

## David Russell and Martin Brennan An Appreciation

The marine community on the Shannon Estuary has been shocked by the sudden deaths of two long serving marine personnel - Martin Brennan, a long serving member of the Pilot Boat Crew based at Cappa, and David Russell, a Shannon Pilot since 1990.

Martin was born and lived in Kilrush, he came from a family that has long been associated with the Shannon Pilotage Service. His father Stephen served as Cox'n on the old Pilot launch Mary Stanford. Martin was an excellent boat handler and a man whose opinion was valued by those around him in matters both professional and personal. His extended family have served as Pilots on the Shannon in past years and in Cork Harbour.

When off duty Martin ran a successful sea-angling venture from Cappa and his extensive local knowledge of the area was greatly appreciated. Martin is survived by his wife Mary and their two children Karen Ann and Stephen to whom we offer our deepest sympathies and condolences.

Born in Cobh, it was inevitable that David Russell went to sea to earn his living. Having gained his Master's Certificate David came to work in the Estuary in 1990 and gained his Second Class Pilot's Licence on March 16th 1990, and in 1993 became a First Class Pilot.

David initially worked as a western Pilot before subsequently changing to the Eastern Division upon the retirement of an eastern Pilot. During his career, he became a very skilled pilot noted for his decisive execution of manoeuvres. David's expertise was not confined to Pilotage as he was passionate about law - obtaining a degree in the subject, which led ultimately to his involvement with the Irish Drivers Association.

David's sudden death shocked us all and our sympathies and condolences are extended to his wife Breda and his children David and Gary. It is sad to note that on this occasion we say goodbye to two members of the close-knit marine community on the Shannon Estuary.

*Alan Coghlan*

Former staff member of Limerick Cargo Handling Ltd., Eddie Reidy, died recently after a long illness. Eddie was a member of the Dock Labourers' Society who transferred from the former casual dock labour system to join the new stevedoring company, Limerick Cargo Handling Ltd. in March 1974 and he gave loyal and diligent service until January 2000 when the Dock Labourers' Society was disbanded.

Prior to working at Limerick Docks, Eddie served as a Deck Hand with the Limerick Steamship Company. He was one of the last two survivors of the famous shipwreck at Inis Oirr, when the M.V. "Plassey" was driven ashore in atrocious conditions in 1960. All the crew survived, thanks to their heroic efforts and those of the Aran Islanders. Film footage of the rescue was shown on TG4 recently.

Eddie is survived by his wife, Helen, daughters Antoinette, Catherine, Eleanor and Aisling, as well as son Edward Junior. We extend our condolences to them all in their sad loss.



**Shannon Foynes**  
PORT COMPANY

## SFPC NEWSLETTER

Welcome to this edition of our newsletter. Firstly it is of prime importance to extend my gratitude to all over the past number of months for your hard work and cooperation, all employees play a significant role toward the success of SFPC and now more so than ever. We are in difficult times and it is important to understand and accept the market dynamic that exists between the Company and the broader international and national economies. At the risk of sounding like a David McWilliams, these economies continue to struggle. These slowdowns have significantly impacted our markets resulting in very difficult trading conditions for 2009. We have experienced substantial declines in tonnages across some terminals, in excess of 35% at one terminal, due to the collapse in global demand. Closer to home we have seen significant falls in electricity demand consequently leading to falls in cargoes such as coal and oil. Turnover, as a result of the aforementioned market depression, has fallen by a significant 17% with profitability taking the bulk of this hit. It is this impact on profitability, the key driver for the future sustainability of the business that has led us to embark on a major program of cost reduction. These reductions include savings in costs across the entire spectrum and regrettably included redundancies. In order to sustain any Company and not just ours, a certain level of profitability is vital because without it we cannot invest in critical infrastructure such as quays, plant and navigational aids to name some.. It is certain that if we cannot generate sufficient earnings then the impacts are felt not just by the Company but by all the stakeholders including customers and employees. It is for these reasons that the recent cost reductions were and are necessary and why it is necessary to adhere to the current level of restraint in our demands for the foreseeable future.

