

Carlow Town Council commemorates our Boating Heritage

During May 2005 the annual gathering of the Heritage Boat Association was held in Carlow Town. This was the first visit by the Association to the County. The Association has rescued and restored many of the former Canal Boats (barges) which had until 1960 operated on the inland waterways of Ireland. Carlow was part of the Barrow Navigation with many important stops including Carlow Town, Bagenalstown and Tinnahinch.

During the course of the Association's visit the Canal Boatmen's Reunion was also held in Carlow Town.

To honour the visit of both groups Carlow Town Council made a special presentation to the Heritage Boat Association at a reception in the Carlow Rowing Club on Friday 13th May and on Sunday 15th May during the Canal Boatmen's Reunion a commemorative plaque to the boatmen was unveiled in the Town Park.



Photo: Carlow County Museum, Tel: (059) 9131759

Presentation by Carlow Town Council to the Heritage Boat Association

(L to R) Dan Carbery, President Carlow Historical & Archaeological Society; Sean O'Reilly, Chairman Heritage Boat Association; Cllr. Des Hurley, Cathaoirleach of Carlow Town Council & Joe Bolger, President Carlow Rowing Club

Carlow Town Council commemorates our floating heritage

“Erected in memory of the men of the trading boats on the Barrow”



Photo: Carlow County Museum, Tel: (059) 9131759

Unveiling of plaque to the memory of the River Barrow Boatmen, Town Park, Sunday 15th May 2005

(L to R) Joe Watters, Town Clerk, Cllr. Joe McDonald, Cllr. Rody Kelly, boatman Simon McDonald, Cllr. Des Hurley, Cathaoirleach Carlow Town Council & Cllr. Tom O’Neill

The model is of a boat on which Simon and his brother Pat both worked. Simon and Pat are from Graiguenamanagh, Co. Kilkenny and they were at least the third generation of their family to work on the boats. The model was made by Pat and he kindly gave it on loan for the occasion.

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Unveiling of plaque to the memory of the River Barrow Boatmen, Town Park, Sunday 15th May 2005

(L to R) Mary Hoare Walsh, coordinator Canal Boatmen's Reunion assisting Cllr. Des Hurley, Cathaoirleach Carlow Town Council to unveil the commemorative plaque.

“Now the Grand Canal is just the same old winding waterway
But it's old time navigators are now moldering in the clay
Those gentle old world boatmen who sailed those waters o'er
They have departed on a voyage from which they'll come no more

Though they are gone they've left us a memory sweet to save
While summer breezes whisper round their narrow silent graves
May they be with their Master and Heaven's light shine on
Those one time hardy sons of toil the boatmen that are gone

.....Now all you men who boat, remember ever more
You'll sail out on that same old track your father sailed before
And just like them will come the day for you to sail out on
That trip from which there's no return, Like the boatmen that are gone”

Extract from the poem *The Boatmen That are Gone* by Kit Ennis.
Mary Hoare Walsh recited this poem at the plaque unveiling.