

# Naomhóga Corcaí AGM 2005

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## A little history (Claire ni Mhuirthile)

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In 1992, Naomhóga Chorcaí was first used as the club's name in the Great River Race in London, by a crew including Pádraig Ó Duinnín, Frank Conroy, Jim Conroy, Máiréad Ní Laoire, and Davitt Conroy.

About 150 traditional rowing boats finished the course after the Naomhóga Chorcaí entry which was the overall winner.

In 1994, a total of 5 boats were built by Meitheal Mara and made available to the club. From 1994 to 1995, the club and Meitheal Mara were both housed at Horgan's Wharf. Naomhóga Chorcaí subsequently moved to Lee Rowing Club and most recently to Shandon Boat Club.

Some activities Naomhóga Chorcaí has taken part in:

Glandore Classic Boat Regatta.

Tall Ships at Castletownbere and Waterford.

Currach races at Dingle, Castlegregory and the Maharees.

Various weekends away.

East Ferry regatta and the Round the Island race.

Plearáca Chonamara.

Two main activities of Naomhóga Chorcaí are:

1. To make people aware of and to help them to appreciate our traditional boats:

By rowing

Taking people for trips

Visiting the Meitheal Mara workshop – seeing how boats are built

Taking part in regattas

2. To develop an awareness and appreciation of their cultural background:

“It is intended to be much more than a normal rowing club. In a word to unite our sea-heritage and our cultural heritage.” (Naomhóga Chorcaí Constitution).

Seeing as these boats were used mostly in Gaeltacht areas, e.g., Blasket Islands, Na hOileáin Árann, etc., where Irish was the main language, we like to use the simple terms used during rowing as Gaeilge:

Ar clé

On the left

Ar dheis

On the right

Le chéile

Together

Clé in airde

Left hand leading

Deis in airde

Right hand leading

Taking part in regattas in Gaeltacht areas (as well as non-Gaeltacht areas of course).

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## Keeping Time - 2004 (Anne Barry)

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In the days before everyone had a wrist watch, clocks in public places served a real function and people used to set the time pieces on their walls and mantelpieces by them. I used to be able to see two clock towers from my kitchen window but now both are blocked forever by new multi-storey developments. One of these was ‘the four faced liar’, otherwise known as Shandon. Of course Shandon is more famous for its bells than for its clock. It was built before the days of quartz movements and digital technology and got its name from the fact that all four faces never told exactly the same time.

It seems the wind was the cause of it, pushing the exposed hands against their will, but they always managed to get it right on the hour. As the time-keeping team for the Ocean to City Pilot Run on the June Bank Holiday Week-End, we had a nice breeze to contend with perched as we were on the exposed outside leg of the Crosshaven Boatyard Marina, but since we had been supplied with two digital stop watches and another digital wrist watch as a back up the wind wasn't an issue, all we had to worry about was dropping them in the water.

Several practice runs were carried out amongst the four of us the night before and on the morning of the event. It was like listening to a horse-racing commentary ..... and number two is coming up to the starting line ..... passing the starting line ..... NOW! Whereupon the appropriate button on the stopwatch was depressed to record the starting time in minutes and seconds. This time was called out loud so a written record could be kept by two people, one recording minutes and seconds only and the other recording hours minutes and seconds using a synchronised digital watch as a backup. This worked well on the day and we had a lot of fun starting each boat individually with the deafening noise of one of those aerosol hooters. The aim of the handicapping system in place was that all the boats should converge at the finish line together, to provide a bit of a spectacle I suppose. That's the theory anyway . (Sounds like a bit of a nightmare for the timekeepers!) In practice this is unlikely to happen as it assumes that all the crews are of the same fitness level so it's the type of boat you're entering that determines when you start. For example, the 3-handed Dunfanaghy, a traditional workboat from an area in Co. Donegal of the same name, started first. No offence to the lads who built her, but you'd know why if you saw her. In contrast, the sleek racing machine that travelled by road from Castletownbere, was last across the starting line. This method of starting left convenient gaps where us timekeepers could enjoy a few sandwiches or answer the call of nature. It was decided that all that was missing was a nice cup of tea. So after our starting duties were completed , we all adjourned to Cronins for tea and cappuccinos. (Nothing stronger, really.) The finish line was on Horgans Quay just where the river divides into two channels. Its

on the North side, downstream of Union Chandlery. We couldn't see any competitors on the river as we drove up by road . Our big luminous orange flag was put in place on the bank and the catamaran Oisín got in position on the river to act as a guide. All of a sudden a boat was spotted in the distance. The binoculars confirmed it was one of the Wexford Cots, which one was not clear as the number on their starboard bow had fallen off. It was the men's team. Identification was confirmed as they crossed the line by the number attached to their transom. A great achievement! They were followed closely by the womens team. Identifying the number of each competitor before they crossed the line was important to those keeping a record of the time. They needed to write in the finishing time alongside the starting time of each boat. So the binoculars were essential. It was also decided to put one of the timekeeping team on board the Oisín where they could have a good view of the number attached to the port side of the bow in case more boats had lost their starboard number en route. Between gaps in recording finishing times, the record keepers were scribbling furiously on any scrap paper to calculate elapsed time, or in layman's language, the time taken to complete the course. It's at a time like this that our dependence on calculators becomes so apparent. But fair dues to them they did it all without any electronic aids. The final job was to list competitors in the order they crossed the finishing line. There's a saying that time pieces don't really keep time, they just keep up with it. Here's hoping we can keep up with the 300 boats expected for the 2005 event!

