



**The Dun Laoghaire Flying Fifteen Fleet
The First Forty Years
1969 – 2009.**



Fleet Captains

1970 Bryan S. (Teddy) Ryan
1971 Bryan S. (Teddy) Ryan
1972 Michael Halpenny
1973 Anthony Kenny
1974 Sean Nolan
1975 Noel O'Hare
1976 Roddy Hermon
1977 Kevin Blake
1978 Jim Gorman
1979 Ted McCourt
1980 Oliver Sheehy
1981 Martin Crotty
1982 Garth McFarlane
1983 Tony Neiland
1984 Eric Colin
1985 Michael Horgan
1986 Jack Roy
1987 Maurice Byrne
1988 Ray Duggan
1989 Jerry Kingston
1990 Peter O'Shea
1991 Ward Philips
1992 Andrew Mackey
1993 Ian Richardson
1994 David Meeke
1995 Eric Cooney
1996 Ken Dumbleton
1997 Yvonne Lynch
1998 Alan Dooley
1999 Niall Meagher
2000 Ian Mathews
2001 Niall Coleman.
2002 Keith Poole
2003 Ken Dumbleton.
2004 Alan Green
2005 Keith Poole
2006 Tom Murphy
2007 Tom Leonard
2008 Ben Mulligan
2009 Peter Sherry

The Early Years

First Fifteen in Dun Laoire

The first Flying Fifteen Peter O'Shea can remember seeing in Dun Laoire was in 1968 or 1969, moored opposite the Royal Irish Yacht Club. This appeared to be an all-timber varnished boat, with a turtle deck forward. It certainly stood out amongst the cruisers and mermaids with its sleek distinctive shape. Ronan Beirne was working as a young lad in the Irish and also has memories of this boat also.

However, it appears that this was not the first Fifteen in Dun Laoire. That distinction rests with "Ffolly" (no. 215) which David Newmark brought to Dublin in 1963, and, as you can read in "A Century of Sailing", approached D.B.S.C. for a start with the Sundry Cruisers. This was granted, after a certain amount of agonising regarding its seaworthiness (what cheek!), and David sailed "Ffolly" until 1966, after which it was sold back to England.

Fleet Connection

Even at this early stage there was still a Fleet connection, you might say, as none other than Jack Owens, crewed on "Holly" for the three years. For the technically minded, Jack tells us that it was an all-wooden boat, built in England with a "Tormentor" hull, which was the "Windibank" of its day.

1969 - Heavy Winds

It is interesting to speculate that if 1969 had been a season of light winds there might not now be a story to tell regarding a Flying Fifteen Fleet, but instead it was apparently a summer of heavy winds and gales. Arthur Lavery and Teddy (Bryan S.) Ryan had G.P.14. dinghy's, Arthur having previously started up a G.P. fleet in Dun Laoire, and secured a D.B.S.C. start for them. (Not for nothing is he known in the drinking-dens of Dun Laoire as "Fleet-Starter" }

Arthur recalls how, in June 1969 he took his G.P. to Dinghy Week in Baltimore, and as he struggled to hold his boat up in continuous heavy gusts in the inner harbour, observed a fleet of Fifteens sailing with comparative ease to their racing area in the outer Roaringwater Bay. These would have been some of the Kinsale and Northern boats.

"I'm going to get one of those"

A month later he was at the G.P. Nationals in Ballyholme in similar conditions, where he experienced several capsizes and a collision. As he hung on grimly, he again saw the flying Fifteens sailing around their course, without undue fuss or stress, and uttered the immortal words; "I'm going to get one of those".

Back in Dublin he infected Teddy Ryan with similar enthusiasm, and they immediately decided to see if the class could be brought into Dun Laoire. At this stage Arthur had to tread softly; he was on the committee of D.B.S.C. and had already introduced the G.P. 14's as a class, (remember "Fleet-Starter!") so he felt that it might be a bit pushy to be coming up so soon with yet another Fleet! At this point Teddy Ryan led the campaign, and made the necessary approaches to D.B.S.C. A class start would require a minimum of

seven boats, so, obviously, others would have to be approached.

Teddy went down to Kinsale where Bill Godkin (whom Arthur had met at Baltimore) was an agent for "Copland" Fifteens. They went for a sail in a Fifteen and were further convinced of it's suitability for Dublin Bay.

Godkins Boat Yard

On their return an ad was put in "The Irish Times", and every sailing friend and acquaintance was approached. Sean Nolan tells me that on seeing the above ad he cancelled an order for a new Mermaid! At the end of the season Bill Godkin brought a demonstration Fifteen to Dun Laoire in which everyone interested was taken for a sail. It was moored at the George Y. C., where it was immediately an object of interest!

Flying Fifteen Demonstration

Looking back on 1969 now, and reading some of the surviving correspondence, it is very clear that both Teddy and Arthur moved things along at a cracking pace, and nobody concerned allowed the grass to grow under their feet!

GODKIN'S BOATYARD LTD.

TEL. KINSALE 72370

Directors—
W. J. Godkin,
J. E. Wyse.

2nd September, 1969

KINSALE,
CO. CORK.
IRELAND.

Bryan S. Ryan, Esq.,
Hunters Moon,
Cherrygarth,
Mount Merrion,
Dublin.

Dear Bryan,

I now confirm that we will demonstrate the Flying Fifteen in Dun Laogire from the 18th to the 21st September. We are advertising in the personal column of the Irish Times on the 11th, 12th and 15th September, as follows:-

FLYING FIFTEEN
ever sailed one?

Come and sail the new all glass-fibre Flying Fifteen in Dun Laogire from the 18th to 21st September. Phone Godkin's Boatyard Ltd. Kinsale 72370 for details.

Would it be possible for you to arrange with the National Yacht Club for me to use the facilities of that club during my sailing there? Could you also arrange to have a mooring for me in that location?

I am writing to the people in Dublin who have already enquired about Flying Fifteens and will let you know how we get on with them. If you can let possible prospects know of this arrangement, I shall be glad to take them out. I shall be staying in Dublin until Sunday and will trail the boat back that evening, but am keeping Saturday afternoon free to crew for a helmsman of your choice in the C classcruisers race.

Please let me know if these arrangements are O.K. If there is any other way you think we can help in promoting this class, we are only too ready to do so.

Yours sincerely,

Bill
W. J. Godkin

*I'll tell
you about
this on
Saturday
20. Ted.
4/9/69*

A Fifteen for £634

Apart from trying to get the required seven boats for a D.B.S.C. start, Bill Godkin had indicated that if there was an initial order for six new boats, a discount would be given. This was also achieved, (no mean feat!) and Teddy agreed to buy the demonstration boat (Little Lady, No. 1092). The price agreed for a new boat, including sails, trader etc., was (wait for it!) £634.

Formation of Fleet

By the middle of September '69 Bill Godkin was acknowledging firm orders and on 25th September, Teddy Ryan was writing to D.B.S.C. (on Fleet note-paper) stating that an inaugural meeting of the new Flying Fifteen Fleet had been held on the 24th, and promising their utmost co-operation in the matter of getting a fleet start in 1970.

While there were about ten possible boat-owners at the inaugural meeting it is worth recording the initial eight who committed themselves, and spent money at the early date.

These were:

Teddy Ryan	"Little Lady"	No. 1092
Arthur Lavery	"Siobhan"	No. 1257
Michael Halpenny	"Susele"	No. 1258
Ronnie Kavanagh	"Frankie"	No. 1259
Jack Owens	"Ffaoilean"	No. 1260
Noel O'Hare	"Bonnie"	No. 1261
Sean Nolan	"Nic:ac"	No. 1262
Tony Neiland	"Fferocitv"	No. 1263

All of the boats, except Jack Owens, were provided complete by Bill Golkin, so I suppose the owners could be referred to as the Magnificent Seven plus One!

The wooden boat Peter had seen, had, according to Jack Owens, been built here by Albert Foley in the mid-60's, and quite some time later was registered under the number 1296 as "Squalus", and brought into the Fleet in 1970 by Timothy Orr. It is interesting that all the boats were different colours unlike today where we only have one or two blue boats.... which are generally over the line at the starts!!

Jack had been aware of Albert's boat building expertise (Albert had a joiner-v works in Phibsboro), and decided to get a hull and keel from Bill Godkin airc dc:k it Itimscl: ;n timber.

COPLAND BOATS FLYING FLEET

Glassfibre hull fitted with glassfibre deck	£285. -- --.
freight	58. 10. --.
Keel - including fitting and painting £5	27. 10. --.
Rudder and tiller complete	25. 2. 6.
2 Elvström bailers (fitted) @ 83/-d. ea	8. 6. --.
Buoyancy	16. -- --.
Genoa furling gear	11. 15. --.
Hook-up and halyard	6. 6. --.
Proctor gold anodised "B" section mast £58. 14. 6.	
Above mast with spinnaker crane, cleats, s.s. flag halyard cleat, single halyard winch and standard kicking strap winch	69. 11. 9.
Proctor gold anodised "C" section boom	13. 15. 6.
1" dia. spinnaker pole	6. 5. --.
Halyard tensioning lever	3. 5. 4.
Suit of Mountifield sails in vectis terylene, cut to the new design, with window in genoa and including spinnaker @ £19. 10. -	82. 10. --.

Albert was having similar ideas, and had ordered a number of hulls' and keels from Bill Godkin. He kindly offered Jack space in his works, and the use of tools, and so "Ffaoilean" was completed in Phibsboro over the winter.

Meetings were regularly held that winter. The Agenda of a meeting dated 101 12/69 refers to correspondence with Northern measurers; Trailers; publicity (Noel O'Hare); Races (Sean Nolan); Insurance (Jack Owens); hotel bookings for Kinsale Whit week-end and bookin-s for British Nationals, Cork (Teddy Ryan), and an inaugural Fleet meeting for January 1970.

