



32 lives saved in dramatic near-drowning rescues Irish Water Safety to honour remarkable rescuers

National Awards Ceremony

The Printworks Conference Centre, Dublin Castle

Tuesday 8th November 2016, 3pm – 5pm

Thirty-two lives were saved from drowning through the brave actions of forty-seven rescuers who will receive recognition at Irish Water Safety's National Annual Awards Ceremony at the Print Works Conference Centre, Dublin Castle on Tuesday 8th November, from 3pm to 5pm.

Mr Simon Coveney, Minister for Housing, Planning & Local Government will present the "Seiko Just In Time Rescue Award" and other awards to rescuers in appreciation for saving so many lives. Minister Coveney said 'I am delighted to be involved in this year's Irish Water Safety Awards Ceremony. It is an issue that I care deeply about and it is an honour to pay tribute to the courageous and deserving award winners.'

"Tragically an average of 133 people drown in Ireland every year," commented IWS Chairman Martin O'Sullivan, "and although that's 133 too many, the figure would be even higher but for the dramatic efforts of these individuals who saved others from drowning and the ongoing work of volunteers teaching swimming and water rescue skills."

"Complacency around aquatic environments is simply not an option", remarked Mr O'Sullivan, adding that "thirty children aged fourteen and under drowned in the last ten years, reflecting the importance of constant uninterrupted child supervision. The work of our volunteers in teaching and assessing Lifeguards pays dividends at our waterways every year, reflected in the fact that Lifeguards rescued 649 people from drowning nationwide this summer and reunited 662 lost children found wandering near water."

"I appeal to all adults to make themselves more aware of the dangers in, on and around water", continued the IWS Chairman. "It only takes seconds for tragedy to strike and this can so easily be avoided if people take responsibility for their own safety by learning about the hazards. I ask that people encourage friends and family to read Irish Water Safety's guidelines at www.iws.ie so that they have the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to avoid becoming a drowning statistic. Drownings can happen quickly and silently so it is very important that people take training before pursuing aquatic activities."

Representatives from the Irish Naval Service will also receive rescue awards for saving thousands of migrants in the Mediterranean whilst on humanitarian missions. Long-Service Awards will also be presented, recognising 1,510 years of personal service of 82 Irish Water Safety volunteers for teaching swimming, rescue and water survival skills in communities nationwide.

Interviews and photographs are available with Award recipients on the day at Dublin Castle from 2pm onwards. Post event images are available from the official photographer David Branigan, dave@oceansport.ie.

Irish Water Safety, The Long Walk, Galway; LoCall 1890-420.202 / 091-564400 / John Leech: 087-6789600 / Roger Sweeney: 087-6789601.

SEIKO Just In Time Awards & Rescue Appreciation

Presented to those who came to the assistance of person(s) in difficulty in water and in danger of drowning.

1. Incident occurred in Galway – Alan Herdman (Kildare) & Neil Gibson (Dublin)

On the 15th of July 2015, at Rusheen Bay, Galway, Alan & Neil were alerted to a group of children in distress in the water. Alan assessed the situation and went to the aid of a young girl and pulled her onto his board. He then continued to rescue another nearby child, pulling them both onto the same board. He instructed the two children to remain on the board while he swam towards a group of four children and helped them to remain buoyant. Neill then arrived on a stand up paddle board to these four children and gave Alan the board to keep them afloat. Neil swam to the remaining two children still in the water and brought them toward the paddle board, joining the children Alan had rescued previously. They then took all eight back to safety.

2. Incident occurred in Turkey – Sean Thompson (Wexford) & Mollie Tamara Power (Dublin)

In July of this year, Mollie, a member of the 38th Dublin Rush Scouts, and Sean, from the 6th Wexford Sea Scouts, were on holiday with their families. The brave teenagers swam to a local boy's aide and pulled him from the water – even clearing his airways and preparing to do CPR before a nurse took over.

3. Incident occurred in Sligo – Ruth Conlon Oates (Sligo)

On the 15th August 2016, 14 year old Ruth was sunbathing by Ballisodare river when she was made aware of a boy in difficulty in the water. She immediately entered the water and brought the person to safety. Her experience in lifesaving comes from her 'Rookie Lifeguard Training'

4. Incident occurred in Laois – Emily Duggan (Laois)

In May 2011, then 8 year old Emily Duggan noticed her little brother Justin then 5 was sinking rapidly in a septic tank. She immediately grabbed a hurley and went to the aid of her younger brother and pulled him to safety. Emily had completed Irish Water Safety's primary school curriculum, PAWS.

