

## PIRATE BATTLE ON LOUGH NEAGH

A battle of the Lough Neagh buccaneers took place on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August, just off shore from Ballyronan Marina. The pirate ships Calypso and the Black Pearl fought a fierce battle for the secret treasure known as the Lough Neagh Necklace. The battle was very intense and drew quite a crowd to the breakwater at Ballyronan Marina on the western shore of Lough Neagh.

Captain Jim the Enforcer of the Black Pearl Pirate Ship battled hard against the enemy Captain Gerry “Scurvy Dog” Darby, firing numerous cannons, before victoriously raiding Scurvy Dog’s ship ‘the Calypso’ and claiming the sought after ‘Lough Neagh Necklace’.

Onlookers were amazed at what happened next; Captain Jim the enforcer drew his sword and forced the loser ‘Scurvy Dog’ Darby to walk the plank before seizing the Calypso and setting sail towards Toomebridge, where they are rumoured to be making their escape to the Tall Ships festival via the Lower Bann River. They will be stopping at all towns along the route to Belfast raising funds for the Community Rescue Service Charity, so if you spot them on route, empty your pockets of gold or beware of the hempen halter!

The battle marked the official launch of Lough Neagh Fest; a festival that celebrates the uniqueness of the largest inland water lake in Britain & Ireland, with 10 fun-filled days of events for all the family. The festival now in it’s third year and features everything from major sporting events, to historic lectures, family days out, and Watersports taster sessions centred at Lough Neagh’s main marinas.

Lough Neagh Fest kicks off on 22<sup>nd</sup> August with a superb boating event ‘Cruise the Lough’, a guided tour of the Lough by sail or power vessel and is open to owners of suitable vessels. It is also a fantastic spectator event for all the family with boat trips operating from Kinnego Marina and Antrim Lough Shore Park throughout the day. The sailing tour is followed by a Jazz Night and BBQ at Kinnego Marina – everyone is welcome! Tel: 028 3832 7573

Celebrate the Six Mile Water on 22<sup>nd</sup> August with a fun and informative day out for all the family along the river corridor in Antrim with guided walks and talks on the local history and wildlife in the area, booking essential Tel: 028 9446 3113

Greenmount College are hosting a Garden Gallery on 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> August for local artists to display their work. The floristry club will also be creating art using natural materials Tel:0800 028 4291

The Lough Neagh Fest also boasts a host of new events including; Murloc Angling Fair, a unique event to give you an opportunity to learn new angling skills, there will be fly tying demonstrations, beginners instruction, a taxidermist, country clothing and food

stands as well as a BBQ, so come along and join in with the festivities on 22<sup>nd</sup> August at Murloc Angling Centre, Aghalee, all welcome! Tel: 028 9265 1421

The prestigious Lough Neagh Ram Raid also takes place on 23<sup>rd</sup> August departing Kinnego Marina for Rams Island, then on to Toome and into the Lower Bann as far as Portglenone where lunch will be served at the Wild Duck Bar & Restaurant, back onto the river towards Lough Neagh again and down the west shore for light refreshments and a tour of the Battery Harbour before returning to Kinnego Marina. Tel: 07912 747586

Its family fun and frolics at this years Washing Bay Lammas Festival from 23<sup>rd</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> August, with a series of events over a five day period showcasing local talent, outdoor activities, historic lectures, and lots of family fun and entertainment, not to be missed! Tel: 028 8774 0636

Bring the kids along to the Teddy Bear's picnic at Antrim Lough Shore Park on 23<sup>rd</sup> Aug! Listen to teddy bear music and meet bear characters. There will be prizes for the best dressed bears so bring along a rug and your favourite teddy! There will be an opportunity to create your own bear at the Bear & Co. workshop Tel: 028 9446 3113

Do your children have green fingers? Then bring them along to the Children's Wildlife Hour - Have fun and learn lots of new wildlife skills at Oxford Island. On each day of the week (24<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> Aug), we will look at a different aspect of nature such as; pond life, insect life, birds, woodlands and crafts with a wildlife theme Tel: 028 3832 2205

Ever fancied getting on the waters of Lough Neagh for some exhilarating activities? Kinnego Marina is giving novices the opportunity to learn some basic skills with canoe taster sessions on 25<sup>th</sup> Aug and sailing taster sessions on 26<sup>th</sup> Aug. Just enough to give you a flavour.....to leave you wanting more! Tel: 028 3832 7573