This last was held on 7th January 1970 and the first committee was elected;

Well Organised

What strikes one on reading this early correspondence was the great energy shown by everybody, and the way the Fleet, like Athena, was born fully formed and ready for action! When one reads the fixture card for the first season in 1970 there is no indication that the Fleet had not been on the go for several years.

The 1970 card lists all the D.B.S.C. races and club regattas; the South Coast Championships; the British Nationals at Cork, and the Northern Championships at Lough Neagh. Michael O'Rahilly and Vincent O'Neill in 'An Sionnach Rua' (1266) won the Plymouth Cup at the British National a cup won this year by Alan Green sailing with Charles Athorp from the UK. Also organised for that first season was a Ladies Race; the Captain's Prize, The Life-boat Pennant, and the Round-the-Island Race. As well as the D.B.S.C. prizes, the 1970 card lists the Godkin Trophy (Round-the-Island Race); the Bryan S. Ryan Trophy (Best Boat Saturday Races). There were also Fleet championship and Handicap Trophies for Thursdays, and the Jack Kennedy Trophy, which appeared to be for one race.

Captain - Bryan S. Ryan

Vice-Captain - Noel O'Hare

Treasurer - Ronnie Kavanagh

Record Keeper - Jack Owens

Secretary - Michael Halpenny subscription was set at £1.00!



DUN LAOGHAIRE FLYING FIFTEEN FLEET

Inaugural Meeting to be held in the Royal St. George Yacht Club
(by kind permission) on Wednesday 7th January, 1970 at 8 p. m.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 1969.
2. Matters arising out of the minutes.
3. Apologies
4. Election of Fleet Captain. ✓
5. Election of Vice Captain. ✓
6. Election of Hon. Treasurer. ✓
7. Election of Record Keeper.
8. Election of Hon. Secretary. ✓
9. Decide on a subscription. ✓
10. Proposals re rules and constitution. ✓
11. Correspondence:- Dublin Bay Sailing Club
Copland Boats
Jack Sturton
12. Publicity:- report by Noel O'Hare ✓
13. Fixtures:- report by Seamus Ryan ✓
14. Race Programme:- report by Sean Nolan ✓
15. Handicapping:- report by Arthur Lavery ✓
16. Hotel reservation for National Championships in September 1970
report by Seamus Ryan
17. Register of boat names and sail numbers by the 13/1/70
18. Any other business
19. Next meeting, date and venue

Trophies

Note: Names and Sail Numbers required by 31/1/70 R. Y. A., 5 Burlington Gate,
London S. W. 1.

Directors: W. J. Godkin J. F. Wyse

Fleet Chaplain

The list of boat-owners for that first season is no less impressive. As well as the Magnificent etc., there were twelve registered boats, (and a few hopeful names!). People now might be interested to know that the Fleet then also had an informal Fleet chaplain! One of the 1970 boats was Farfalla (No. 1212) owned by Father Larry O'Sullivan, I don't think he got much of a chance to race it. I imagine Saturday confessions would have spoiled that!

Also amongst the pioneer was Fred Espey in "Suzanne" (No. 23!), Morgan and Oliver Sheehy in "Dragon One" (No. 170), Seamus Ryan in "Splinter" (No. 609), Ken Ryan (brother of Teddy) in "Tina" (No. 920), Frank Devitt in "Lucy Glitters" (No. 1266), Michael O'Rahilly and Vincent O'Neill in "An Sionnach Ruadh" (No. 1268), Timothy Orr in "Squalus" (No. 1296), Paddy Kirwan in "Scoubidou" (No. 1329), and Oliver O'Hare (brother of Noel) in "dolly Bloom" (No. 1330). Dermot Ryan, well-known businessman, got "Clyde" (No. 1264) to match his friend Noel's "Bonnie" (Bonnie and Clyde, geddit!) Anthony Kenny bought "Ulysses" (No. 1267). Albert Foley booked a slot for "Angela 111", but I do not think it ever appeared (no number). Eddie Cotter is listed boatless, but appears in 1971 with "Ffoto Finish" (No. 1338). A Greg Whelan is listed, boatless, but never appears.

1970 Boat Show

There was a boat-Show at the R.D.S. in 1970 and a further boost to the new fleet was given by the appearance there of a shiny new "Susele", and an equally shiny "Ffaoiiean", exhibited by Godkin's Boatyard and Albert. Foley respectively. The Flying Fifteens had arrived in Dun Laoire!

Anxious Travellers

As can be seen, the Dun Laoire Fifteeners were anxious to travel from the first year of the Fleet. Unfortunately the start of the Fleet coincided with the outbreak of the political strife in the North and after 1971 no-one seems to have gone North again until either 1978 or 1979 when Sean and Brenda Nolan and Roddy and Jill Hermon travelled North once more,

They were solemnly warned to disguise themselves heavily, stay in at night, and visit no pubs. Whatever about the disguise, they stayed out all night, went to every pub that would let them in, and had a great time!

In the following years other boats followed, and existing boats changed hands, and, sometimes changed names. Noel Cautley appeared with "Ffraulein" (No. 680) in 1972 and presented the "Halfway Mug". In the same year a certain Maurice Doyle bought "Lucy Glitters". Two of Albert Foley's boats arrived from Phibsboro ("Scolta" No. 1471, Paddy Birmingham and P O'Shea and "Kentucky Helen" No. 1472, Hal Bleakly).

Women & Family Fifteeners

Unlike some other fleets, the Fifteens have always had a prominent women's presence at the sailing end of things. One of the attractions of the Fifteen has been its requirement for only one crew. This could easily be filled by a sailing spouse, and this was evident in the early years when Maureen Halpenny crewed with Michael, Brenda Nolan with Sean, Zita

O'Hare with Noel and Angela Neiland with Tony, and in subsequent years husband and wife teams were not uncommon. What better example than the lively Ian and Fiona Richardson, Adrain & Pamela Cooper, Eddie & Dara Totterdall, Francis & Clive Brandon and Niall and Nikki Meagher whose dedication and efforts continue to astound us! It was a joy to the fleet and all women sailors when in 2003 and 2005 a husband and wife combination won the worlds!

Other family connections include the Cahill brothers Hugh and Michael, never a dull moment there! Michael and Seamus Quinn also featured in the late 90's. There is a multitude of Mulvin's sailing at the moment with David sailing with Ronan Beirne in 3919 and Valerie & Linda sailing their recently aquired 3283.

Best father and son has to be Sean and Paul Nolan but other sons of Fifteneers have come back to the fleet obviously impressed as babies, John Lavery son of Arthur, Michael Mc Cambridge son of John, Dave Gorman son of Jim to name but a few.

Fleet Sex Therapist

Boat owing women have also made their presence felt, and the first of these was Roleen Moloney, with Clive Castle, who bought "Fflipper"(No. 1344) in 1971; Anne-Maric 'McGoris who had "Oltra" (No. 1350) in 1980, and in more recent years Cathy McAleavy brought in "Gulf Stream" (No. 3198), apparently a birthday present for the Worlds in Dublin. Yvonne Lynch sailed "Ffoggy" (No. 3116) and Scandal, Cathy Irwin (No. ????)), Ann Reihill (No. ????) , Patrica Redlich with "Wild Oats" (No. 3147) and most recently Valerie Mulvin sailing in 3283 and Yvonne Slater. We may no longer have a fleet chaplain, but prior to her departure to Waterford in Patricia for many years we had our own resident psychiatrist, sex therapist, and agony aunt, some of the lads in recent years have continued in this role since!

Fleet Trophies

By 1972 most of the Fleet trophies have been presented, when Anthony Kenny gave the beautiful "Chase" trophy, which he had specially designed. The other major trophy to arrive was the "Flying Fifteen Gun" presented by Michael Halpenny, and again specially made. The 1974 card list a "Mid-Season" trophy, but by 1979 we have the "Mid-week Cup" presented by Kevin Blake.

In B S Ryan Cup was lost and Ken Dumpleton kindly and generously donated a new cup that is a superb design with all the names added to it.

After Frank Burns died suddenly in 1997 it was decided by the then committee to have a prize in his honour. This started off as a team racing prize but has recently changed to a prize for the winning crew for the Thursday series, a series that should go on for many years to come.

In 2007 Frank Burgess came up with a trophy called Endeavour for the person making huge efforts above and beyond the call of duty. This was won by Joe Coughlan and by Joe Hickey last year. It is a surprise that Frank hasn't won it himself yet!

Key People

In any organised group there are always people who make their mark, and play a major role in the development of events. In the Dun Laoire Fleet, (apart from the founding fathers!) I think the first of these was Roddy and Jill Hermon, who originally hailed from Yorkshire, and arrived in Dublin in 1971 after 20 years in Karachi. In 1972 they bought

"Dustbin" re-named it "Shabash" and were another of the husband and wife teams from then until 1987, with two short breaks in Cork and London. In recent years Ken Dumpleton, Alan Dooley and of course Gerry Donleavy have had numerous boats and passed them on through the fleet.

October Team Racing

The years 1976 `77 and `78 are shrouded in mystery, due to the fixture cards missing for those years, and no fleet records existing before 1979, but on the card for 1979 the "Shabash" Trophy for invitation team racing is listed, and this was presented by Roddy, who was instrumental in starting the team racing as an out-of season event in early October. This led, in turn, to the October open meeting, which then became the East Coast Championships.

