

Coastal Cruise *18th July 2021 to 5th August 2021*
Lough Neagh Rally *6th August 2021 to 9th August 2021*

Introduction

This document is to provide information for those DA members and guests who plan to join us for either the cruise round the coastal waters of Northern Ireland or for the Lough Neagh Rally. Both events were planned for June 2020 but have been postponed until July 2021 due to lockdowns and travel restrictions. This year, 2021, is the 100th anniversary of the founding of Northern Ireland and this may provide additional events to attend on our travels.

The Coastal Cruise will be a live aboard event, the Lough Neagh Rally is suitable for smaller Drascombes (SSD) and there should be places to camp ashore if necessary. The Lower Bann section of the cruise is also suitable for the smaller boats in the fleet. Due to the length & expected duration of the Coastal Cruise, boats / crews can join at various locations if individual commitments don't allow participation for the entire voyage.

Boats from Scotland can travel directly to Northern Ireland via Larne / Cairnryan, or from England using Belfast / Liverpool (actually via M53 to Birkenhead). Travel from Holyhead to Dublin will require onward travel through the Republic of Ireland. Parking will be organised for cars & trailers in County Antrim, providing quick access to either the NE Coast or to Lough Neagh.

Assumptions

We will be sailing under any restrictions imposed by the UK Government and also the Northern Ireland Executive and as responsible sailors we will of course adhere to any stipulations in force during the event.

At the time of writing the Bann Navigation is closed, as is Rathlin Island to visitors. By delaying the rally until late July it is hoped that these and other venues will be open, and also that our friends from Eire will be allowed to travel North to join us.

Each skipper is responsible for the safety and well-being of her / his craft & crew and any decision to sail on a particular day rests entirely with individual crews. All boats must carry third party insurance as per DA Rally guidelines.

Communications

We will usually be sailing in company but at sea (and on Lough Neagh) boats can become widely spread out. It is suggested that for safety reasons each boat has a licensed VHF so that course changes or requests for assistance, ie rigging failure or engine failure, can be made on a shared channel. We will operate on a designated channel which will be advised during the daily briefing.

We will probably set up a What's App group for the duration of the cruise but this may not be available off shore.

Overview of Ulster Coastal Cruise

The coastal cruise will start on the south coast of County Down, meeting up on 18th July. Possible launching sites are EDYC in Strangford Lough, Carlingford Lough or Warrenpoint Marina. After mustering and launching we will move the trailers to County Antrim for collection at the end of the cruise. The East Coast of County Down has numerous small fishing ports and sheltered anchorages to visit as we travel North to the RSPB bird sanctuary on the Copeland Islands, close to Bangor. As we cross the mouth of Belfast Lough we will be tracked by the naval guns of the WW2 defenses at Grey Point, accessible via a short walk from Seapark.

The Antrim coast beckons with Whitehead, Portmuck and Larne Lough leading to the famous Nine Glens of Antrim. Glenarm Castle is close to the marina and it's coffee and craft shop is to be recommended. Fair Head is the NE corner of Northern Ireland and once rounded we will head for Rathlin Island or Ballycastle. At this point we are only 12 miles from Scotland and the Mull of Kintyre.

The North Channel is the gateway to the Atlantic but after passing Balintoy Harbour and Portrush we will enter the fresh water of the Lower Bann at Coleraine, site of the first settlements on the island of Ireland at Mountsandel. From Coleraine we re-trace the wake of the viking invader Turgesius to Lough Neagh some 40 miles upstream. There are five locks to traverse, with the last near the Eel Fishery at Toome.

Access Points on Route

There are slipways at Carlingford, Kilkeel, Strangford, Bangor Marina, Carrickfergus Harbour, Glenarm and Ballycastle for boats joining or leaving the main fleet. The slipway at Coleraine will provide access for boats joining the passage to Toome. There may be charges for using these slipways.

Resources & Navigation

HM Coastguard shipping forecasts are broadcast on various local VHF channels, with notifications on Ch 16. Local channels are as follows: County Down channel 62 / 63, County Antrim channel 63, North Coast channel 10, all subject to prevailing weather conditions. Broadcasts are at 02:10, 05:10, 11:10, 14:10, 17:10 & 23:10

The Irish Cruising Club publishes the "East & North Coasts of Ireland Sailing Directions" which is highly recommended.

