

# Foyle Rowing Club's "magnificent achievement"

Elation on the waves as rowers make it from Islay to Inishowen

THERE WAS elation on the waves on Saturday when the men and women of Foyle Rowing Club crossed the finish line after their marathon voyage from Scotland to Greencastle.

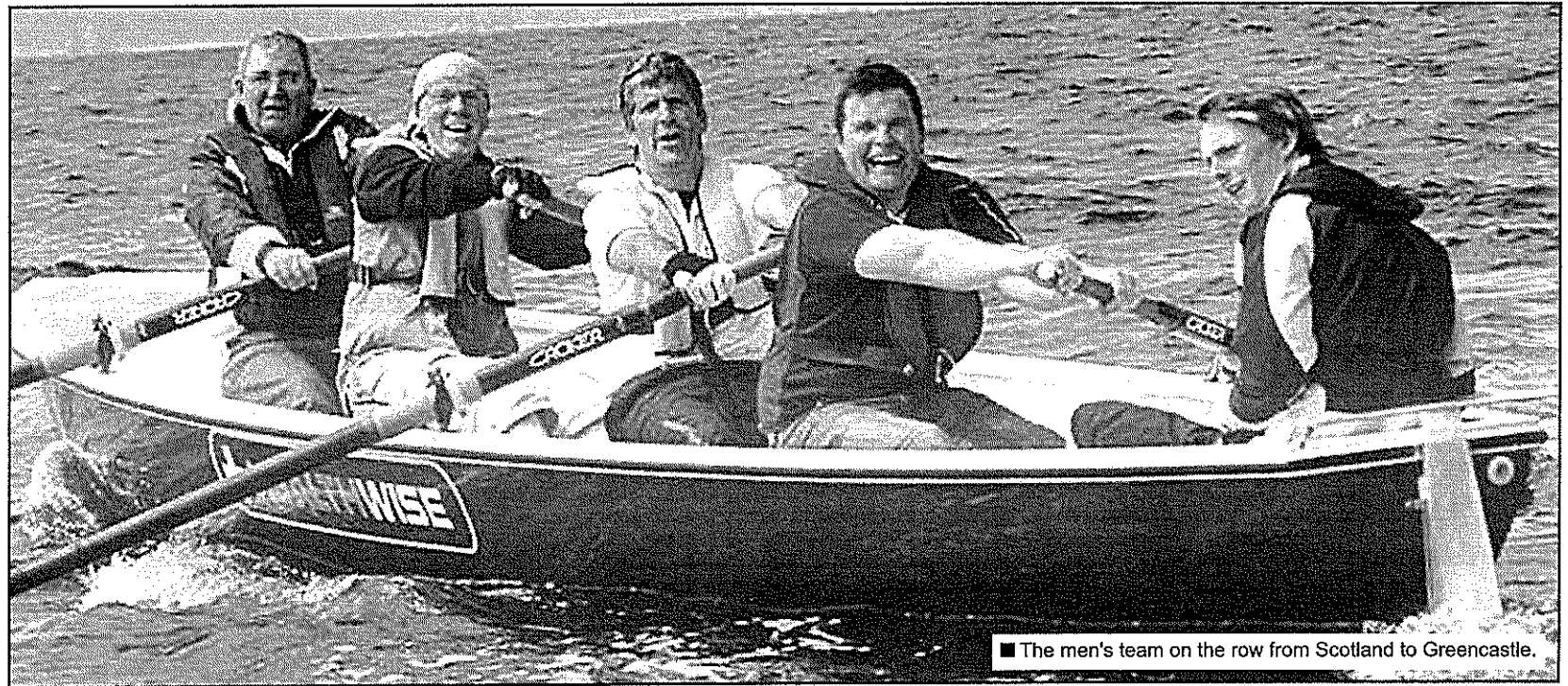
by  
Linda  
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Women's team member, Bríd McGinley, said the 44-mile charity journey – the Colmcille Challenge – went very well with the men clocking a "remarkable time".