The Fleet started with a great burst of energy, but as is often the case, things flag a little after that, and a certain amount of this was evident in Dun Laoire, also. Sean Nolan tells us that when he was Captain in 1974 (it must be his turn again soon) there were, in reality only about eight active boats out of a rather impressive list of twenty five. A large part of his evenings were spent in `phoning and cajoling people to turn out for races, so that a reasonable number of boats would appear on the D.B.S.C. starting line. He obviously did his work well, as the Fleet is still here!

Generosity & Hospitality

In the early years of the Fleet every thing appeared to have been done on a communal basis. People travelling to events in Dub Laoire were often put up in Fleet members' houses. The Captain's drink's party was held in the Captain's house up to 1990 (when things got totally out of hand!), and one of the social high points of the season was the Team-Racing Party, held on alternate years in the Hermons' house and Sean Nolan's' house. A lot of the food was made by Jill and Brenda, with help from various F.F. wives. The records state that in 1980 a surplus of £200 was made on the Team Racing, partly due to a "good deal" done by Jill Hermon with the suppliers (no better woman!)

Gowan Trophy

However, by then, commercial pressures were starting to make themselves felt. The annual dinner had incurred a loss of £5 in 1979 (shock; horror!), and in 1980 sponsorship for the Team-Racing is being mentioned. As it turned out sponsorship was provided by Gowan Motors, the car distributors, and so effectively was this managed, that there was a modest surplus left after the Team-Racing, with which it was decided to purchase a perpetual trophy for the "frost-bite" series, and hence the Gowan Trophy.

A national Flying Fifteen association is being mooted, but subsequently decided against. Also in that year "Flying Merry" (No. 2300) sailed by Morgan and Oliver Sheedy, is recorded as finishing "in the top half" of the fleet at the British Nationals in the Clyde.

Storm Damage

There must have been some bad weather in 1981 because Michael Horgan and Roddy Hermon lost "Foklore" and Taffle" respectively in a storm (on moorings", and, as a result, acquired "Flying Merry" and Ramtaffer" (No. 2715). Younger readers please remember that Fifteen were not always dry-sailed; up to the early ninties the Fleet was on moorings up in the main harbour and in the 'patch' outside the NYC, and types of anti-fouling were always the subject of deep conversation. There is correspondence with International Paints on the subject, (who now remembers "Graphkill" etc.,?) and people spoke of "Micron" in hushed tones'

Also in 1981 there was an attempt by D.B.S.C. to shift the Fleet from Thursdays to Tuesdays with the dinghys, but this was firmly resisted.

Records show that the 1981 Team Racing was also affected by bad weather, but despite Saturday afternoon being blown out 10 teams competed in 35 races over the week-end. Avril Harris, who later partnered Maurice Walsh in "Foxbat" (No. 2164), was an excellent O.O.D. for these events, and her husband Theo always provided and manned a rescue boat. Martin Crotty was another Fleet member who gave valuable assistance as O.O.D. on various occasions, and also inaugurated, through his business, the new design for the fixture card in 1981.

1982 - Sinking of the Gaffer

If 1981 had boats sinking at moorings, the following year saw a more spectacular sinking at sea, but fortunately, without any illeffects. Eric Colin, sailing "Gaffer" (No. 2383), and crewed by John McCambridge, was racing in May near Daikey Island, when they broached and filled. Obviously the "filling" was of a serious nature for "Gaffer" could not be bailed out or righted, and just stayed afloat long enough for Eric and John to step aboard a passing Ruffian "Nuit St. George". They weren't allowed to forget this escapade for a while, and the ensuing epic poem of 24 verses by Tom O'Connor (who wishes to remain anonymous!) ensured this.

The Sinking of the Gaffer

This is the tale of the shipwreck of The Gaffer off Dalkey Island in May, 1982 while engaged in a Flying Fifteen class race. Eric Colin was the Captain and John McCambridge, the well-known, rich, parsimonious Dublin merchant was crew. The sinking is a mystery to this day and the wreck was never recovered. Rumours of gun-running, dope-smuggling, bullion-running and white slave traffic have been hotly denied by Eric and John. Garda investigations were never completed.

It was the good ship Gaffer,
A Sea-Craft staunch and true,
Set out to race to Dalkey
With its Captain and its crew.

The Captain, Eric Colin,
Gave orders for to start
And the Crewman John McCambridge
Set to with a stout heart.

Decrept John McCambridge,
Aged two score years and ten,
Was showing signs of wear and tear,
A tippler amongst Men.

"Hoist the Jib" said Eric
"Aye-Aye Sir" shouted John
The Jib he soon had hoisted
And the great sea race was on.

Oh fearless John McCambridge
Set out upon those seas
The winds howled hard behind them
Brass monkeys they would freeze.

"Hoist the Main-Sail Crew Man"
Said Eric with a shout
McCambridge leaped to action
And the Main-Sail billowed out.

In spite of all their efforts
The other ships soon passed
Intrepid John McCambridge
And Eric — they were last.

"More sail, more sail!" roared Eric
And John piled on more sail
For he was so determined
That the Gaffer would not fail.

Upon the good ship Gaffer
Brave John McCambridge toiled
The creaking masts protested
As the waves they roared and boiled.

But nearing Dalkey Island
Before they realised
The howling wind caught hold of it
And the bloody ship capsized.

"All hands on deck me hearties
All hands now to the sheets"
The Captain yelled his orders
As the waves sloshed round their feet.

The Author of this Epic Poem, Tom O'Connor, who wishes to remain anonymous, would like to extend thanks to the following: Jack Kirwan for assistance in establishing some of the facts surrounding this rather mysterious affair. It is no coincidence that Jack comes very well out of the whole thing.

Fintan Cairns for help with some technical terms and for the loan of his wife Hilary for the Palmerston First XV after training last Thursday. Mrs Maureen (Mo) McCambridge, for some details of John's personal life (Ugh).

The twelve lovely McCambridge children who just wanted to be mentioned.

The Maritime Museum in Dun Laoghaire for details of John's early life.

Larry Curran without whom the entire incident would have been consigned to merciful obscurity and without whom the population of this country would not be so large.

The copyright in this masterpiece is vested in the Author. Serial rights have been sold to "The Messenger" in Ireland and to "Playboy" in England. Film rights are being negotiated with Hammer Films.

All characters are fictitious and any resemblance to any person living or dead is coincidental other than Jack Kirwan and Eric Colin who sometimes resemble the living and John McCambridge who almost always doesn't.

"Oh Jays, I think we're sinkin"
Said John, his face all white
As he took the balling bucket
And his knees both shook in fright.

"Oh me wife and lovely children
I'll never see them more
And who will now look after
Me Ranelagh Grocery Store"

Eric tried to comfort him
But all to no avail
When there on the Horizon
They spied a friendly sail.

"Ahoj, ahoj and S.O.S.
May-Day for Jaysus sake"
Roared fearful John McCambridge
As his body it did quake.

It was the good ship Nult St. George
That soon hove into view
With its Captain, bold Jack Kirwan,
And his tried and trusted crew.

They threw some ropes and tried
to pull
The Gaffer to the shore
But the Gaffer she was finished
And just sank more and more.

The Captain and the Crewman
Were rescued by bold Jack
And craven John McCambridge
To land was taken back.

"Oh thank you, thank you, thank you"
Wept John upon his knees
And tried and tried to kiss Jack's ring
Which made that brave man freeze.

The mystery of that shipwreck
Has puzzled many a mind
For in spite of all their efforts
The wreck they could not find.

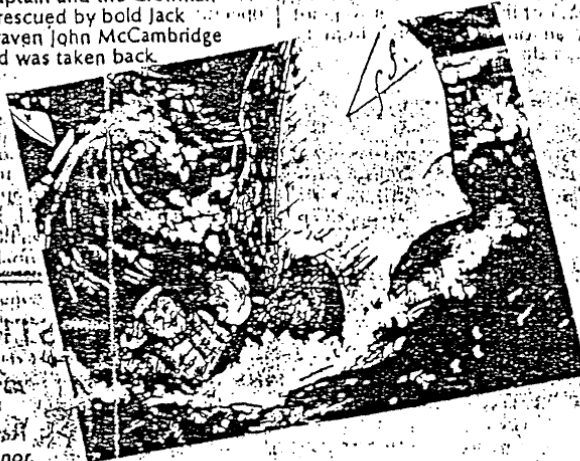
It's said by some the air tanks
Were really filled with gold
By greedy John McCambridge
In England to be sold!

Now old sea-dog McCambridge
Holds forth upon the pier
And like the Ancient Mariner
Will try to bend your ear.

He'll tell the tale of Gaffer,
He'll say that it was true
That the Captain Eric Colin
Was rescued by his Crew.

But don't listen to the liar,
He's gone around the bend
For I have told you all the facts
And now — this is —

THE END.



This poem should be compulsory reading for all those about to check their buoyancy bags! Despite going down under full sail, nothing of "Gaffer" was ever seen again.

1982 - Fleet Bank Account

At this stage the fleet finances must have been getting significant because it was decided to open a Fleet account in 1982. Up to then each treasurer kept the Fleet money in his own account. It speaks much for the honesty of the Treasurers, and the modesty of the sums involved, that nobody is mentioned as having absconded with the loot!

1983 - Six New Boats

1983 dawned bright with a mention in the records of six new boats. Amongst these was Jack Roy, who bought "Frankie"; Jerry O'Neill who bought 1261, now called, "Bluebell"; Ray Duggan who arrived with "Osprey" (No. 1343); and David Algeo with "Folklore 11" (No. 2130). Maurice Byrne complained about his mooring allocation, and there was "some considerable upset" because some boats were disqualified due to not meeting the safety standards!

