



LEYC



SILVER ANNIVERSARY NEWSLETTER



Crowded Mark Rounding



Roy roped many into sailing J/42s and other boats then asked - did you enjoy that? His try-sailing weekends in J/24s and sailing cruisers brought many new members, and two of LEYC's women commodores, Karen Fitzsimmons and Trudy Mannion. Getting great fun out of events like Georgian Yacht Racing was the Howards way.

Roy, as Irish J/24 President won a World Council bid that Ireland host the 1990 World Championship ñ later deemed a model event worldwide. He took keen interest, during his last months, in the Council's historic world gathering at LEYC.

The new Roy Howard Memorial Cup, presented at Summer Regatta on the Silver Anniversary of J/24 racing, marks his LEYC legacy ñ well-organised enjoyment of sailing. Aptly engraved on the Cup is - Did You Enjoy That? - Yes We Did, Roy!

LEYC's 25 J/24 YEARS

This is the story of two dozen J/24 keelboats that came together, some to move on, some to stay in a fleet of fast sailing boats on Lough Erne. Over 25 years, they gave superb Sailing sport to hundreds of sailors, expert and novice, men and women, young and old. Local, yet interactive at national and international levels, this fleet forged for its Club a world place in Sailing, and made the major contribution to Sailing's modern development at Lough Erne Yacht Club, founded in 1818 as the Subscribers to the Boat races on Lough Erne, for the encouragement of fast Sailing Boats.

Evidence includes that LEYC's only Irish National Champions are both J/24 sailors,

J/24 World Council's choice of LEYC as venue for its 2006 gathering of over 20 delegates from Japan and Australia, North and South America, and Europe, and 2008 spring J/24 season, with 60 sailors active in 11 of 13 boats, 18 races and 6 prize-winning boats, that include LEYC's first J/24, Jet in her 30th season.

ROY HOWARD

The late Roy Howard's contribution to LEYC Sailing was immense He helped start the GP14 dinghy fleet. In the 1980s he did the same and more with J/24s. Roy set up J/24 racing on Tuesday not to interfere with Wednesday GP14 and Fairy racing. He organised LEYC's important first hosting of a J/24 National Championship.

Irish Lake Sailing, Jeriatrix



Erne Start Line



OMAGLASS CHAMPIONSHIP

LEYC's historic mission is to organise yacht racing. On Roy Howard's initiative, the Irish J/24 National Championship in 1985 was an opportunity to display competence for that mission, and at top level in modern sailing sport. A major success, it was described in Ireland AFLOAT by top yachting writer, WM (Winkie) Nixon.

Running a contemporary championship, wrote Winkie, is demanding - precision of administration afloat and efficiency ashore both of highest order. LEYC put it all together to perfection. An excellent championship for the J/24 class, and a real feather in the collective cap of Lough Erne Yacht Club, he concluded.

Lough Erne has islands galore and fine open water for major championships. LEYC may indeed be the oldest specifically yacht-racing club in Ireland and in the world, he said, but the past is mere background to the enthusiastic present. LEYC's new clubhouse and its convenient setting are home to a rapidly growing membership, buzzing with zest for sailing.

That the boat needs a crew of five soon ropes in the growing membership. As the championship demonstrated, the J/24 might have been designed for Lough Erne. The J/24 is more than just the world's largest keelboat class. The J/24 is a cult, said Winkie, a way of sailing, which is very special. The hull is a stylish simple design as is the fractional rig without runners. Larger boats are easily seen away with the boat's remarkable speed - the J/24 simply goes faster and faster.

Emphasis in racing is on perfect hull trim and rig power. This tiny boat needs five crew, angle of heel is crucial, tweaking the rig an art. A generous spinnaker accentuates the boat's zippy performance.

What Winkie wrote in 1985 is pertinent in 2008, and J/24s have been much enjoyed on Lough Erne, season after season since.

GRANDFATHER JOEY

Joey Kelly hunts bargains, spends little, wins a lot. When handicap sailing competition revived in the 1970s, Joey, first LEYC's Cruiser Fleet Secretary, hunted for a boat costing little yet fit to win a lot. He found Jet Set in Troon, sailed her over to Donaghadee, drove to Skibereen for a bargain trailer, then towed Jet to the Erne. Like J/24s did worldwide, despite handicap, Jet easily beat all, simple rig, fast hull, and great fun to sail. Jet still wins most J/24 races today in her 30th Erne season.

Fleet founder, Joey was dubbed Erne J/24 Grandfather. Next bargain with Michael McCaldin were new J/24s, Jamais and Jealousy. Michael's first Murder Picture replaced Jamais, owned for a time by Trudy Mannion, and now on Lough Neagh. Joey sailed Jealousy in the 1990 World event. She sold to Howth, and thence to Lough Ree. Living in the USA, a bargain there was Jelly Roll, akin to Ragtime, the first ever J/24. An LEYC crew raced her at a J/24 event, aptly in New Orleans.