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## Rowing report (Cathy Buchanan – Captaen)

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### The year

It has been a really enjoyable and active year of rowing for Naomhoga Corcaí. The impetus may have come from Ocean to City, and the need to prepare crews and boats, but the fun continued all summer with different people

coming forward to organise trips away and compete in regattas, including the Great River Race (more on these below). Saturday rowing sessions at Shandon have been well attended, and five more people joined the existing stalwarts on the rota, which is a great and appreciated support. The club also laid on two

sessions of rowing trips for the public in Fitzgerald's Park in partnership with Meitheal Mara, at the request of the City Council; one as part of the Midsummer Festival, and the second during the Folk Festival (on the day of the world-record-beating ceilidh in South Mall). The boats saw hard use, and a number have been substantially overhauled (An Rogaire Dubh, Rinceoir na Greine, the black 4x racer, the 3x Conemara) with new or refurbished oars. A price has been agreed with Meitheal Mara for repairs to Dúlúta and Án Brat Draíochta (Magic Brat), which are next on the list: the White Whale, Yellow Banana and 3x Arainn also need attention. A particularly pleasurable feature of the year has been the influx of a great bunch of new members. The enthusiasm, energy and commitment that came along too contributed hugely to the year, and I'd like to mark your input and thank all of you. Lastly and importantly, the experience and continuing

support of long-standing members is essential to the functioning of the club's rowing activities, and to them I pay particular tribute.

## Monthly time trials

Naomhoga Corcaí held a series of time trials over the winter and spring for club members preparing for Ocean to City. The idea was to build up interest in the race by giving crews a goal, to begin to link boats to crews (and avoid a scrum in June !), and to provide data on currach times in a range of conditions to help Meitheal Mara with the handicapping system. There were four crews in the November event, three in January, five in February, seven in March, . Any times that we have (taken by the crews themselves) are in the tables at the end of this report, with the pilot race currach times for comparison. Brief reports of each time trial follow below.

Dates (Saturdays)	HT Cobh	Course
20 <sup>th</sup> November, 2004	HT 12.02 pm 3.9m	Rushbrooke –St. Patrick's Bridge
22 <sup>nd</sup> January, 2005	HT 3.49 pm 3.9m	1. Spike Island – Custom House 2. Buoy 15 (west of Cobh) to Custom House
19 <sup>th</sup> February, 2005	HT 2.12 pm 3.1m	1. Spike Island – Mahon (approx. over the tunnel - Cork HOR taking place on the Marina). 2. Buoy 15 (west of Cobh) to Mahon, as above.
19 <sup>th</sup> March, 2005	HT 11.53 am 2.9m	1. Spike Island – Custom House. 2. Buoy 15 (west of Cobh) to Custom House.
23 <sup>rd</sup> April, 2005	LT 12.03 pm (HT 3.8m)	1. Crosshaven to Shandon east of Haulbowline. 2. Crosshaven to Shandon west of Haulbowline.
21 <sup>st</sup> May, 2005	LT 10.43 am (HT 3.6m)	Ocean to City course

**November:** We started late – very late and after the tide had turned. Conditions were good though – mild with a light wind (NE, I think). Crews were 3x racer, 3x and 4x naomhoga and 3x Dunfanaghy. The 3x naomhoga completed the course to Shandon; the 3x Dunfanaghy turned out not to be rowable (twisted gunnel caused the dowels to keep coming out), and the other two crews went to its assistance early in Lough Mahon. The Dunfanaghy and 4x

naomhog returned to Rushbrooke and the 3x racer (plus car keys needed at Shandon !) continued into the city. No harm done as the day was fine and all were reasonably experienced, but lessons learned.

**January:** Started on time, in two places. Crews were 2x Dunfanaghy, 4x racer and 4x naomhoga. Former started at channel marker buoy 15, between the shipyard and Cobh at 11.30am; other two crews started from 12.00pm at southern end of Spike Island. Day was fine

initially, wind NW, fresh at first but increased as row went on, with very strong gusts as the two 4x crews were in Lough Mahon, accompanied by showers of rain and even hail. There was also a lot of fresh water coming down the river which superceded any benefit from incoming tide. So we had a tough row, but all crews finished – two at the Custom House and one at Shandon RC.