"Our men's team came home in 7 hours 45 minutes and the women in 10 hours 45 minutes. The women had a more challenging time, missing a vital tide and so met strong tides at the mouth of Lough Foyle and some wind too," said Bríd.

The tough challenge was undertaken by Hugh Kelly, Robert Kelly, Don McGinley,



■ The men's team on the row from Scotland to Greencastle.

Odhran Hegarty, Thomas Farren, Damien Gillen, John White, Daniel McDaid, Anthony Doogan and Tony Reynolds. On the women's team were, Denise Kelly, Jackie Kelly, Kate McLaughlin, Katrina Reynolds, Jennifer Gill, Lucy White, Sally Dorrian,

Jackie Penson, Siobhan Curran and Bríd McGinley.

Bríd said they could not have completed the journey without the help of others on the day.

"We had great support on the water from our support teams of ribs and support boats,

and there was a tremendous reception in Greencastle when they teams came in.

"Two teams from Islay also travelled, and they did (the journey) in about 11 hours, rowing bigger, more traditional boats. This was a remarkable feat too," she added.

As the rowers salved their blistered hands, there were plenty of homecoming celebrations for them, with music and dancing in the marquee in Greencastle. Proceeds from the unique event go to the Foyle Hospice.

Meanwhile, speaking at this

week's Inishowen electoral area meeting of Donegal County Council, Cllr Martin Farren described the Foyle Rowing Club's efforts as a "magnificent achievement". He asked that a letter of congratulations be sent to the club to mark their success.

## NEWS



■ Moville Rowing Club members - pictured in Greencastle on Saturday afternoon following their row from Islay in Scotland

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# The rowers return

Moville crews complete historic sea journey

THE people of Inishowen were reconnected with their Scottish neighbours at the weekend, thanks to a unique and historic achievement by the Foyle Rowing Club.

Crowds lined Greencastle harbour on Saturday to welcome back members of the intrepid Moville-based club as they successfully completed the first ever Colmcille Challenge.

Two teams of Inishowen rowers were accompanied by boats from the island of Islay as they made the voyage from Port Ellen to Greencastle, a stretch of 44 miles, in traditional coastal rowing vessels.

Spokesperson for the Foyle club, Brid McGinley, said they were "over the moon" to complete the challenge.

She said: "We got on great and everything went well. It was such a rollercoaster for us as because we didn't know it could even be done. To actually achieve it is wonderful."

She said the men and women's teams both completed the challenge in "fantastic time" with the men coming in at just under eight hours, and the women just over ten.

"The women were a wee bit behind the men, but they had a much harder time of it as they missed their tide and encountered treacherous conditions on the approach to Lough Foyle."

Choppy seas and high winds meant that it wasn't all "plain sailing" and Mrs McGinley praised the support crew who helped the rowers when they changed over from boat-to-boat for a rest each hour.

Upon their arrival back in Greencastle a flotilla of boats came out to meet the rowers and people lined the harbour waving them in, blowing horns and even letting off gun shots!

Mrs McGinley said: "It was very emotional and a great thrill. The reception was fantastic and people recognised the whole thing for

what it was – a real challenge."

Celebrations in Greencastle were low key on the Saturday evening, followed by a full programme of events on Sunday including a dance in the Marquee. Mrs McGinley said: "There was a great buzz and a great turn out. It was very relaxed, a lovely day."

Previously, on Islay, the rowers had been treated to a feast of Scottish and Irish culture as the islanders held their own four day "Festival of the Sea" to celebrate the event. Inishowen-based musicians and members of the Greencastle yacht club were among the Irish contingent who travelled to the Hebridean island.

Activities included a firework display the evening before the voyage, a raft burning in the harbour, and a talk on the "Greencastle Yawl," a working boat still used by the islanders.