1984 - Arrival of the Windibank

As you may know, the National Yacht Club is rather good at burning itself down. It did this in 1984 and because of this there was no Team-Racing in October. However this is jumping ahead a bit. This was also the year in which the dreaded word "Windibank" first appeared, where there is a report of three arriving in the Fleet. Two of these probably were "Frizby" (No. 1-929) _ Jack Roy, and "Mary Foo" (No. 2924) bought by Jerry O'Neill. The third may have been "An Chuileann" (No. 2937) not listed until 1985, owned by Maurice Byrne.

Nothing daunted, Eric Colin and John McCambridge returned to the fray with another boat "Ffootless" (No. 2619). Could this be a clue as to why "Gaffer" sank?

Success in the 84 Worlds

The new Windibank must have suited Jack Roy because in 1984 the World Championships were held in Kinsale, and Jack, crewed by Mal Nolan, was 19th overall. Obviously Olympic courses were growing in frequency and importance, because Dermot Baker, who had come into the Fleet in 1980 with "Shillelagh" (No. 2463), presented the "Hells' Gate Trophy" for best boat in Olympic Courses which is now used for the Sunday series

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1985 - Computerisation

Like everything else, the Fleet had to move with the times and in 1985 computerised results were introduced for important Fleet events, but with the safeguard of a parallel manual system, (just to be sure!) Teddy Ryan had done some computerised results through his office system, and subsequently Ward Phillips had continued the work, as computers are his speciality.

The records show first contacts a Mayo S.C fleet newly formed by ex fireball sailor John Gordon. They also mention a very rough N.Y.C Regatta, with several boats towed into the harbour, and subsequent queries re buoyancy!

Sad Loss

Unfortunately 1985 also had its' down-side with the death, shortly after Christmas of Noel O'Hare, which was a shock to all who knew him. Noel had left the Fleet around 1982, but maintained contact with all his Fleet friends. While he was sailing with us he was Mr. Personality of the Fleet, as well as being a top-class sailor. He was a most enthusiastic founding member of the Fleet. He had a very good dental practice, and it is said that during 1969-70 he promised a discount to any of his clients who bought a Fifteen!

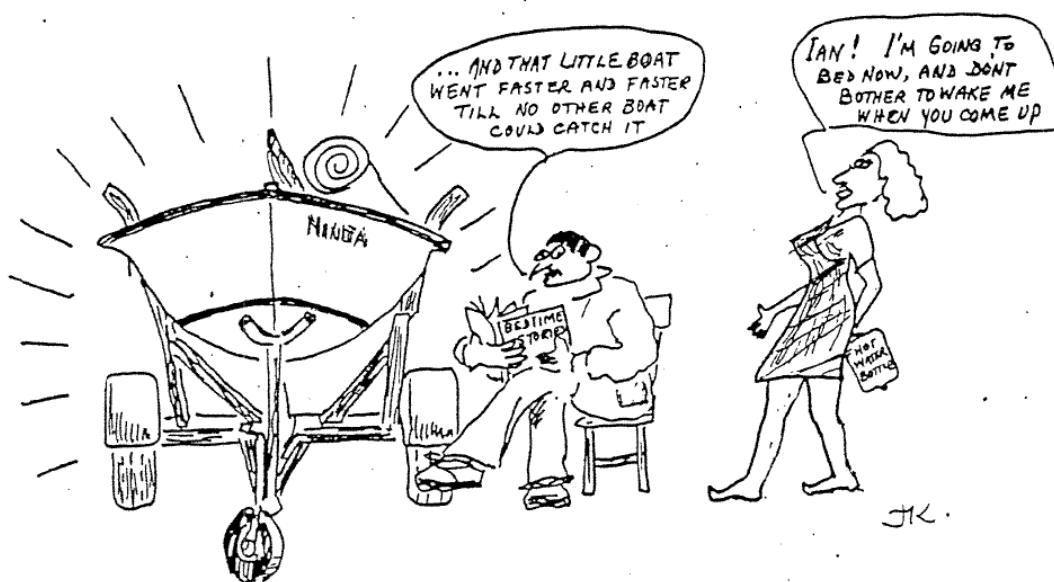
1986 - Watershed Year

1986 was a watershed year for the Fleet, in that under the Captaincy of Jack Roy, it took a new direction with an emphasis on Olympic Courses and dry-sailing. Jack had joined the Fleet in 1983, having bought "Frankie" and now was Captain and had his new Windibank with Mal Nowlan, and the two of them were filled with missionary zeal and youthful energy! (Jack maintains that when he joined the fleet, he lowered the average fleet age by 20 years !). The National Y.C. (where most of the fleet lives) got an electric winch, and gradually boats came off moorings and onto the hard.

Under "Captain Bligh" Roy training courses and lectures were set up and taken very seriously ! No longer were they light-hearted fun events. The records show that the D.B.S.C. race for Fifteens was cancelled for Saturday 17th May, and a full days training was held instead, preceded by a lecture on the Friday night !

Tuning Talks

Invaluable help was given at these events by Gerry Donleavy and Roger Bannon, who gave freely of their time and expertise, when asked to do so. As far back as 1979 there is mention of Gerry giving talks on tuning and tactics.



'Jerry Kingston illustrates the level of enthusiasm generated by the tuning talks'

Part of the reason for all this hard work was undoubtedly the holding of the Irish Championships at the N.Y.C. in 1986, which was won by Roger Bannon and John Davies in "Strange Magic" (No. 3037), with Gerry Donleavy and Dave O'Brien in "The Real Thing" (No. 3108) coming third.

Olympic Courses

Roger Bannon helped to organise some Saturday Olympic Courses - with D.B.S.C., which was the start of the gradual move to Olympic Courses for every Saturday. Some Olympic Courses had been held in previous years, in 1979 there is mention of the Fifteens, Dragons and Ruffians each organising one Olympic-style race in the season.

1986 was also the last year in the Fleet for Teddy Ryan, who by this stage had Little Lady III (No.2292), which he sold to Brody Sweeney. I think Teddy, at this stage, wanted something bigger and drier!

1986 - Hurricane Charlie

Another event in that year which also changed the characteristics of the Fleet was the arrival of Hurricane Charlie over the night of August 25th/26th. As people will, no doubt, remember, this caused considerable damage, and none less than amongst the boats in Dun Laoire Harbour. Six Flying Fifteens were wrecked on their moorings, mostly by loose boats running through them, and on the morning of the 26th the N.Y.C. slip was littered with bits of Fifteens!

Far from being down-cast, the "lucky" six owners went gleefully to claim their insurance and invest in new Windibanks! We now had a Fleet divided between Windibank-type boats and non-Windis, and the Windis were so potent that for a while the "Mid-week" and Halfway" prizes had to be reserved for the non-windis!

There had been a fear expressed that the loss of six active boats suddenly, might mean the departure of the skippers to try other classes, and a special meeting was held on the 31 st August to review this event. Any records of this meeting are missing, but obviously fears were unfounded. Undoubtedly the chance to get a Windibank was too good to miss!

Due to everybody being exhausted after helping with the Irish Championship, nobody could face organising the complicated Team Racing, so an open meeting was set up for the same October weekend. This proved even more popular and was to be the start of greater things. ,

Foundation of F.F.A.I.

Lastly in 1986 the new Flying Fifteen Association of Ireland (F.F.A.I.) was formed, with Jim Rogers from the North as first President, and Jack Roy (as if he wasn't busy enough!) as Secretary.

Mayo S. C. (based near Westport) was contacting Dun Laoire in 1987 regarding Fifteens that might be for sale, as people there felt it would be a very suitable boat for Clew Bay.

Heineken Sponsorship

Running events was incurring serious money, and sponsorship was secured from Heineken, who have been most helpful to the Fleet since. Roger Bannon's "Black Magic" was exhibited at the Boat Show, and various Fleet members were pressed into service to man the stand!

Incidentally one could see why sponsorship was becoming necessary; the cost of running the October Open Meeting was put at over £1,700.

Ramtaffer Trophy

Sadly 1987 saw the departure of Roddy and Jill from the Fleet. Roddy had retired, and was setting up a sailing school in Scotland. A dinner and presentation in recognition of their service to the fleet was held in August, and as a parting gift Roddy gave the "Ramtaffer" trophy to the fleet.

Demise of Team Racing

This same year saw the demise of the Team Racing. There had been a certain falling off in visiting team numbers, and the 1986 Open Meeting had been so enjoyable that it was decided to continue this event and call it the Leinster Open Meeting to suit the plans of the newly formed F.F.A.I. The "Shabash" Trophy would become the trophy for this new event. This is now the East Coast Championship Trophy.

1987 - Captain Maurice Byrne

Maurice Byrne was Captain this year, and threw a Captain's Party of such lavishness in his house (complete with a group of four singers!) that the incoming Captain (Ray Duggan) was observed to have a distinctly worried look, and was heard enquiring if the Dubliners would be expensive to hire for a night!

Bid for World Championships

The Flying Fifteen World Championship was due in 1992, and already via the F.F.A.I. efforts were being made to bring it to Ireland, and the Dun Laoire Fleet intended to see that it would take place in Dun Laoire! F.F.A.I. meetings were held in 1988 to hear submissions from various clubs throughout Ireland_

Gold & Silver Fleets

The business of a fair division of the spoils at prize-giving time was solved by the introduction of a "gold" and "silver" Fleet category, although this did not stop some people from grumbling about this particular allocation!

1988 - Word Perfect Ray

We find Ray Duggan, that year's Captain, (and author of very witty newsletters), writing to the 'N.Y.C. Head Boatman thanking him for towing in a Fifteen after the first race of the season "in particularly difficult circumstances". Who was this?, and whose buoyancy was not A.O.K.? Flying Low has been mentioned as a contender for this!