Another bargain was Jerk, from Falmouth. Fortunately renamed after Joey's hostelry, Vintage J was USA built, and the very boat sent to Britain for the mould that shaped all Westerly J/24s. Europe's original J/24, Joey sold her to Shane Logan. Today, Jay Kay's owner is Tim Sheard, Lough Neagh, whose restoration merited classic boat prize at 2006 World Championship. Joey next rescued Kilcullen (ex-first Murder Picture) from Dublin, renamed her JOG, Joey's Old Geezers, her 2002 Europeans crew, and then White Trash, with younger crew, the tip-top Taylor lads. Sold again, she is now John Kane's Skipjack. Story is that Joey, first time ever, paid good money in England for Dandy Rocker, named after

the wooded isle that shelters Inishdoney jetty. Rumoured also, she sold at better money to Carlingford.

So, Joey's J/24 Grandfather title is twice earned. First Erne fleet founder, then his numerous J/24 progeny in the Irish fleet and USA. Joey reminisces on them like a movie star on wives -the wayward, the fastest, the favourite.

TEN FLEET CAPTAINS

Ten J/24 Captains built up LEYC's J/24 racing over 25 years. Management's most important officers, they run Tuesday and other club racing, recruit new boats and numerous sailors, and host a J/24 Championship almost every season. Tuesday racing was Roy Howard's 1984 initiative. Only four J/24s turned out, so it became one-design, far better sport, won by being first, not via handicap calculations. 1985 handbook formally made Roy J/24 Secretary, with 6 boats: Jet, Jasper, Jamais, and Jealousy joined by Bandit and Sheer Jenius (later Ternacious, Fred and George Ternan, now Robin Eagleson's Luder Too).

By 1987, Alan Cecil's fleet numbered eight, adding Jeriatrix and Pathfinder. Wilf Greene's 1988-89 events lists had Georgian Yacht Racing, under Erne 1882 rules with Georgian dress code and picnic. Great fun.

J/24 sailors since 1990-92 have groaned in gratitude when awarded Hugh Mahon's donation, that big Italian jug engraved - for notable J/24 achievement. Robin Hogg's 1993-94 fleet made nine, adding Jurassic and Vintage J. Tim Rippey's 1995 fleet were ten when Virjin arrived. Michael Clarke, 1996-1999, raised participation with two races each Tuesday, and weekend J/24 races for over 30 cups. Shane Logan, 2000, arranged a training visit by Stuart Jardine of the J/24 Technical Committee. Diarmuid O'Donovan, 2001-04, both organised and won an Irish National Championship, and led six Erne J/24s to Dublin Bay for the European Championship.

Shaun Sowden, Jorvik, 2005-06, gave out trophies as each series ended, for immediate encouragement and to shorten the long J/24 session at LEYC prize giving. First woman J/24 Fleet Captain Bridget Rippey, 2006-08, expanded Tuesday's programme to 7 series each of 6 races. Spring 2008 turnout was a 25-year record.

Virjin French Women Match racing



NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

Returning to enrich LEYC Sailing with valuable experiences and new ideas, all our J/24s have raced in regional and national events hosted by some twenty other clubs across Ireland. LEYC's top J/24 sailors, Michael McCaldin, Joey Kelly, Mick Whaley, Bertie Forsythe, Ed Beattie and others won an Irish National Championship on Lough Ree, and were at British and USA Mid-Winter Championships.

Much enrichment came from European and World events. Jamais and Jeriatrix crews at the 1990 Worlds on Dublin Bay, learnt a lot about rig and sail settings from US and other boats, and an LEYC support team a lot about running big events, ashore and afloat. Jurassic and Murder Picture did likewise at the 1995 Europeans

as did six boats, LEYC's whole active fleet then, at the 2002 Europeans, where Jeriatrix, with women helm and deck crew, won the cup for best old Westerly. Olivia Cosgrove, Judie Anderson, and Sandra Dillon (Dublin) later re-joined Canadian helm Anne Marie Shewfelt at two North American Championships, the Women's and the Open.

Jigalo, with owner Tim Rippey in her crew, won the 2005 World Championship. His crew prize, Jigalo plate added, went back for the 2006 event. Tim's story is up framed in LEYC bar. Diarmuid O'Donovan took Sayonara to Weymouth Europeans. He and Marcus Isherwood watched in awe as top match racing women jostled on Cork Harbour in Irish J/24s including Virjin and Jadore in the 2006 ISAF Nations Cup world match racing final. All were richly satisfying sailing experiences.

WOMEN AND SUSAS

LEYC hosted Irish Ladies J/24 Championships. Helms included Olympic hopefuls. Great was delight when an LEYC crew won in 1990 - Sally Livsey-Davis, helming Trudy Mannion's Jamais, with Karen Fitsimmons, Anne Beattie and Sarah Kelly. Later we had similar women's J/24 events just for LEYC club members.

Some ex-junior LEYC sailors were at Scottish Universities, and in SUSAS, their sailing association. They asked Erne J/24s to host the SUSAS keelboat championship. We did, on three occasions. The J/24s had owners on board. The simple event plan, all on one A4 side copied to everybody, had a rota of crews racing each boat in turn in a series of simple two-round windward-leeward races.

A Strathclyde winning crew that included LEYC's Chris Scott went on to win the World Student Championship in France. Soon after, two from this crew joined Diarmuid O'Donovan in Virjin to win the 2003 Irish National Championship.

