subdued sailing season for most of our members.

While Storm Covid battered our best laid plans offshore, Technology, in the form of What's App and Zoom provided much needed respite and relief onshore. Through our usual series of Winter & Spring talks, now conducted on Zoom, together with a plethora of poetry, painting and literary groups conducted on What's App, (admittedly with an Irish bias!) the camaraderie and fellowship of the Dublin Bay fraternity not only continued unabated but has strengthened. Through technology we are still able to continue passing the Yellow Welly around "virtually" at our Zoom talks maintaining our regular donations to the Howth Lifeboat station (€1500) and its Fishermen's Memorial (€200). Technology has greatly assisted our non-Dublin based members to participate to a greater degree in Dublin Bay affairs. We now have committee members and boats based in counties Cork, Donegal, Down, Galway, Kerry, Louth, Wexford and Wicklow in addition to our redoubtable Dublin contingent.

During the year our fleet had three very welcome additions: *Betty Alan*, Ed Maggs' gaff ketch based at Glengarriff in Kerry, Michael Weed's *Droleen* class (1896 design) sailing dinghy based at Gweedore in Donegal and Guy Kilroy's *Marguerite* (1896) back sailing following a restoration. Sadly the *Naomh Cronan* the much loved and iconic Galway hooker that has been the mainstay of the Dublin Bay OGA over the last 20 years returned to her "spiritual roots" in the west. Her guardianship has been transferred to Badoiri an Cladaig, based in Galway, where she will undertake youth sail training ensuring that the traditions and skills of sailing a Galway hooker are kept alive and well.

Sadly the following members passed away during the year: James O'Donnell, Capt. Tom Murphy and Johnny White Senior. Their support and contribution to Dublin Bay OGA over the years was considerable and they are all greatly missed by our entire membership. May they Rest in Peace.

Despite our absence of activity on the water this year we would like to express our thanks to the Poolbeg Yacht & Boat Club for their continued cooperation and support and also to the Dublin Port Company for their ongoing financial support for our annual regatta.

Following the Taoiseach's announcement imposing Level 5+ restrictions for a month from New Year's Eve it is evident that Storm Covid will continue to cause grief to all aspects of our lives for a while more. Whilst this isn't the start we wanted for 2021 the beginning of the vaccine roll-out next week makes the future look a little brighter than it might otherwise have been. Planning is already underway for the immediate resumption of our activities. Once Storm Covid is under control our target for 2021 will be to provide as much sailing and value to members as possible and to grow our membership numbers. In the meantime we will continue to exploit Zoom and What's App to keep our shoreside activities vibrant, entertaining and safe.

Darryl Hughes
Hon Sec
DBOGA