Ray also records in a June newsletter the great performance of Fleet boats at the Southern

Championships. Apparently they won all but one of the prizes, but, alas, no names are mentioned!

1988 - British National Champion

The outstanding event of 1988 for the Fleet must surely be Gerry Donleavy's performance at the British Championships on the Clyde where he took first place, in "The Real Thing" (No. 3108), crewed ~ by Dave O'Brien, becoming British National Champion! As if this wasn't enough they went on, some weeks later, to come in 9th overall in the world championships at Lowestoft! In the diningroom of the National Y.C. you will see a fine oil-painting of Gerry and Dave, painted on the spot from one of the Clyde mark-boats, as they powered past!

In this year, also, the East Coast championships was run very efficiently by the Dun Laoire Motor Yacht Club, being the club other than the N.Y.C. with the greatest number of Fifteens.

There was a Boat Show at the Point Depot in 1989, and consideration was given to showing another fifteen. Jack Roy's new boat Ffozzv (No. 3116) was selected, but when it was discovered that it would have to be hoisted onto a balcony, Jack, or somebody, demurred, and , in the end, no boat went in!

Marinas

The Fleet was now getting worried about the numerous marinas that were promised to Dun Laoire! Remember, that although there were eleven boats on the platform at N.Y.C. there were still thirteen on moorings opposite the National (apart from those at the DMYC. and one or two at the George and Irish), and it looked as if every mooring opposite the National would be wiped out by said marinas! From the early 1990's most boats started to dry sail from the extended new platform in the NYC. A marina was eventually built in front of the Irish and there are now talks about having another marina in front of the George and National.

Bray Fleet

There was now a Fifteen Fleet at Bray, and a number of Dun Laoire boats travelled to a very enjoyable, and well-organised, inaugural open meeting .

Fleet Prophet

Apart from Westport, Fleet members also travelled North to the National Championships at Kircubbin. Now if Westport had been enjoyable and well-organised, Kircubbin, despite being a National championship, lacked a certain little something! For one thing the weather was not of the best and, secondly, the locals seemed to take a very casual view of launching and retrieving facilities, and generally making things easy for visiting boats! "Yea verily, this is a fun event", was the cry sent up by the Fleet prophet, Raymond of Stillorgan, who excoriated the event in his book of Odyffeus (verses 91:1 to 91:12).

Book of Oddyfeyues

91:1 And it came to pass, that e call went ourt to all 14teenen to assemble at IGrqubbin Saiting Club for the National Championships- When this was made known, five of the faithful Dun Laoghaire boats travelled North with a team that include 4 ex-c.aptains but no sxchampions including from the province of hGnsate near Cortc Arc from the beginning, great and wondrous were encountered such that alit exclaimed 'Yea, verity this is a fun event'.

91.2 In race one, Ward Phit:ips found that his relief crew refused ;o leave the Committee Boat at *.%e eleventh hour whereupon he sailed singie handed into 7th place whereupon he was immediately disqualified. for sailing singfe handed is not nghtous in the eyes of The ft. After which the Dun Laoghaire sailors showed their displeasure by refusing to partake in Vie cold showers in Me clubhouse but instead gave to the two elders of the team the task of leading Ward down the path of debilitation.

91:3 On the following morning. the waters had withdrawn from the firmamont of the slipway and on seeing this the Dun Lacighairs followers again exclaimed 'Yea, verily this is a fun event for now we will get to push our boats and trailers out onto the sand until the water is lapping around our armpits'.

91:4 And such was the fun to be had in this that the local People all left so that they would not be tempted to lend assistance and thus reduce the pleasure of the visitors. But the pun Laoghaire followers refused to socumb and instead. donning the garment of a dry suit Mat Nowlan single handed pushed each boat and skipper into the wasers, leaving the assembled crowds standing on The shores wondrous as to how they would reach Their boats foe no launch was to hanC.

91.5 Despite these distractions race two got under way amidst a great contumetation of flags and guns and Mwnce Byrne rounded the first weather mark in 4th position. But the winos refused to blow steadily and he fell by the wayside but the elders of the to4lowen. Ted and John finished in third place having been in the lead for some short time. And the kindness of he who wore the dry suit was rewarded far his skipper was moved from last posQior at half. way stage to 7th at the finish.

911A After partaking of an aided uate repaet, all assembled for race 3 and tan Fichardson sailed with fortitude to fill the fourth poodlon at the early stages of the race but the winds kept Increasing to a force known as rive and alas Ian could not hold up. But many and varied were the happenings in that race. Ward Phillips thought there was a recall end

Preparation for 92 Worlds

waited for all to return but such was not to be. Maurice Byrne's crew smote his knee upon a hard object. and could partake no further

91:7 8uC greatest at all was in the middle of the boat when Mal had cause to exclaim 'Yea, verily this is a wondrous place for look ahead, there are seagullS walking on the watee-But his skipper of Fitte faith did not believe him and changed direction just in time to avoid hitting the submerged land mass. Not so Lucky was one of the brethern from Carrickfsgus who had neither laith nor sharp eyesight and went aground; of such happenings are National Championships made great.

91:8 When the and came to that race, though the days meniment was far from over, Jack Roy finished in 4th place followed further down the fleet by Ted, tan, Ward and Maurice.

919 When the faithful came to go ashore they found the the onshore wind and the tolerant a=do of the hosts added further to the occasion as they stood alongside each other in the water and held the boats as they bumped and crashed against each other. Two of the People of the club almost spoiled the merriment by coming into the water to he:p but they were forgiven as they were but babes, being no more that 11 or 12 years on Lnis earth

91:10 One Samaritan came forward with a small van for towing and his services were accepted as the throng were anxious to get ashore to partake in !he new game of 'find somewhere to leave your boat as the day trippers in the bar have parked all over the boatyard". And so, after some small amount of refreshment the second day came to a close

91:11 And on the morning of the third day, the muttctude assembled to find that the wind was blouv+i.n9 again at force five and the prophets among them were forecasting an increase in its svenght And the visAora cried again 'Yea verily this is a fun evenL for now we get to launch and retrieve our boats in gale force oonditions and if we have gear failure we wilt be able to return to shore in solitude. for rescue launches are not to be found in abundance'.

91:12 And Jack son of John, said 'fee. verily this is a load of horse manure. Cm going home'. And a paeen of acctaimatlon arose and the boats derigged, a short time alter which the Committee boat sounded an indefinite postponement and word was That a race might be held later that afternoon. But of this the visitors have no knowledge for they had pecred wtiei: ten!s mr, ; luti•- r boats and shook

the Cua',om tteir anl.ais and left -

And know ye all Ithat this account is indeed True, for who could invent such a taJe.

By this stage plans for the 1992 World Championships had firmed up to the extent that it

was now going to be held in- Dun Laoire in the National Y. C. A special committee was set up in 1990 chaired by Michael Horgan, who is very experienced in such matters. The "" event would be organised by the club, and not by the Fleet, but it still meant a lot of work for Fleet members.

Jack Roy and Mal Nowlan were in the thick of things, and Paddy Lynch helped with sponsorship plans through his work contacts. Martin McCarthy gave invaluable advice regarding publicity, which came from his newspaper reports on his other love, motor-sport.

As well as working on this committee, Mal had also the task of running Peter O Shea as Captain for 1990, which he did admirably (I think it's the legal training), and made him feel he was always on top of things, as any good Fleet secretary would do!

1990

A handi-cap system was worked out for championships involving gold, silver and bronze Fleets which appeared to work, and would stop the ungodly from manoeuvring themselves into a silver or bronze prize!

Westport had been such a success in 1989 that the National Championships were held there in 1990. This was a lively event in rather heavy weather, and was won by Gerry Donleavy, crewed by Margaret Conway. By now the October Open Meeting was firmly established as the East Coast Championship and was attracting in the region of 40 to 45 boats. It had become especially popular with Northern Boats as the October date meant they could participate after their own season had finished.

The cost of running the East Coast Championship in 1990 was put at about £3100, and again Heineken came to the rescue with sponsorship of £1,000 plus prizes.

The week-end of that October was distinguished by heavy weather, with (if I remember rightly) Saturday blown out, and three short races run on a rather windy Sunday. It was windy enough for one of the boats to capsize and sink, fortunately without fatalities or injuries. Unlike "Gaffer" this boat was seen again - strewn all over Sandymount strand!

Heineken Trophy

At the dinner of this championship, Heineken presented a magnificent silver plate as a perpetual trophy for the best Dun Laoire boat in a season. It's first recipient was Gerry Donleavy, in recognition of his outstanding performances, and services to the fleet. As this trophy was a well kept secret from everybody (except that year's committee), none was more surprised than Gerry!

This was also the last year for some time that the Captains Drinks Party was held in the captains house. Over the years it had grown from simple drinks, to food, drink, and how's-your-father (and small choirs!), and as the fleet had had for some time been subsidising it, it was decided that it would be held in one of the clubs in future. A last link was broken with one of the fleet traditions!

92 World's Committee

The world championships were now looming up fast, and a meeting was held in January 1991 to organise squad training for this event. Meetings of the special committee, under Michael Horgan, were convened at regular intervals.

To try and overcome some of the excesses of cheque-book sailing, this year saw further restrictions imposed on the number of new sails allowed per season.

At a fleet committee meeting, someone complains that there is too much dependence on the East Coast Championships for revenue, and that too much is being spent on prizes and entertainment for the fleet. On the other hand, the number of entries for the East Coast championships that year had grown to fifty five boats, and the sponsorship was £1,400.