So what next for the Foyle rowers? Mrs McGinley said while the group had no plans to recreate St Brendan's voyage to America, they are now considering the Celtic Challenge from Arklow to Aberystwyth in Wales: "We may look to that whenever our blisters heal!"



■ Husband and wife Hugh and Jackie Kelly celebrate coming ashore in Greencastle.

## NEWS

# Row, row, row your boat...

## Moville rowers get ready to undertake "historic" Colmcille Challenge

By Simon Fallaha  
Reporter

FOYLE Rowing Club is rowing "into uncharted waters" this weekend.

On Saturday July 9, two teams of men and women from the Moville-based club will attempt the "Colmcille Challenge" for the first time.

The challenge will see them row across the North Channel from Islay to Inishowen in a voyage that has long-been viewed by some members as "an aspiration."

Now the dream is about to



■ Foyle Rowers High Kelly, Don McGinley, Anthony Dougan, Damien Gillen and Odhran Hegarty who will be rowing to Islay, pictured during training at Moville. Picture Martin McKeown. Inpresspics.com.

come true as initiative has been made possible with both the support of the Inishowen Development Partnership and strong links forged between groups of rowers from Islay and Greencastle.

Since its foundation six years ago, the club has gone from strength to strength. Having concentrated on the traditional Foyle Punt initially, the club also acquired two skiffs, common in coastal regattas in West Donegal.

However, these would not be suitable for rowing from Islay, so after much research and visits to other coastal communities, last year the club purchased a Celtic Longboat, a four person coxed boat which has become the favourite of Welsh rowing, and is becoming increasingly popular for sea rowing.

And last week, with the support of IDP, the club took delivery of its second Longboat and it is now ready for the Colmcille Challenge!

Members of the Foyle Rowing Club will travel to Islay this Friday, July 8. Following some celebrations featuring Inishowen-based musicians, two teams of ten men and ten women will row back to Greencastle on Saturday. They will be accompanied by two rowing boats from Islay. Each participating boat will have a RIB and a support



■ The Foyle Rowing Club crews who will be taking their Celtic Longboats to Islay. Included are, Jennifer Gill, Jackie Kelly, Lucy White, Kate McLaughlin, Denise Kelly and Katrina Reynolds. Picture Martin McKeown.

boat in attendance and will be accompanied by the Loughs Agency's Lough Braddan, and sailing boats from Moville Boat Club.

The locals in the Men's Team are: Hugh Kelly, Robert Kelly, Don McGinley, Odhran Hegarty, Thomas Farren, Damien Gillen, John White, Daniel McDaid, Anthony Doogan and Tony Reynolds. The Women's Team are: Denise Kelly, Jackie Kelly, Kate McLaughlin, Katrina Reynolds, Jennifer Gill, Lucy White, Sally Dorrian, Jackie Penson, Siobhan Curran and Brid McGinley.

Saturday evening celebrations will then take place on return to Greencastle in the Marquee. On Sunday, there will be a Craft Fair and a programme of events, including Irish Dancing, cookery demonstrations and bouncy castles, all culminating in a dance in the Marquee to the music of the popular Lee Roy Brown Band.

A spokesperson for Foyle Rowing Club said: "The Colmcille Challenge will be a test of endurance for the rowers who have been preparing for a year.

"Hopefully the weather will be kind!"

The spokesperson thanked all club members who helped with organising the "historic" event, in particular Kathleen McGonagle, Gerard McGonagle and Sean Lake. All funders and sponsors, including Inishowen Development Partnership, Sail West/Malin Waters, Healthwise Pharmacies and Tullis Plastics, were also thanked.

Everyone is welcome to join in the Greencastle celebrations on Saturday July 9 and Sunday July 10. Proceeds will go to the Foyle Hospice. For more information, contact 0868242714

### newsbriefs

#### Bunagee Raft Race

The Bunagee raft race will take place this Sunday at 2.00pm at Bunagee pier, Culdaff. The event is being held as part of a watersports fun weekend which will include car treasure hunt on this Friday and a cycle, duck race and over 40s football match between Gleneely and Culdaff on Saturday.

