

Dinghy Cruising Association (DCA) – Irish Section.

Bere Island and Castletownbere cruise, May-25.

Hi all, the first (reasonably!) confirmed fixture for Ireland in 2025 is a rally based around Bere Island and Castletownbere coasts. We are looking at a very flexible program, based around 15 May to 21 May (if the wheels fall off for those dates, we will look at an alternative in August). The rally is suitable for Drascombes and smaller (and even bigger) dinghies/sailboats.

The main thrust of the meeting is to explore six "small ports" (basically, inlets), with the intention of staying overnight on board (or wild camping on the immediate shores) in some cases, and otherwise being based on Bere Island itself. There are five inlets on the mainland coast (north and south of Castletown), and one on the eastern tip of Bere Island. The mainland inlets are: Puleen, Dunboy, Bank, Adrigole, and Traffask. Lonehort is on Bere Island. All of these inlets are stunning, sheltered locations, well worth visiting and photographing.

In anticipation of some having to fit in work schedules, it is envisaged that a "larger fleet" could head out on the Friday and Saturday to the more remotely located inlets, and a "smaller fleet" of those without work commitments could continue on to explore the rest up to Wednesday 21 May.

Probably the best place to launch boats is at "Pontoon", just to the east of Castletown. This is a spot where one of the Bere Island ferries (Murphy's) works from, but there are two slipways, as well as a pier for mooring. The adjacent parking area is a good size. As I have an open dinghy with limited storage capacity, it is my intention to get my car (only) on to Bere Island. I will launch "Woodstock" at Pontoon, moor up there, leave the trailer in the car park, take the ferry over with the car to Laurence Cove in Rerrin (on the east end of Bere Island), then return to Pontoon as a foot passenger on the ferry to pick her up and sail back.

Our host on Bere Island is part-time local resident and Drascombe sailor Thom Kleiss who has an intimate knowledge of the area.

Bere Island is likely to be pretty sleepy in May, so we are not 100% sure as to whether we can persuade the local shop and Dessie's Pub to open. On the plus side that means that we will pretty much have the "run of the town"! Toilets at the nearby GAA pitch are open to the public, and we will try and get the showers there up and running as well."

Chris van Schor

crasherchris@gmail.com

+353 87 929 7071