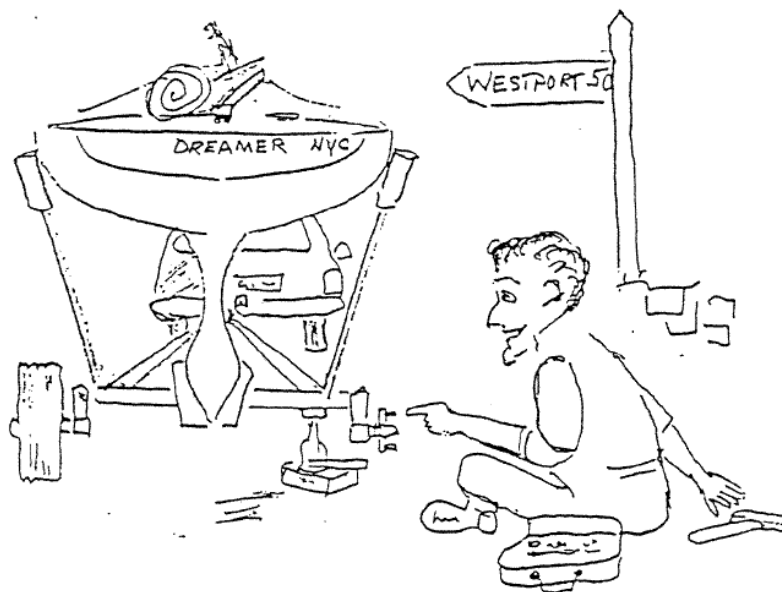
The open event in Westport had now become the West Coast Championships, and was also sponsored by Heineken. It was felt that everybody would be so tired after organising the worlds, that thought should be given to holding the East Coast Championships somewhere else other than Dun Laoire. Bray was mentioned, as it was felt it would also help the Bray fleet.

Thanks to the existence of the new all-Ireland organisation F.F.A.L, the Irish fleets were able to avail of seven qualifying places for the World Championships, and four of these went to Dun Laoghaire boats.

In a final break with some old traditions, it was decided to have the captain's party as a beginning of season event, and that the annual dinner and A.G.M. would be an end-of-season function rather than post Christmas as it had been. —

DAF Travellers Trophy

In 1991 the fleet got yet another fine trophy in the shape of the "DAF Travellers Trophy", presented by DAF trucks, via Bruce Archer, who was constantly in the company of "Fflusie" (No. 3276).



Now listen hub! I am an intelligent and resourceful engineer. You are a lump of iron. Now are you coming off or am I taking the lump hammer to you?

"Ray Duggan - Dreamtime or at least 'Dreamer' overcoming small difficulties en-route to Westport, as depicted by Jerry Kingston.

1992 World Championships

It is undoubtedly an honour for any sporting body to host a World Championship in its particular discipline. This honour fell to the fleet in 1992, and undoubtedly qualifies as the culminating point of the fleet's activities in Dublin Bay to date. Aably hosted by the National Yacht Club, and with a lot of hard work put in by fleet members, the event was regarded by all who participated, and especially by the visitors, as an outstanding success. A number of English competitors came from a club which had thought of bidding for the next world championships, but when they saw the level of organisation needed to hold such an event, they apparently decided amongst themselves to forget about it!

The actual World Championships were preceded by the Irish National Championships, so the whole series took up two weeks in July.

Such events attract some pretty high-powered sailors, especially from overseas. Such was the standard of entrants (of which there were 75) that the highest Dun Laoire boat was John Lavery (son of Arthur the fleet starter) in 20th place, immediately followed by Justin Burke in 21st position. When it was all over, everyone went to bed, and didn't sail again for about two weeks!

1993 - Ghost of the Gaffer

After 1992 and the World Championships, 1993 was almost an anticlimax, as the fleet settled down into its normal seasonal routine of D.B.S.C. races and Fleet events. However, there is one little vignette of that year which should not go un-recorded, namely that of the 'self-righting, and 'self-steering' Flying Fifteen. This remarkable boat "Ffinally" (no. 3352) is owned by Eric Cooney (our captain for 1995) and Gabriel Grier. On a rather heavy Saturday they were sailing for Bullock mark, when an almighty gust knocked them down, and caused 'Ffinally' to do something that fifteens rarely do, namely to turn turtle, with the mast touching the bottom, and the keel in the air! The two lads very smartly got onto the up-turned bottom, and proceeded to try and right her.

A passing Glen saw their plight and decided help was needed, and fired a flare. As it so happened, an Air Corp helicopter was searching for a missing person in Scotsman's Bay, and immediately went over to "Ffinally". Before they knew where they were, Eric and Gabriel found themselves winched up to the helicopter, and landed on the East pier, with their boat floating away, bottom up!

Nothing daunted, they immediately commandeered one of the Club's launches, and went in pursuit of 'Ffinally'. By this stage, your scribe, who was an eye witness to most of this, had motored down to Dalkey Sound, where he saw the astonishing sight of 'Ffinally' right way up, sailing into the Sound, with no-one on board, hotly pursued by the lads in the launch! Obviously it had righted itself unaided, which says a lot for the Flying Fifteen design, once it has sufficient buoyancy.

The escapade ended with Eric hopping onboard and sailing 'Ffinally' back single handed to the N.Y.C. A new mast was the only damage, as the old one had acquired a rather sexy sideways bend (presumably due to contact with the sea-bed). Could it be that the ghost of the 'Gaffer' haunts Dalkey Sound, and comes to the aid of fifteens in distress? Is this how 'Ffinally' was righted?

1994 - A Year of Loss

For older members of the fleet, the 1994 season opened in a sombre note, with the news of the death of Jill Hermon in Scotland, at the end of April. It was a great shock to all of us who knew her. As well as crewing for Roddy, she had also flung herself enthusiastically into all aspects of the fleet's activities, especially the social events.

As if this wasn't enough, John McCambridge, the crew of the famous 'Gaffer' and later crew for Ted McCourt, was killed instantly along with his wife Maureen, in a car crash in June. Both were well known and loved, and few fleet events took place without their attendance.

Hardly a month later, Teddy Ryan died suddenly, and again, is missed very much by the older members. It is ironic, that he should have died in the twenty fifth year of the fleet, and one wonders what tales of the early fleet years have died with him. He would have enjoyed celebrating the fruits of his labours!

1995 - 25th Anniversary

As the fleet completed its twenty fifth year, and entered the 1995 season, it is good to see what a healthy state it was in. The fleet consisted of twenty eight boats, all of them comparatively new, with the oldest boat 'Ffaoilean' (no. 1260) one of the original 8 fifteens in the fleet. Jack Owens sold 'Ffaoilean' at the start of this season, to Michael Sweeney. The newest fifteen on the fleet fixture card is Justin Burke's 'Ffangs' (no. 3495) and Gerry Donleavy had just taken delivery of a brand new Ovington.

1997 – 50 anniversary Cowes

A large contingent of NYC sailors headed off on what was to be an interesting adventure to the Flying Fifteen Golden Jubilee Worlds anniversary regatta in Cowes, the home of Uffa Fox, these included our guru Gerry Donleavy & Barry, Niall Coleman & Chris Doorly, Ian Matthews & Conor Grimly, Nikki Meagher & Niall Matthews (the spinnaker was instead of an engagement ring!), Alan & Lorcan Balfe, Ken Dumbleton & John White, 7 fifteens in the qualified team and others just going for the preworld regatta or so they thought, Alan Dooley can fill us in on this manouvre.

There were so many highlights most which occurred before we even got sailing!! John White getting sun burnt while waiting for the ferry to Cowes, Nicki & Nialls lunch from previous regatta's was found in the side tank during the weigh in , Alan Dooley not been able to get the rudder off for the weigh in, Niall scouring the island for weight correctors. His birthday bash was memorable where his crew organised a daily spot prize after a 62nd position! That night it was Australia night and the drinking and tug of war competitions took off in earnest. The northern hemisphere boys won by tying the rope to the railing outside and Nikki drank the 'Sheila's' under the table.... literally!! While Brian McKee had a fantastic race win the rest of us seemed happy to sail against each other much the same as we would in Dun Laoghaire, but Alan Dooley deserves particular praise for his wide mark rounding clearing the way for the rest of us to nip in. The Worlds was won by Steve Goacher & Phil Evans. The saga's continued on the way home with Ian & Conors trailer coming apart in Enniscorthy but the truth of what people were really there for became clear nine months later so clearly sailing wasn't the priority!!

Unfortunately 1997 brought the untimely death of Frank Burns from a work accident and the fleet introduced an internal team racing event in his honour.

1998 – New Technology

With Alan Dooley as class captain technology took a huge step forward with the introduction of a website for our class and the use of email as a form of contact. Indeed if you googled then the only web site for Flying Fifteens was the one Alan set up. With this one could set up event news, S.I's, boats for sale, crews wanted could all be posted for easy access. Not everyone had access to the web so it was decided after much discussion to continue issuing newsletters by paper in the post. In recent years John McNeilly and Alan Green have been doing Trojan work keeping it going and it is the main source of news and information.

1999 – British Nationals in Pwelli

The travel bug had hit and the qualifiers were on for the Worlds in Esperance Australia, others attended the British Nationals in Wales and the strongest winds that people have experienced took place at this event, Gerry still talks about it!

2000– New Millenium.

Everyone survived the fear of the world as we knew it changing when all the zero's lined up at midnight December 1999 and by April everything was normal,

There were four new boats this season and new class captain Ian Mathews managed to secure sponsorship for 3 years from the local branch of Ericson which helped keep the East Coast Championships secure and also enabled the fleet to get stickers and t-shirts, like the true accountant he decided to spend it while he had it!!

In his own style the format of the end of season prize giving was done as a 'Oscar' award night which was hilarious also a man or was it a woman called Tell-Tale was very active in the newsletters!

