

The Autumn edition of The Shrimper gives a summary of the details for this year's Shrimper Week, also available on the SOA website. Several members have already registered their interest in attending the event and we shall soon be sending out entry forms to those members who have registered. For those who have yet to register please send details of boat name & number of people including skipper, and whether use of crane is required to Robin Whittle (robin.whittle@btinternet.com). For those attending special ISW 2018 clothing is available from the SOA on-line shop for which there is a link elsewhere on this website.

The following is a welcome message from Tom Bailey, Vice Commodore of Lough Erne Yacht club:

'Happy New Year to all you Shrimpers from everyone at LEYC. As I write this in late January it's snowing, blowing a NW gale straight off the Atlantic and struggling to reach 3 degrees. I sincerely hope that matters will improve by June for the Shrimper visit when we expect to see you all swimming in the balmy waters. It's very good for the skin as it's bog water and should reach (if you're lucky) 4 to 5 degrees. The Club has two new Defibrillators and we are very eager to try them out!

Our cruising grounds are vast and full of pleasant surprises. If you want open waters you can have them but equally if you seek

tranquillity and solitude you will have no trouble finding it. The Erne River and Lakes (upper and lower) span the border between N.I. and the R.O.I. Excluding the wide and tranquil River Erne that runs for 80 miles, the two lakes cover 56 sq. miles of cruising with 154 islands. Average depth in the Upper Lough is only 8 ft. whereas the Lower Lough has an average of 39 ft. with the deepest sections being 155ft. I think that is possibly deeper than the Channel or Irish Sea. Navigation is made easy with clear and numbered markers. By matching the marker number with your chart you will be able to find your position with complete confidence. When you arrive at the Club you can either launch your boat on our slipway or avail of our crane which is rated for 2000kg. We will find secure parking for cars and trailers on site.

Even though we are very close to the Atlantic the entire area has its own micro climate so if you get heart palpitations with the morning shipping forecast you can be certain that there will be options to sail in the shelter of the many islands. Some of the Islands are privately owned but unoccupied for many generations. Many will have excellent jetties and you will readily recognise which you can tie up to. Indeed many jetties are large enough to safely tie up a fleet of Shrimpers without the need to raft out. The island based jetties do not have water supplies.

Waterways Ireland is the body tasked with the management of the river and lake system in both N.I. and R.O.I. and they do a wonderful job. If you come across their staff or wardens you will be greeted with a smile and if required, an offer of advice or assistance. There is no charge for using the navigation or public slipways unlike many areas in the UK.

As to LEYC we are celebrating our 200th anniversary this year and have a very busy season ahead. We are so looking forward to it. Besides you Shrimpers we will be hosting the UK Dinghy Cruising Association (their second visit), international J24 championships, visits from Shannon One designs and Waterwags, two of the oldest one design classes in the country.

LEYC is situated on a former RAF flying boat base and the RAF are also celebrating their 100th anniversary this year. In early June we are hosting a joint celebration with Catalina flying boats, the Battle of Britain flight and a 21 gun salute from the Royal Artillery. I must make a note to make sure our bar is well stocked.

Having raised the topic of the bar I feel I need to address the matter of Ireland and Pubs and wish to point out that not all Irishmen are addicted to Guinness, only most of us. We are well used to visiting yachtsmen and women experiencing what is known

locally as 'good craic' and can recognise the first symptoms of Guinness addiction. LEYC members are always alert to the first signs of this affliction and make an effort to support the visitor by joining them so that they never drink alone. We can offer good company, friendship and conversation and in general we have most of the world's problems sorted by closing time, whenever that is.

I have no doubt you will all enjoy your visit to our uncrowded waters and look forward to greeting you all in June. We are also launching a new web page so have a look as it will give you a flavour of our facilities and surroundings.'