5. Incident occurred in Dublin - Donal Ward (Dublin), Niamh Wrenn (Dublin)

On the 23rd of January 2016, two swimmers got into difficulty in the water at Vico swimming place, Dalkey. A swimmer alerted a group of people about the situation. Both Niamh and Donal took a lifebuoy and went to the scene. One swimmer managed to get out of the water but the second swimmer remained in the water. He appeared very weak and was being

overpowered by the waves. It was very windy. On the third attempt with the use of a ringbuoy, Donal and Niamh managed to bring the swimmer to safety.

6. Incident occurred in Cork – John McCarthy (Cork)

On the 20th of April 2016, John was walking with his family when he came upon a woman in distress in the water. He entered the water and upon reaching the woman grabbed her by the arm and pulled her to safety.

7. Incident occurred in Donegal – John Flannery, Martin Treanor & Roisin Treanor (Monaghan)

On the 17th of September 2016 at 6pm, four teenage girls were rescued by a group of body boarders John Flannery, Martin Treanor and Roisin Treanor, after they had got into difficulty while swimming in Bundoran, Co. Donegal.

8. Incident occurred in Longford – Nicole Bohan, Dylan Murray, Kielan McDonagh & Jack Carey (Longford)

On the 3rd of July 2016, Nicole, Dylan, Kieran and Jack were walking along the Camlin River, Longford when they noticed a woman in distress. The woman was unable to reach her child in difficulty in the water but through the brave actions of the four friends working together, the child was saved and brought safely to the riverbank.

9. Incident occurred in Wexford – Laurence Duggan, William Duggan (Wexford)

In August of 2016, brothers William & Laurence Duggan came to the rescue of an 11-year old girl who was stuck in mudflats near the Ferrycarrig Hotel, Wexford. They heard the cries for help and immediately went to the rescue, deploying a life buoy on the riverbank and calmly giving the girl instructions so as not to alarm her further as they brought her to safety. Fifteen minutes later, the area where the child was embedded, was covered by an incoming tide.

10. Incident occurred in Clare – John McDonnell, Sergeant John Casey, Sergeant Marie Crowley (Clare)

On Sunday evening of the 14th of August 2016, Sergeants John Casey & Marie Crowley responded to a call at the Pier Road, Ballyvaughan. A man in a car had entered the water. Both Sergeant Casey and John McDonnell entered the water and brought the man to safety.

11. Incident occurred in Kildare – Gardai John O’Sullivan, Michael Murphy & Kevin Williamson

On the 17th September 2015 Gardai John O Sullivan, Michael Murphy & Kevin Williamson entered the Lake at Ballymore Eustace Road to rescue a female who had entered the water.

The female was unconscious and unresponsive. They performed CPR until the arrival of the paramedics at which stage the casualty was transferred to hospital for treatment.

12. Incident occurred in Kildare – Gardai David Salmon & Nathan Conroy (Kildare)

On the 21st of March 2016, Gardai Dave Salmon & Nathan Conroy received a call regarding a woman in distress in the water at Rye Bridge, Kildare. Both Gardai went to the location. Upon observing the woman in distress, they both entered the water and brought the woman to safety.

13. Incident occurred in Wexford – Garda Jarlath Duffy (Wexford)

On the 17th February 2016, Garda Jarlath Duffy observed a man in distress in the water at the River Slaney. The full uniformed Garda entered the water and brought the man to safety.

14. Incident occurred in Dublin – Garda Aidan Kelly (Dublin)

On Tuesday 19th of January 2016, Garda Aidan Kelly of Blackrock Garda Station observed a man fall into the water at Victoria Quay. Garda Kelly responded immediately and went to the aid of the man. After many attempts to reach the casualty with the aid of a lifebuoy, Garda Kelly ran along the river bank, grabbed another ringbuoy and lowered himself down a ladder. With the assistance of members of the public, Garda Kelly managed to pull the man onto the ladder and up onto the bank to safety. The man was transferred to hospital for treatment. *Garda Kelly has Irish Water Safety's Rescue 1 & 2 Lifesaving training from Templemore Garda College.