The class did a trip to Draycote, a lake in the UK in April with the guys and girls coming to the National in September.

The website was now been update and moved away from Alan Dooleys office and both Alan Green and John McNeilly put in a huge amount of work to get it up and running.

In 2001 about three boats started sailing from the George including well known sailor Sean Craig and Francis & Clive Brandon.

2002 –New Money.

New boats were been bought keeping the fleet progressing but now we had a new currency called the Euro. Indeed it was overheard in the changing room that to move up one inch on the fleet card would cost you €10k. The fleet return to Clew Bay for first time since 1996, Gerry and Dave Gorman won Nationals in Kinsale with Justin and Alan second.

2003 World Championships at the NYC.

As stated previously is an honour for any sporting body to host a World Championship in it's particular discipline and this honour again fell to the fleet in 2003. The visibility of fleet members traveling to foreign events and the success of the previous worlds helped get the event here and with great work by FFI representative Gerry Donleavy and local fleet captain Ken Dumbleton the NYC were selected to host the event in July and with a lot of hard work put in by fleet members, the event was regarded by all who participated, and especially by the visitors, as an outstanding success on the water except for the lack of wind and the fog! The juniors from the NYC participated in the opening ceremony where the flags of the participating countries were hoisted as the Garda Band played the anthems in glorious sunshine.

Thanks to Nikki and Niall Subaru sponsored the event and Jack Roy was the PRO and did an excellent job with his team completing the event in tricky windless and foggy conditions.

There was a new pride in sailing and been part of the Irish team and this came through when the Irish guys arrived in smart t-shirts and gilets organized by Chris Doorly. The other countries didn't know what to make of this, the Irish getting together and looking like a team! What's more training took place in the build up and this was reflected in the results which were vastly improved from previous worlds, the highlight been Justin & Alan winning Race 3 and getting 5th overall and been in contention going into the last day, magnificent!!. Nine boats qualified from a ranking system that included the previous seasons regional events including a number from the National but as the event got closer and other teams didn't take their places more of the local fleet were able to participate.

The actual World Championships were preceded by the Irish National Championships which were won by John Lavery and David O'Brien in Afloat, a tremendous achievement in such a quality field, so the whole series took up two weeks in July. When it was all over, everyone went to bed, and didn't sail again for about two weeks!

A contingent from Mallorca came to press their case for the next event, the first Europeans to be held. As one prominent member of the fleet was overheard saying if its half as good as it sound it will be great! The plans were put in place.

2004 – The year of the Traveller.

Rather than sit at home after the worlds the new bred of sailor wanted to go and race at the highest level and 2004 gave ample opportunity. Firstly the Europeans in Port Pollenca in Mallorca and to finish the season in October the French Nationals in La Rochelle who were due to host the worlds in 2007.

European Championships Mallorca-May 2004.

The boats all headed off in container at the end of April and the fleet could fly down on a package holiday, this was a very new and shocking experience for Mr Coleman! The bay was beautiful and the weather was as they say at many of these events 'not normally like this' as we were greeted with force 5-6 storms on the first day and blown out on the second day. The container proved very useful on the way home and Alan and Aislinn Green didn't have to buy any wine or Bacardi for years!

French National Championships La Rochelle.

What a trip, Boats and crew including Ken & John, Justin & Alan, headed off by car rail and air. With nearly 40 boats including all the top British sailors, the Spanish and French fleet were also well represented. Justin (who celebrated his 50th) and Alan were the top Dun Laoghaire crew in 7th place but NYC's Chris Doorly crewing with Waterfords Shane Statham got a podium finish in third place, a superb achievement in a top quality fleet.

2005 – More travelling

the year started with the Worlds in New Zealand and finished again with the French Nationals in La Rochelle. Alan Green was man of the moment and sailing with Charles

Apthorp from the UK came second.

In between Dublin Bay continued apace and the first combined DunLaoghaire Regatta took place. This coincided with the new facilities in the National Yacht Clubs redevelopment been opened.

2006- Tuesday Nights.

After a few accidents the previous summer when large boats didn't look out and DBSC couldn't give any assurances on improving safety the fleet took a decision to race on Tuesdays on a trial basis it was a year of light winds and the racing was not particularly successful in Scotsman's Bay nor was the socializing. On one occasion the L.E. Deirdre was anchored in Scotsmans Bay and an extra tactical decision had to be made in deciding which way to round her... maybe this was the last straw!

2007-

And so back to Thursdays to the relief of the socialisers.

The second Dun Laoghaire Regatta took place in very light winds in July and was won by David Gorman.

2008-

New class captain Ben Mulligan kept things going on the home front. The Championships of Ireland were won by the NYC's Dave Gorman & Chris Doorly in what can only be described as testing conditions in Whiterock on Strangford Lough.

European Championships Kinsale.

Organized by the Dun Laoghaire Fleet from afar but was successful with nearly sixty boats. It was interesting that the UK boats got all the Gold prizes, the Irish the Silver(blue) and the Spanish the bronze (green) Another development in this regatta was the use of VHF radio's which increased safety and also meant the fleet could be constantly aware of the PRO's intentions not to mention been over the line!

2009-

An opportunity came after many years absence to get the Fifteens into the boat show at the RDS, no more balconies! David Mulvin kindly lent his boat 'Fifty Something' (3919) and with the efforts of Alan Green, Chris Doorly and class captain Peter Sherry a successful show was had which culminated in an open day for all those interested in trying out this fantastic boat that has lasted the test of time.

On the Dublin Bay scene John Biggs who did OD for many years died and is a loss to Saturday and Tuesday racing, a plaque has been put on the back of Lima in his honour. The third and most successful combined Volvo Dun Laoghaire Regatta took place in July with wind! In a great weekend Dave & Chris managed to win seven out of seven races and won the trophy for the best small keelboat. The last race of the season was interesting in that Sean and Paul Nolan won the race, perhaps Sean will continue on for a few more years. The captains BBQ reappeared with a most enjoyable evening in Peter's house, so it seems all is normal once more!

40th Anniversary

As the fleet completes its fortieth year, at the end of the 2009 season, it is good to see what a healthy state it is in. The fleet consists of twenty six boats, all of them comparatively new, The newest fifteen on the fleet fixture card is Dave Mulvins 'Fifty Something' (no. 3919) with the oldest been 3383. Many of the older boats that were in DunLaoghaire have found new homes in Carlingford and Rosaveal in Galway, 'No Regrets' (3382) and Ken Dumpletons 'Olive Oyl' (3753) are in Mallorca where some of the fleet take part in events down there... apparently the weather is better!. The classic fleet has remained popular and with the number now revised to 2700/3000 ? these boats continue to have a long life.

A race, organized by Chris Doorly and Peter Sherry was held in August for past members followed by dinner. Sixteen boats turned out and a full dining room heard many tales from years gone by. The race on the night was the Chase and was won by Ian & Fiona Richardson, a feature of the evening was the number of family ties, Dave Gorman sailing with Jim, Susan Halpenny sailing with Michael and of course Ian and Fiona Richardson, Jim remarked that it was the first time he had ever beaten Michael Halpenny in a race!

Long-standing Fleet Members

The fleet has constantly attracted outstanding sailors. Gerry Donleavy has had a long term relationship with it, Roger Bannon has had some 'magic' Flying Fifteens (Black, Strange and Mischievous!), Cathy MacAleavy, well known in Olympic sailing circles, sailed in 'Gulfstream' (no 3198) during 1990. Justin Burke also arrived 1990 with 'Slipper I' (no. 3383). His fame had preceded him; he was well known in Quarter-Ton circles, and had come second overall in the Quarter-Ton world championships in Cork in 1987, in 2007 he moved on to sail SB3's, the latest 'in boat' in the Bay, but his record in the Fifteen speaks for itself.

Many people have come and gone in the fleet over the years, but others have stayed with the Fifteens over a long period. First and foremost would be Sean Nolan, who after forty years of continuous membership, and being the only one of the original 'Magnificent Seven' still sailing with us, must surely be considered 'Father of the Fleet'. (I'm not saying that makes Brenda Mother of the Fleet at least not without standing well back!)

While Jack Owens has not sailed his boat actively for a number of years (he owned 'Ffaoilean' upto 1995 as you will have read) he has had Flying Fifteen connections since God was a boy!

Michael Halpenny is still going strong in the Dragons and his daughter Susan and Niall Coleman are active in the fleet, this year his granddaughter Laura sailed in the Sunday races and a recent Saturday. We understand she was not impressed with the shouting and roaring going on !??

Noel Casey is cruising now having joined in 1975 when he bought Tony Kenny's 'Ulysses' and re-named it 'Diogenes'. Ray Duggan arrived in 1983 in 'Osprey' (no. 1343) and was partnered by Ward Phillips in 1985.

Frank Bums had been in the fleet since at least 1979 and died in 1997, when he bought Tony Veiland's 'Fferocity' and called it 'Ffreebooter'. Ian and Fiona Richardson joined in 1985, and in rapid succession Ross Doyle joined in 1986, Eric Cooney in 1987, and David Meeke in 1988.

In the mid90's there was a fresh influx of new faces who are still sailing and actively sailing including Keith Poole, Ian Mathews, Niall & Nikki, Niall Coleman, Chris Doorly etc the storey goes that some of this group were all sailing what they thought was bigger and greater things with ex Flying Fifteen captain Ted McCourt and all jumped ship to the smaller and greater 15!

Achievements

Members of the fleet have distinguished themselves outside Dublin Bay also. The Dun Laoghaire fleet regularly travels in large numbers to both regional and in recent years international events. This keeps the interest and the standard high and in the current economic climate it has been suggested that people put fellow sailors up in their houses similar to what happened back in the 70's.