TODAY'S THIRTEEN

The Erne fleet had two-dozen J/24s over the years. The 1990s saw fleets up to 10, then down to 6 with sales to other fleets, then with newer boats back up to today's 13. Owners range from family sailors to the Club's two Irish National Champions.

JADE. A family sailor, now with racing ambitions, Sean McCosker bought Jade, a Westerly with 1980 deck gear on Lough Swilly's rough waters. Posted for-sale, the response was come to the Erne. So he did. Her two seasons here have been fun.

Women in Europeans



JADORE. Marcus Isherwood dreamed of owning a J/24, found Jadore, Italian built 2002, on a website in France, drove over and towed her home. With crew the Harrison brothers of Lough Neagh, Jadore in two seasons with Marcus won a Spring J/24 Championship. On the Erne, Jadore's life includes family cruising.

JASPER. John Mulholland, via an LEYC sailing course, crewed in a J/24, was told to buy his own, and did - Jasper, an old Westerly from Robin Hogg, who got her from Roy Howard. Since painted white, Jasper's team did well early 2008 season.

JERIATRIX. longest with the one owner, Michael Clarke's old Westerly warrior has enjoyed a couple of hundred crew since 1986, island picnics, racing at every Irish J/24 venue, two World and two European championships. Prizes include a Cork Week race winner tankard and the Big Cup for notably achieving last in the 1992 Worlds.

JET. was owned, after Joey Kelly, by Alan Cecil then Tim Rippey. Michael McCaldin bought this historic boat to keep her at LEYC. Jet wins most races she sails.

JIGALO. replaced Jet, brand new from Italy in 2003. She races on Tuesdays. Bridget Rippey is 2008 Fleet Captain. Wee son Connor, sails Sundays and Regattas.

JORVIK. Hood had her for J/24 sail design work. Hired to a TV company, she featured in the soap Howard's Way, with a fair maiden in shorts trimming her spinnaker. Shaun Sowden, enticed to the Erne on a try-sailing day bought her from Strangford, and, a Yorkshire man, re-named her Jorvik. An old Westerly, well-rigged, good sails and cleaned tidy, she races on Tuesdays and at some events.

JURASSIC. Rob Heshall, round-Ireland adventurer, bought a Welsh Westerly with many successes in Irish Sea sailing. Rob raced Jurassic Tuesdays and at events, including the 1985 European Championship on Dublin Bay, where Jurassic's backstay came off and, on setting spinnaker, her mast shattered spectacularly over the bow. Rob sold her



to Neville Cromie, who had some successes. Work prevents Tuesday sailing and Jurassic is again for sale.

LUDER. yet to launch on the Erne, is a famous British Westerly, bought to Lough Neagh, and thence to Lisbellaw by Johnnie Walker for a yet-unfinished refit

MEJOOIE. Barry Humphries and Ann Sheehy exploring non-city options found a Cavan home and the Erne, a friendly place for good sailing. They bought an Italian built J/24 from Dublin, renamed her Mejoolie, a comic's girlfriend, first time at Summer Regatta won the J/24 Morris Cup, and are steadily improving on Tuesdays.

MURDER PICTURE. Michael McCaldin's second Murder Picture came on the same lorry as Jigalo. Used for championships - Jet for club racing - she replaced Joe Blob (sold to England) in which Michael had become a National J/4 Champion.

SAYONARA. A Japanese crew shipped a 2004 USA build J/24 to the 2006 World event and left her in Britain. Spotted on a website, Diarmuid O'Donovan bought her, towed her home and renamed her Sayonara, She has been busy in Club sailing, winning 2008's first Tuesday series, and in regional national and European events. She replaced Italian-built Virjin, in which Diarmuid became an Irish National J/24 Championship. Virjin is in Kiltrush, Co Clare.

SKIPJACK. Career took John Kane to Fermanagh. He saw J/24s in the sport news, came and got a Tuesday berth. John pondered one sunny winter day, decided, and bought Skipjack from Joey Kelly. Best life-decision ever made, she races Tuesdays, some events, and cruises summer weekends with children Ellie and Patrick.

J/24 SUCCESS

The LEYC formula's most important factors for J/24 fleet success are Fleet Captain leadership, lots of keen sailors, and lots of superb racing on complete windward-leeward courses. The world's most numerous and popular keelboat is far cheaper to own and race than any comparable boat, backed by experience and mutual support on maintaining J/24s among Erne owners, old and new. The J/24, with its real spinnaker and fast fin-keel hull, keeps a crew of five busy - novices welcome among old hands. It has given a remarkable number of Erne sailors of modest means significant access to world-class racing. With strong one-design rules, cheap old boats can and do win - Jet is an example. Tuesday's numerous weekly races for many trophies rewards winners and also encourages all who participate. Likewise do J/24 standards of racing sport, close and competitive. With boats the one-design, success depends only on teamwork in boat preparation and sail handling, wind judgement and race tactics.

Above all, J/24 racing at LEYC it is that special kind of fun where nothing attracts a crowd like a crowd.

Michael Clarke, LEYC Historian, June 2008

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