The Admiralty Leisure Folio 5612 covers the coast from Carlingford Lough to Lough Foyle or Imray charts C62, Irish Sea & C64, Belfast Lough to Lough Foyle & Crinan

Ecoean.com has details of harbours round the coasts of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. <https://eoceanic.com/sailing/harbours/europe/ireland/antrim/>

CanoeNI have various canoe trails throughout Northern Ireland with printable maps and useful information: <http://www.canoeni.com/canoe-trails/lower-bann/>

OSNI 1:50,000 map sheets for the shore party are 4, 8, & 14

Safety Concerns

In addition to the normal precautions we take when sailing there are a number of area's on the passage with specific safety concerns:

Carlingford Lough:	Ferry traffic and commercial shipping from Warrenpoint & Greenore Ports Tidal flows at Greenore Hellyhunter Rock N of Carlingford Lough entrance
Dundrum Bay:	Current flows and shallow water at the entrance
Strangford Narrows:	Tidal rip in the narrows, which can be evident some miles offshore
East Coast:	Various low lying rocks and currents from 1.4 to 2.3 kts depending on the tide
Copeland Sound:	Tidal streams can reach up to 5 kts with broken water East of the Copelands
Belfast Lough:	Ferry traffic and commercial shipping to and from Belfast Port
Maidens:	Group of low lying rocks N of Larne, including Hunter Rock
Isle of Muck:	Drying reef covered at high water in the inshore channel
Waterfoot Bay:	Conservation Area, no anchoring unless in emergency
Fairhead:	Strong currents & broken water
Rathlin Sound:	Marine Conservation Area
North Coast:	Rugged (but very beautiful) coast, note & avoid Carrickmannon Rock W of Ballycastle
Barmouth:	Well lit but there can be a dangerous swell as the River Bann meets the sea
Masts:	Note: We will need to lower the masts for the transit up the River Bann

Please note all crews should keep a sharp lookout and be aware of additional hazards not specified in the above summary.

Lough Neagh Rally

The Rally will start on the Six Mile Water in the North East corner of Lough Neagh, assembling at either the public slip on the southern shore or at the private slip at Antrim Boat Club. Those boats which have traveled up the Lower Bann from the North Channel will approach from Toome.

On Saturday morning, leaving Antrim we will head south to Rams Island, a distance of about 18 miles, and spend the night on the jetty or at anchor. Sunday will see us head to Coney Island in the extreme SW of Lough Neagh at the start of the disused Ulster Canal. Sunday will see us sail up the western shore, past the Arboe High Cross and finishing close to the Ballinderry River. Monday's sail will take us back to Antrim, with a possible stop at Cranfield.

Access Points on Route

There are local council slipways at Antrim, Sandy Bay (private), Kinnego, The Battery and Ballyronan Marina. We will organise launching at Antrim, but should any boat need access at the other slips please let the organiser know as you may need to register your boat with a specific council. Other access points are detailed in the CanoeNI guide but these may not have a suitable slipway.

The slipway at Coleraine will provide access for boats joining the passage on the Lower Bann to Toome.

Resources

The definitive guide to Lough Neagh and the River Bann is Michael Savage's "River Bann and Lough Neagh Pilot" available from the IWAI website shop: <https://www.iwai.ie/product/river-bann-and-lough-neagh-pilot-book/>

The Admiralty chart of Lough Neagh is number 2163

CanoeNI have various canoe trails throughout Northern Ireland with printable maps and useful information at: <http://www.canoeni.com/canoe-trails/lough-neagh/>

OSNI 1:50,000 map sheets for the shore party are 14, 19 & 20

Safety Concerns

Lough Neagh is the largest freshwater lake in the British Isles and as such can be likened to an inland sea. It is shallow in comparison to its surface area, which can cause a considerable fetch, especially in the NE when strong winds are blowing from the South and South West.

In addition to the normal precautions we take when sailing, attendees should be aware of commercial traffic in the form of low lying sand barges operating in most parts of the lough.

Please note all crews should keep a sharp lookout and be aware of additional hazards not specified above.

Contact Details:

It will greatly assist in the organisation of trailer placement and launching if prospective attendees advise if they will be attending and where they plan to launch / recover.

Queries: Telephone: +44 28 9443 0966 Please leave a voice mail if no answer

Email the rally application form from DAN to ucc2021@peal-group.com

Express your interest on the Irish Drascombes website <http://www.drascombe.ie/index.php?act=cruises>

David Camlin, Coaster Delta

9th April, 2021