



The Inland Waterways Association of Ireland

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IWAI Carrick Cares Day – Promoting our Waterways for All



As members of the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland (IWAI), we sometimes take access to over 1000km of lakes, rivers & canals for granted. The fact that we can just hop onto a boat and cast off on a journey of exploration is a real joy. It is this feeling of joy that IWAI Carrick on Shannon aims to share through the 'Carrick Cares Day' event, which this year took place on Saturday August 27th at Lough Key Forest Park in Co Roscommon.

This event introduces the waterways to some very special guests, many of whom are wheelchair bound or have other special needs. For many of the visitors, Carrick Cares Day provides an opportunity to partake in water based activities, an opportunity that might not have been available otherwise. The idea, originally conceived by IWAI Carrick members Tom Meegan and Linda Garland, has gone from strength to strength since its inception in 2011. For the past 5 years, IWAI Carrick members along with members from other IWAI branches give their time unselfishly to participate in the Carrick Cares Day. The event also enjoys the support of Waterways Ireland.

The location of Lough Key Forest Park provides the perfect setting for the Carrick Cares Day event. IWAI members gather the evening before and prepare for the forthcoming day, erecting tents & assembling BBQs and tea stations. Others are busy baking cakes while a further team look after the health and safety to ensure total accessibility for the visiting guests.

Participants start arriving from mid-day. Numbering over 100, guests and their helpers arrive from various Care Centres including Brothers of Charity, Boyle. Also well represented is the Irish Wheelchair Association with branches from Sligo, Drogheda, Athy, Carrick on Shannon & Athlone. You can feel the excitement building as our guests arrive. Each and every one of them has a smile on their face in anticipation of the day.

Guests experience a trip in open wheelchair adapted boats, try their hand at fishing & have an opportunity to cruise out on the lake. They get to explore the beauty of Lough Key Forest Park and all it has to offer. Carrick Cares Day 2016 involved 63 IWAI volunteers, 28 cruiser trips, 34 wheel chair boat trips taken, 19 fish were caught and 186 burgers enjoyed, not to mention the tea, coffee and homemade cake that was consumed. Live music followed the refreshments rounding off an event that is in keeping with the IWAI aim of 'the use of the waterways for all'.



More photos available on request. Please email pro@iwai.ie for more information.

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