Our tonnage projections for next year are consistent with GDP forecasts for 2010 and 2011. In such market conditions it is vital that we improve our competitiveness against our competitor ports. The aforementioned together with prevailing deflationary pressures rule out price increases and it is vital then that we aggressively manage our cost base. I am confident that by adopting a team approach, by aligning our expectations with the current economic reality, we will successfully deal with the challenges that lie ahead and emerge as a much stronger entity.



G1 crane placing the pipe bridge across the back of No. 3 jetty as part of the new AFSC terminal project.

Despite the short term economic gloom I am happy to report that there are some very positive developments taking place. Tonnages at Foynes have improved significantly since the summer and while this is in line with the cyclical nature of our business it is nevertheless encouraging as other ports have not been so fortunate. For us to maintain existing business and win new business we need to offer an efficient, flexible and competitive service. I believe recent improvements to our services are starting to pay dividends. For example, the capability the Shannon 1 now offers in maintaining drafts at both Limerick and Foynes is huge in terms of satisfying customer expectation and, likewise, at Foynes, we are consistently discharging 10,000 tons of cargo per vessel per day. That type of performance was unheard of a few years ago and indeed I believe there is only one other port in the country that could match it. I note Shannon LNG has recently obtained a foreshore licence for its proposed facility at Ballylongford. In effect the single largest private investment on the Shannon Estuary in over 30 years has now more or less completed the statutory consent process and is edging forward. The 67,000m<sup>3</sup> Atlantic Fuels Supply terminal at Foynes is substantially complete with commissioning due to take place next year. Further down river at Tarbert Island, the National Oil Reserve Agency is expected to commence refurbishment in 2010 of 250,000m<sup>3</sup> of storage for national strategic requirements. These projects provide for a promising future and are evident of the importance of the Shannon Estuary not only to the Mid West but also to the national economy.

There is no doubt that the Shannon Estuary is one of the country's primary trade hubs but is also of national strategic importance in providing a major platform for Ireland Inc's energy supply chains. Power producers present on the Shannon such as ESB, Endesa and potentially Shannon LNG are testament to the latter. Finally we have recently teamed up with the IDA and IMDO to promote the Shannon Estuary internationally, targeting industries in the energy and bulk transshipment sectors

and while this is a long-term initiative it has the potential to provide substantial benefit in time. I hope you enjoy this newsletter and given the current context it is worthwhile noting the proverb "for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today".

**Pat Keating, Interim CEO**



### SFPC launches new estuary website

The company has launched a new international marketing campaign aimed at attracting new investment projects which can take advantage of the natural deepwaters in the Estuary, our technical competence in handling the largest vessels entering Irish waters, and the generally attractive location for establishing business. This campaign is being supported by IDA Ireland and the Irish Marine Development Office. A new dedicated website, [www.shannonestuary.ie](http://www.shannonestuary.ie), has been developed to showcase our potential and we see this as an important marketing drive for the future. *Martin Morrissey*



### Congratulations to

Kevin Geoghegan, Deputy Harbour Master & his wife Margaret  
JJ Ryan, Limerick Cargo Handling & his wife Ciara and  
Kevin Murphy, Crane Driver Foynes & his wife Aine,  
all who have recently married.

*We wish them every happiness for the future.*

Congratulation also to Michael & Denise Carmody on the birth of their baby daughter. Also to Suzanne Bulger (former Director) and husband Edmund on the birth of their baby boy.

### Get Well Wishes

We would like to wish a speedy recovery to John Monaghan (Limerick Cargo Handling) and Paul McCarthy (Crane Driver Limerick) after their recent illness. We look forward to seeing them back at work soon.

### Well Done to

Alma Moran & Anthony Murphy who recently graduated with an Honours Diploma in Health & Safety from The University of Limerick & Aoife Lenihan who received an Honours Diploma in Management Studies from The Institute of Commercial Management.



## Kevin Geoghegan

Kevin Geoghegan, Deputy Harbour Master, is to retire on November 8<sup>th</sup> this year.