A number of sailors in our fleet have done extremely well and have managed to get their names on trophies numerous times over recent the years, in particular Gerry Donleavy, John Lavery, Justin Burke & Alan Green.

Credit of course must also be given to those who don't travel, the fleet would not survive without the people who turn up week in week out in Dublin Bay on Tuesdays and Thursdays and Saturdays. The following come to mind in recent years such as Adrian Cooper, Frank Burgess.

National Championship Winners:

The pinnacle of most amateur sailors would be the winning of their National championships and this has been achieved by many members of the NYC over the years. Roger Bannon was the first to win it, Gerry Donleavy, John Lavery, and Justin Burke & Alan Green have multiple titles and Dave Gorman & Chris Doorly are the most recent current winners after winning up in Whiterock last summer in particularly testing conditions.

1986: Roger Bannon & J. Davies. 'Strange Magic' – 3037.

1988: Gerry Donleavy & David O'Brien. 'Canada Life' - 3108.

1990: Gerry Donleavy & Margaret Conway. 'Mind Over Matter' – 3275.

1998: John Lavery & Gerry Donleavy. 'Awesome' – 3558.

1999: Justin Burke & Alan Green. 'Ffangs' – 3495.

2000: John Lavery & Gerry Donleavy. 'Total Eclipse' – 3664.

2001: Gerry Donleavy & David Gorman. 'Total Eclipse' – 3664.

2002: Justin Burke & Alan Green. 'As Good As It Gets' – 3688.

2003: John Lavery & David O'Brien. 'Affloat – 3773.

2008: David Gorman & Chris Doorly. 'Hi5ive' – 3877.

East Coast Championship Winners:

1988: Gerry Donleavy & David O'Brien. 'Canada Life' - 3108.

1991: Gerry Donleavy

1992: Roger Bannon

1996: Gerry Donleavy & Barry Hayes

1997: Gerry Donleavy & David O' Brian

2005: Brian Willis (CSC) & Chris Doorly

2006: Justin Burke & Philip Lawton

Regional Event Winners:

The South Coast Championships have been won by –
Michael Halpenny in 1975,

Gerry Donleavy in 1988, 1992 and 1993 by Gerry (partnered in 1992 by Roger Bannon)
Justin Burke & Ciaran Crummy 1995
Justin Burke & Alan Green in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005
John Lavery & David O'Brian 2009.

North Coast Championship Winners:

1992: John Lavery, 'The Storey Teller'
1995: Gerry Donleavy & Alan Balfe, 'Terminator'.
1998: Gerry Donleavy & Chris Doorly, 'Awesome'.
1999: Gerry Donleavy & Barry Hayes, 'Total Eclipse'
2006: Gerry Donleavy & Chris Doorly, '8ight'

West Coast Championship Winners:

2002: Sean Craig & Stephen Boyle (RStGYC)
2005: Ian Mathews & Ben Mulligan.

The George Arthur Newsome Trophy is one of the most prestigious D.B.S.C. trophies, which in order to win you must first win a horrendous number of other DBSC prizes, as it is for the outstanding one-design boat of the season. This was won by Michael Halpenny in 'Susele' in 1975, in 1983 by Tony Neiland in 'Snapapple', in 1992 by David Meeke and Jim Woods in 'the Real Thing', in 1994 by Justin Burke in 'Ffangs', in 1997 by David Meeke and Jim Woods in 'No Regrets' and in 1999 again by Justin Burke & Alan Green in 'Ffangs'. This has recently changed to the Dr Alf Delany Cup for the most successful dinghy and this was won for the first time by the Flying Fifteen class in 2009 by Dave Gorman and Chris Doorly with a little help from Alan Graham on Thursdays.

Over the years the fifteens have been a force to be reckoned with in Dublin Bay. They have become a major fleet in Dublin Bay Sailing Club. They have brought a major national championship in the form of the East Coast Championships to Dublin Bay for many years, as well as the World Championships of their Class in 1992 and 2003.

The Fleet founders had, no doubt, great hopes for their enterprise, and I'm sure nobody would deny, that these hopes have not only been realised, but exceeded. Here's hoping that there will be more celebrations in the year 2020 when the Dun Laoire Flying Fifteen Fleet will be fifty years old!

Peter O'Shea, June 1995 and Chris Doorly 2009.

With many thanks to the following people for their help: Peter O'Shea, Eric Colin Michael Halpenny, Arthur Lavery, Sean Nolan, Jack Owens also Ray Duggan (for the Book of Odveus) Jerry Kingston (for the cartoons) who put together the First 25 Years. And to Peter Murphy for putting the document in the modern word format.

Thursdays: Flying Fifteen Gun.

1973: Michael & Maureen Halpenny. 'Susele'.

1974: P. Byrne.

1975: Michael & Maureen Halpenny. 'Susele'.

1976: R. Hermon. 'Shabash'

1977: K. Blacke. 'Frankie'.

1978: Jim Gorman, 'Pipet'.

1979: N.O'Hara, 'Atomic Dustbin'.

1980: N. O'Hara. 'Atomic Dustbin'.

1981: Sean & Brenda Nolan. 'Gadzooks'

1982:

1983: T. McCourt. 'Fait Accompli'

1984: J.H. O'Neill. 'Mary Foo'

1985: Jack Roy & Mal Nowlan. 'Ffozzy'.

1986: R.E. Nolan. 'Whitewash'.

1987: Jack Roy & Mal Nowlan. 'Ffozzy'.

1988: R.E. Nolan. 'Whitewash'.

1989: R.E. Nolan. 'Whitewash'.

1990: Justin Burke & Dave O'Neill. 'Countdown'

1991: Justin Burke & Dave O'Neill. 'Slipper 1'.

1992: David Meek & Jim Woods. 'The Real Thing'.

1993: Justin Burke & Dave O'Neill. 'Slipper 1'. ??

1994: Justin Burke & Alan Green. 'Ffangs'. ??

1995: David Meek & Jim Woods. 'No Regrets'.

1996: David Meek & Jim Woods. 'No Regrets'.

1997: David Meek & Jim Woods. 'No Regrets'.

1998: David Meek & Jim Woods. 'No Regrets'

1999: Justin Burke & Alan Green. 'Ffangs'.

2000: Lorca Balfe & Alan Balfe. 'Ffangs'. ??

2001: Nick Robinson & Ian Mathews 'Out of the Blue'

2002: Justin Burke & Alan Green. 'It Just Gets Better'.

2003: Niall Coleman & Chris Doorly. 'Flyer'

2004: Lorcan Balfe & Peter McCabe 'Ffangs'

2005: Niall Coleman & Chris Doorly. 'Flyer'

2006: Hugh & Michael Cahill. 'Ffrentic'

2007: Niall Coleman & Eric Cooney. 'Flyer'

2008: Chris Doorly & Alan Green. 'Deranged'.

2009: David Gorman & Alan Graham 'Hi-5ive'.

2010: Alan Green & Chris Doorly. 'Deranged'

Saturdays: B.S. Ryan Trophy.

1970: P & S Grey. 'Little Lady'

1971: N. & Z O'Hara. 'Bonnie'.

1972: Michael & Maureen Halpenny. 'Susele'.

1973: N. & Z O'Hara. 'Bonnie'.

1974: Michael & Maureen Halpenny. 'Susele'.

1975: Michael & Maureen Halpenny. 'Susele'.

1976: N. & Z O'Hara. 'Bonnie'.

1977: Sean & Brenda Nolan. 'Nicjac'

1978: Jim Gorman & M Crotty. 'Pipet'.

1979: M & O Sheehy. 'Flying Merry'

1980: N. & Z O'Hara. 'Atomic Dustbin'.

1981: Sean & Brenda Nolan. 'Gadzooks'

1982: Dermot Baker & F Kenny. 'Shillelagh'

1983: A. Nialand & A McGoris. 'Snapapple'

1984: Jack Roy & Mal Nowlan. 'Ffozzy'

1985: J.H. O'Neill & J O'Neill Jnr. 'Mary Foo'

1986: R. Nolan & P Fletcher. 'Whitewash'.

1987: Jack Roy & Mal Nowlan. 'Ffozzy'. Frisby?

1988: Ted McCourt & John McCambridge. 'Fflambuoyant'.

1989: Ian & Fiona Richardson. 'Ninja'.

1990: David Meek & Jim Woods. 'The Real Thing'.

1991: Justin Burke & Dave O'Neill. 'Slipper 1'.

1992: David Meek & Jim Woods. 'The Real Thing'.

1993: Justin Burke & Dave O'Neill. 'Slipper 1'. ??

1994: Justin Burke & David O'Neill. 'Ffangs'. ??

1995: David Meek & Jim Woods. 'No Regrets'.

1996: Ken Dumpleton & Alan Green. 'Felix the Cat'.

1997: David Meek & Jim Woods. 'No Regrets'.

1998: Justin Burke & Alan Green. 'Ffangs'.

1999: Justin Burke & Alan Green. 'Ffangs'.

2000: Justin Burke & Alan Green. 'As Good As It Gets'

2001: Ian Mathews & Nick Robinson 'Out of the Blue'

2002: Justin Burke & Alan Green. 'As Good As It Gets'

2003: Justin Burke & Alan Green. 'As Good As It Gets'

2004: Nick Robinson & Keith Poole, 'Out of the Blue'.

2005: Lorcan & Alan Balfe, 'Ffangs'.

2006: Hugh & Michael Cahill. 'Ffrentic'

2007: Lorcan Balfe & Peter

2008: David Gorman & Chris Doorly. 'Hi5ive'

2009: David Gorman & Chris Doorly. 'Hi5ive'.

2010: David Gorman & Chris Doorly. 'Hi5ive'