

## Dublin Branch

### Circular Line Jubilee Rally 13–16 April

On a very cold and muddy Thursday evening the boats assembled at Hazelhatch in a downpour of rain. Those who arrived earlier had a very good evening in McEvoy's, but some of us did not arrive till after closing time.

An early start on Friday in excellent weather made things seem much better and the realisation that CIE was providing extra help at the locks gave us all great heart. As the fleet passed the 9th lock we were joined by the *Clonskeagh* and four or five other boats. Less welcome was all the plastic rubbish that also joined us. Some boats were lucky – some were not! *Wild Rover* must have a lot of broken knives and saws on board! Shortly after 6.00 p.m. most of us were moored at Portobello and a curious crowd of Dubliners were amazed to watch the swabbing of decks, polishing and cleaning.

Saturday morning, after a quiet night, the fleet moved down two locks to Grand Parade and met those who had come in from the sea. The Tanaiste, George Colley, joined the last boat and

thoroughly enjoyed his brief voyage down the two locks – he's not a newcomer to the inland waterways! In his speech of welcome Chairman Frank Blake expressed concern about the interim period of the CIE/OPW change over. The Minister in his speech assured us that the Government had no intention of letting the waterways suffer during this period which would be kept as short as possible. After receiving a presentation of a handsomely mounted rally plaque, the Minister met the canoeists of the Harrow Canoe Club and started their race. In all nineteen cruisers, ten rowing boats and the canoes had assembled and, while Pádraig O'Brolchain with some good friends ran a very original programme of dinghy sports, Cora O'Leary and Joy Henderson organised a beautifully arranged reception for the Minister in the tent pitched on the canal bank. Thirty children between 3 and 14 years of age competed in the dinghy sports and among the winners were Niall Sutor, Linda Waterhouse, Erica Clandillon, Gary Leyden, John Cronin, Eoin, Mella and Niall O'Brolchain. In order to get to a film show given by Douglas and Ruth Heard in Carroll's well appointed theatre, some of the rally participants crossed the canal by dinghy. Amidst much hilarity one well-loved belle was seen to take an involuntary bath in the canal with her husband. No harm was done and warm towels of adjacent boats were declared unnecessary as the canal water was warm! A very enjoyable wine and cheese party in the tent concluded Saturday's entertainment.

On Sunday morning Father Michael Donoghue said mass for us. Some Sunday morning walkers were rather surprised – some joined us with their dogs! After a relaxed morning entertaining city friends the fleet moved up the canal and moored at Sherling's bank for the night. At 7.00 on Monday morning CIE capped a magnificent effort by starting out six of their men from Tullamore to be at the 1st lock by 9.00 a.m. to help us back to our various moorings. These friendly and helpful men stayed with us till we were all through the 11th lock. Thank you C.I.E.

*Sheila Redmond*