His association with the Shannon has been a lifelong one. Born in Limerick in 1944 he spent his childhood along the river and in the early 1960's went to sea with Irish Shipping (where most Irish seafarers of that generation started). Kevin then moved to the Coastal trade and when I first met him he was Master on a Rowbotham tanker called the "River Shannon" trading into Limerick Dock. He was a very regular caller during the 1980's

During that time I recall vividly a very bad stormy night when a ship got into difficulties in the mouth of the Estuary at a time when there was no Coastguard or Radars or Tugs to control the situation. The "River Shannon" with Kevin in command was the only vessel close to the scene and he readily answered the call to go to the aid of the vessel which had no power and was at the mercy of the elements. Kevin, took his ship as close as possible to the stricken vessel attempting to get a line on board, eventually on the fifth pass a line was attached and the "River Shannon" towed the vessel into the safety of the anchorage. This action definitely avoided a disaster.

In the 1991 it was no surprise that Kevin became the Foynes Inlet Pilot eventually becoming Deputy Harbour master at Foynes in the late 1990's. During the amalgamation of the two port companies Kevin readily became a member of the new team and became involved in the company's activities beyond his former limit in Foynes

All at Marine Operations are very sorry to say goodbye to Kevin as it means the loss of a vast wealth of marine experience – but we realise that a well earned rest is really deserved – good luck Kevin!

Alan Coghlan



L-R: Kevin Geoghegan, Aoife Lenihan, Jim Whyte, Tony Murphy, Hugh Conlon and Alan Coghlan.



During a two day visit to the region, Norwegian Ambassador Mr Oyvind Nordslettenmet with Pat Keating, Interim CEO Shannon Foynes Port Company to discuss a unique cruise link between Foynes and Norway.



## Coors Light Peak Festival at Limerick Docks....

Limerick Dock was the host for the inaugural Coors Light Peak festival on Saturday 19 September. Similar events are planned at other ports in coming months. This was an opportunity for us to showcase a working port to members of the public and by all accounts was a great success, with some 1500 people turning up on the night to hear acts like Reverend and the Makers, RSAG (Rarely Seen Above Ground) and Dark Room Notes perform live. The venerable old dock area was suitably decked out with various examples of shipping, and lit up to highlight some of the features like the Clock Tower. The organisers were very grateful for the cooperation shown by all staff involved, and were fulsome in their praise for the venue.....U2 next year maybe?!



## Belgian Task Group visit to Limerick Dock

The Belgian Task Group, the Belgian command and logistic ship A960 GODETIA, the Belgian Mine hunter M924 Primula and the Belgian Auxiliary ship A963 STERN, visited Limerick Docks on the 25th and 26th July 2009. The purpose of the visit was part of a training campaign for the benefit of embarked students. Members of the public were also welcomed on board for a tour.



## Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series (OHSAS) 18001:2007

As you are all aware SFPC is once again rising to the challenge of performance enhancement and continuous development, particularly in the field of Health & Safety. We have recently commenced a project which we hope will lead us to OHSAS 18001 accreditation. This new standard will set even higher goals for SFPC and further raise H&S awareness and compliance within all of our facilities. As always we are reliant on our employees to assist us in raising H&S awareness and we hope that completion of this new project will raise our existing high standards to a new level. We look forward to your positive input into this project over the coming months. Please speak to the Company Safety Officer or your safety representative for further information on this project.

## Visit to Limerick Port by Catherine McAuley School – 8th June 2009

Following other successful visits to Limerick Port, Catherine McAuley school made a very welcome return visit with their Junior Cert class just before they knuckled down to the exams.

Tom Treacy gave a presentation to the kids when they arrived into the port offices. The presentation covered all aspects of the work carried out in the port and was followed by a tour.

Happily a BRC Steel Ship was working at the time and the students were able to see the port operations in full swing.



A trip to Limerick Docks would never be complete without the involvement of Carmel. She greeted the kids with goodie bags and bid them farewell as they drove away.

One observation made by all who came in contact with the Catherine McAuley students was that they did their school proud – On behalf of Shannon Port Company we would like to thank Catherine McAuley School for their interest in our Company.

Jackie Belton