Maybe you are a budding historian? Learn about the history of Owen Roe at an informal pub lecture titled: Who was Owen Roe? It takes place on 26<sup>th</sup> Aug at the Owen Roe Pub near Randalstown, be sure to book your place Tel: 028 796 50277

Go batty with the conservation volunteers and the Northern Ireland bat group along the Toome Canal on 26<sup>th</sup> August. Enjoy an evening walk and learn how to listen for Daubenton's bat using bat detectors Tel: 028 9185 2817

Join the Lagan Valley Regional Park Staff on 27<sup>th</sup> August for a walk along the Broadwater and discover a little history of the Lagan navigation, whilst enjoying the wildlife along the way. The walk follows the towpath between Aghalee & Moira. Booking Essential Tel: 028 90 491922

Take a boat trip with a difference on 27<sup>th</sup> August around Kinnego Bay and Castor Bay. A guided tour by Pascal Downing on the Formation of the Lough (approx 1 hour) Booking essential Tel: 028 3832 7573

Ever dreamed of the beautiful sights of a tropical marina by night, with the illuminations of cruise liners and sail boats reflecting on the gently lapping water..... Well Lough Neagh has the next best thing! Ballyronan Festival of Lights on 28<sup>th</sup> August is a great evening of entertainment for all the family with an impressive boat lighting competition, fireworks, BBQ and outdoor disco; so get out your grass skirt and join in the fun! Tel: 028 7941 8399

Feeling flighty? Then come along to Tannaghmore Farm & Gardens for their annual Bird Fair, a traditional show of the wide variety of hens, ducks and geese we have in Northern Ireland on 29<sup>th</sup> August Tel: 028 3834 3244

The very first International Canoe Polo competition will be held on Lough Neagh this year from 29<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> August at Ballyronan Marina, the competition attracts top Scottish and Irish teams and makes great entertainment for spectators.

Lough Neagh has its very own Canoe Trail, if you would like to paddle it why not join in with our canoe paddle tour on 29<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> Aug? The tour will depart from Kinnego and paddle to Coney Island for an overnight camp, returning to Kinnego the next day. Equipment can be hired in advance, bring your own food & water. Booking essential Tel: 08702 405 065

Two of Lough Neagh's main Boat Clubs are hosting a Boating Open Day on 29<sup>th</sup> August to give you an insight into sailing and boating. They are hosting an open day for anyone with an interest to find out more and get out on the water. Antrim Boat Club Tel: 07920 197510 or Lough Neagh Sailing Club, Kinnego Tel: 077108 04169

The 30<sup>th</sup> Aug is Wildlife and Heritage Day with a guided walk hosted by RSPB, NIEA, and the Lough Neagh & Lower Bann Advisory Committee around Lough Beg. You will see the rich diversity of wildlife on the reserve and Moira O'Rourke, Lough Neagh Partnership's Heritage Officer will be giving a talk on the local history of Church Island. This is a unique opportunity, not to be missed, booking essential Tel: 028 7941 7941

The 31<sup>st</sup> August will see the fourth Lap the Lough Cycle event - the biggest event of its kind in Northern Ireland is not exclusively for the elite or club cyclist but for anyone up for a challenge. The event aims to encourage as many cyclists to do 1 lap of Lough Neagh, and subsequently raise cash for good causes. We provide as much help as possible to anyone who hasn't attempted this distance before with training programmes, tips and links to more information. So if you've been waiting for the opportunity to get back in the saddle... here it is! [www.laphelough.org](http://www.laphelough.org)

And last. But not least! The Fortifications of Lough Neagh Tour at Ballyronan on 31<sup>st</sup> August. Come along and learn about the history of Lough Neagh, with a seminar commencing at 10am, lunch and a bus tour in the afternoon visiting the sites of Salterstown, Ardboe & Mountjoy. Cost £10 (including lunch & Bus tour) Booking essential Tel: 028 7941 7941

If you want to experience the Lough Neagh Pirates come along to Antrim Lough Shore Park on Sundays throughout the summer for a short trip, the kids will love it nearly as much as the adults! Adults £5 Kids £3. The pirate ships are also available for private hire, ideal for hen parties, stag parties or a corporate day out with a difference. [www.piratesofloughneagh.com](http://www.piratesofloughneagh.com) or telephone Captain Jim the Enforcer 07828 905801.

A full itinerary of events with contact details can be found in the Lough Neagh Events guide available from Tourist Information Centre's or by logging on to [www.discoverloughneagh.com](http://www.discoverloughneagh.com) Telephone 028 7941 7941.