



## News Release - Immediate

### The Inland Waterways Association of Ireland

[www.iwai.ie](http://www.iwai.ie)

#### Offaly Waterways Honoured in St Patrick's Day Parade

For the first time a St Patrick's Day Parade has picked the Inland Waterways as the Parade theme. IWAI would like to congratulate the Tullamore Parade Committee on their choice.



By selecting this theme the Parade will highlight the importance of Offaly's Inland Waterways to the communities through which they flow. In addition to showcasing a variety of water-based activity, the Parade theme will also encourage participants to display their interpretation of the history of these Waterways.

Secretary of the Parade Committee Sean O'Brien captures this feeling noting that;

*"The Grand Canal has been flowing through Offaly for over 200 years and it has had a significant influence on the business, cultural, heritage and leisure life of the County and its Towns. This is a great opportunity to celebrate this impact and this great facility and we hope that many more people will use the facility over the coming years."*

The IWAI has been extended a great honour with an invitation to the President John Dolan to act as Grand Marshall for the Parade. The Tullamore Parade is well-established with over 1,500 participants and up to 10,000 onlookers. While the Parade itself starts at 11.30a.m, proceedings get underway at approx. 10:30am. A flotilla will ferry the dignitaries from Bolands Lock House to the Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre. This flotilla will include members of the Tullamore Canoe Club, the Offaly Rowing Club and the IWAI Offaly Branch. Floats in the Parade will feature the IWAI Offaly Big Bolinder Engine and a variety of vessels including a 13 metre 4 man rowing boat, a speed boat and a powerboat.

County Offaly is a haven for Inland Waterways and includes lakes, rivers & canals. The Grand Canal, stretching from near Edenderry to Shannon Harbour, winds its way timelessly through the countryside. On reaching Shannon Harbour, one enters onto the mighty River Shannon whose waters form the natural border between Galway & Offaly. From above Meelick in the south of the County towards Athlone in the North, Offaly's Shannon Waterways boast many treasures including the religious, cultural & historically significant site of Clonmacnoise .



More information about the Tullamore St Patrick's Day Parade can be obtained by logging on to: <http://www.stpatricksdaysullamore.com/>

More photos available on request. Please email [pro@iwai.ie](mailto:pro@iwai.ie) for more information.

#### Inland Waterways Association of Ireland



## Notes to Editor – the IWAI

The Inland Waterways Association of Ireland (IWAI) is a voluntary body representing over three thousand five hundred enthusiasts, with 23 branches across the island of Ireland.

The Inland Waterways Association of Ireland (IWAI) is an energetic, fun, voluntary organisation with members from all corners of the Island of Ireland, all sharing a keen and passionate enthusiasm for the waterways of Ireland.

The IWAI advocates the navigation, use, maintenance, protection, restoration and improvement of the inland waterways of Ireland. It was formed in 1954 to promote the development, use and maintenance of Ireland's navigable rivers and canals.

When the Shannon was almost totally undeveloped for pleasure boating, the IWAI campaigned against the building of low bridges, thus ensuring the development of the river as a national asset. In the 1960s IWAI successfully campaigned to stop plans to close the Circular Line of the Grand Canal in Dublin. Later the Association campaigned for the re-opening of what is now the Shannon - Erne Waterway (formerly the Ballinamore & Ballyconnell Canal) and the Naas Line of the Grand Canal.

IWAI played its part in the restoration campaign for the re-opening of the Royal Canal between Dublin and the Shannon in recent years. IWAI assistance to the campaign to re-open the Ulster Canal has also borne fruit with the announcement that work is to begin on re-opening the section from the Erne to Clones. Currently, IWAI members are active in restoration projects on the Boyne, Newry and Lagan Canals.

IWAI Branches hold approximately 200 events each year across inland navigations with the wider communities in many locations. These events include Boat Rallies, Harbour Festivals, Walks, Social Gatherings, Heritage Activities; Family activities and Youth focused events.



Clonmacnoise, Co Offaly

National Website Details [www.iwai.ie](http://www.iwai.ie)