#### Historical Tour

County Donegal Historical Society will hold their second Field Day of 2011 in Carrowmenagh this Sunday. Meeting at Carrowmenagh Community Centre at 3.00pm, under the guidance of local historian John A McLaughlin, the event will visit the Garden of Remembrance (an eviction site), the Thomas D'Arcy McGee Memorial and Kinnego Bay, of historical importance as one of the landing places for the Spanish Armada. Other places may also be included.

You don't need to be a member of the Historical Society to take part in the Field Days, however, new members are welcome.

# Moville rowers in voyage from Scotland to Greencastle

## Gearing up for mammoth Colmcille Challenge

TWENTY BRAVE oarsmen and women will attempt to row across the North Channel from Scotland back home to Inishowen this Saturday to help patients with cancer.

It will be uncharted waters for Foyle Rowing Club when two teams make the long voyage from Islay in the Hebrides to Greencastle Harbour.

by LINDA McGRORY  
INISHOWENNEWS.COM

Club spokesperson, Brid McGinley, said their 'Colmcille Challenge' was partly inspired by the saint who made a similar journey in the 6th Century from Lough Foyle to Iona. She said the distance from Islay to Greencastle is 44 miles and the journey is expected to take them about 10 hours. Proceeds from the event will go to the Foyle Hospice.

"This voyage has long been viewed by some members as an aspiration, but now the dream is about to come true," said Brid, who will be on the 10-woman team. Her husband, Moville GP, Don McGinley will be on the 10-man team.

"Since its foundation six years ago, our club has gone from strength to strength. Having concentrated on the traditional Foyle punt initially, the club also acquired two skiffs, common in coastal regattas in West Donegal.

"However, these would not be suitable for rowing from Islay, so after much research and visits to other coastal communities, last year the club purchased a Celtic longboat, a four-person coxed boat which has become the favourite of Welsh rowing, and is becoming increasingly popular for sea rowing. This week, with the support of **Inishowen Development Partnership**, the club took delivery of its second longboat and it is now ready for the Colmcille Challenge."

Some club members travelled to Islay in April to meet fellow rowers keen to join the Colmcille Challenge. In turn, a group from Islay travelled to Greencastle last month and strong links have been forged between the groups.

Foyle Rowing Club will tomorrow travel to Islay ahead of their mammoth undertaking the next day starting around dawn.

They will be accompanied by two rowing boats from Islay, two



■ The Foyle Rowing Club crews who will be taking their Celtic Longboats to Islay. Included are Robert Kelly, Sean Lake, Don McGinley, Damien Gillen, Anthony Dougan, Tony Reynolds, Ofran and Hugh Kelly, Jennifer Gill, Jackie Kelly, Lucy White, Kate McLaughlin, Denise Kelly and Katrona Reynolds. Picture Martin McKeown. Inpresspics.com. 5.5.11

rib and two support boats carrying their food and provisions. The Loughs Agency's Lough Braddan will accompany the two teams while they will be cheered on by a number of sailing boats from Moville Boat Club.

Some Inishowen musicians

will travel to Islay on Friday for the celebrations there while there will be a whole weekend of celebrations including entertainment in the marquee in Greencastle on Saturday evening. The festival will culminate in a dance in the marquee on Sunday night to the music of the Lee Roy

Brown band and everyone is welcome. While the challenge will be a "test of endurance", they hope at least that the "weather will be kind", says Brid.

The men's team comprises Hugh Kelly, Robert Kelly, Don McGinley, Odhran Hegarty, Thomas Farren, Damien Gillen,

John White, Daniel McDaid, Anthony Doogan and Tony Reynolds. On the women's team are Denise Kelly, Jackie Kelly, Kate McLaughlin, Katrina Reynolds, Jennifer Gill, Lucy White, Sally Dorrian, Jackie Penson, Siobhan Curran and Brid McGinley.