15. Incident occurred in Tipperary – Gardai Mark Holden, Kieran Hayes, Claire Murphy & Sergeant Kieran O Regan (Tipperary)

On the 17th of August 2015, Gardai, Mark Holden, Kieran Hayes, Claire Murphy & Kieran O Regan, received a call regarding a man who had fallen into the water at New Quay, Clonmel. The Gardai immediately went to the scene. Garda Mark Holden & Sgt. Kieran O'Regan entered the water. The four Gardai managed to bring the man to safety and waited with him until emergency services arrived to the scene.

16. Incident occurred in Sligo –Gary Robertson JIT, Rescue Appreciation - Ciaran Ferguson, Sean Redahan & Michael Treacy

On the evening of the 9th of August 2016, MRSC Malin Head coast guard received an emergency 999 call regarding an upturned boat off Inishshinny island. A lifeboat went to the scene but they were unable to attempt the rescue due to the crashing waves and many loose fishing ropes floating near the casualty. The unconscious casualty was wearing a lifejacket and was clinging onto a ringbuoy. The Rescue 118 helicopter assessed the situation and positioned itself 50 metres away from the scene. The winchman, Gary

Robertson, was lowered into the sea. He swam 50 metres to reach the casualty who was unresponsive and his left arm was wrapped around the buoy. Gary proceeded to work on the rescue by attaching double lifting straps around the casualty. Waves continued to crash over them. The winchman signalled to the operator to slowly start winching them out of the water. The fishing ropes attached to both the winch man & casualty were visible and the winch operator stopped the process to allow the ropes to be cut one by one. Both Gary and the casualty were winched into the aircraft.

**17. Incident occurred in Donegal – Davitt Walsh JIT, Rescue Appreciation –
Stephanie Knox**

On the 20th of March 2016, Davitt Walsh and Stephanie Knox were driving from the Buncrana pier when Stephanie noticed a car in the water. The pair immediately ran down to the slip-way where they met a local man who pleaded with them to swim out to the Jeep. Davitt entered the water and swam 40 metres out to sea to reach a jeep that had slipped off the pier at Buncrana. Sean McGrotty, rioghnachs father, broke the car window and in doing so broke his arm. He got out of the vehicle onto the window sill and gave rioghnach to Davitt. Upon reaching the Jeep, Davitt took the baby from the car. He managed to swim and make it back to dry land. Stephanie took the baby and wrapped it up in her coat until emergency services arrived.

Rescue Appreciation Awards:

Mr Norman Griffin (Monaghan)

In April of 1984, Norman was preparing for his lessons at St Davnett's Hospital swimming pool when he noticed a 7-year old boy face down in the water. Norman immediately entered the water and managed to take the boy to safety where he commenced CPR and alerted one of the parents to call for an ambulance. Norman continued CPR until a doctor arrived. The boy was taken to hospital by ambulance and he made a full recovery.

Ms Ciara Murray

In June 2016, Ciara Murray came upon a teacher who had collapsed in the corridor of the school she attends. Ciara immediately summoned help and an AED and successfully managed to keep her teacher alive until the emergency services arrived and took over. The teacher has since made a full recovery.

Sergeant Dermot Monaghan; Gardai Kieran Dempsey, Mary Murphy, Karl Moore, Johanna Connolly, John Glennon, Nicholas Glennon (Westmeath)

On the 22nd of September 2015, Gardai received a call regarding a woman in distress in the River Shannon in Athlone. Sergeant Dermot Monaghan, Garda Kieran Dempsey, Garda Mary Murphy, Garda Karl Moore, Garda Johanna Connolly & Garda John Glennon and Nicholas Keogh - all of Athlone Garda Station - rushed to the location and commenced searching for the distressed female. With the use of a lifebuoy and a fishing boat the Gardai brought the female to safety. The woman was taken to hospital by ambulance where she made a full recovery.

Mr Hugh Long (Dublin)

In Jan of 1983, Hugh Long was driving his Texaco tanker back from a routine trip. While stopped at traffic lights on the Liffey, a woman banged on his window screaming "help, she's drowning, save her". Hugh, a non-swimmer, immediately jumped from his lorry and climbed down a ladder to the river. He attached a rope to the ladder and threw it out to reach the woman. He managed to bring her to safety and he stayed with her until emergency services arrived on the scene.

Irish Navy

LÉ Eithne – CPO ERA Ruairi de Barra

LÉ Niamh – S/Lt Dave McKenna

LÉ Samuel Beckett – Lt Niall McCarthy

LÉ Roisin – PO Mech Dwayne Philbin

LÉ James Joyce – A/Supply Catherine Doran