**February:** Started on time, from same two points as January. We had five crews (intention was six, but a set of oars got left behind): 3x racer, 4x racer, 4x naomhoga and two 2x Dunfanaghys. The latter, powered by new but determined members, rowed the shorter course from buoy 15; other three crews started at Spike Island half an hour later. Wind was NW and sharp; forecast strength was fresh; and that was how the event started. By the time the bigger boats reached Passage West (and the smaller ones were entering Lough Mahon) it had increased considerably. It was a battle getting around the point at Glenbrooke, and the 4x racer decided to retreat to Rushbrooke and take the boat out. The 3x racer continued to the finish; while the 4x naomhoga rounded up the two valiant Dunfanaghys (one had tied up to a course marker buoy for a rest; the other was battling on but the crew was at its limit: neither boat had a sandwich between them). A very tough day: luckily the newcomers proved to be hardy individuals and have been back for more (but not in a Dunfanaghy !). No rain, which could have made things thoroughly miserable.

**March:** Same start points as in January and February: four crews began at the buoy off Spike (3x Arainn, 4x naomhog A, 3x Conemara racer, 4x yellow banana racer) and three crews from buoy 15 west of Cobh (4x naomhog B and C; 4x racer). Wind was SE and felt fresh enough from the thwart of a currach; we all found the row tough, although not as much of an ordeal as in February. Everyone made it up to town, with five crews completing the course to the Custom House and two finishing at Shandon Rowing Club. Hard but enjoyable, with a good sense of achievement for newcomers and old hands alike.

**April:** The run-up to this one was nerve-racking for the Captaen, with a small craft warning in place all week. However, the

conditions proved manageable on the day, with a fresh easterly. There were four boats and all rowed from Crosshaven to Shandon, two to the east of Spike and Haulbowline (3x Conemara and 4x naomogha, the Magic Brat), and two to the west (4x naomhog, Dlútaca and the Moo crew, white whale).

**May:** Records for this last trial are sketchy ... wind was fresh and south-westerly, and there were four or five crews: a first venture for the 2x Barry boat; 4x An Rogaire Dubh (Jim, Claire, Cliona and Mike); 4x Yellow Banana, 4x Dlútaca (maybe ?), the 4x White Whale Moo crew, and 4x Magic Brat/An Brat Draíochta. From memory, all finished: the bigger boats rowed the complete Ocean to City course from Crosshaven to Roches Point, and the Barry boat rowed a shorter course, from Crosshaven to the west of Spike and Haulbowline and home.

**June ....** we had the real thing ! Times for Naomogh Corcaí crews (including crews-of-convenience, taking advantage of membership for the day) in Ocean to City 2005 are in the table on the next page. A proud congratulations to regular time-triallers, O’Sullivan’s father, son and brother-in-law, the first currach home in the 3x Conemara. Well done ! I also have to pick out the first and second naomhoga home for special congratulations – both crews learned what racing really was on the day, and showed it by beating the club old-hand crews that made up the rest of the class. We’ll see your sweaty backs yet .....

**Ocean to City 2006 will be on the last weekend in May: Saturday, 27th. Put it in your diaries.**

## Ocean to City 2005 – Naomogh Chorcaí times (or some of them)

Boat	Finish	Time	H'cap	Boat type	Place
O'Sullivan's Boat	14:01:08	02:31:09	27	Connemara Racer	16
Ringeoir na Greine	14:17:25	02:45:20	32	Working Naomhog 4hd	34
An Bad Mor Dubh	14:18:33	02:46:28	32	Working Naomhog 4hd	37
An Brat Draíochta	14:35:45	03:03:30	32	Working Naomhog 4hd	50
White Whale	14:59:38	03:27:33	32	Working Naomhog 4hd	65
An Rogaire Dubh	15:00:20	03:28:15	32	Working Naomhog 4hd	66
Declan					
O'Callaghan	14:36:27	03:34:02	1	Working Naomhog 2 hd	51
Baidin Brid	14:47:00	03:39:00	7	Arainn Currach 3hd	59
An Ciarog	14:46:08	03:41:20	1	Working Naomhog 2 hd	57
Cahill/Murphy	15:07:29	04:04:06	1	Working Naomhog 2 hd	72
Yellow Banana	15:51:12	04:15:40	35	Racing Naomhog 4hd	81
Uisce Milis	15:31:48	04:20:48	10	Dunfanaghy Currach 3hd	80
Arainn a Laon	15:31:41	04:27:41	4	Arainn Currach 3hd	79
Montys	15:53:57	04:41:21	12	Working Naomhog 3 hd	83
Lifeboat	15:51:50	04:50:50	1	Working Naomhog 2 hd	82

### Saltee Islands and Tall Ships trip (Cathy Buchanan)

Organised with ease by “no problem” Creagh, several carloads of rowers and one boat trailer left Cork on Friday, 8th July for Waterford, to see The Tall Ships. Two naomogha were launched unobtrusively at the ferry slipway for Waterford Castle Hotel, and off upriver we went (Oisín, Marion, Sinead, Finola; Cathy, Pat Ruane, Ian Ombima, Kevin Guerin, Robbie and Niall) joined by a couple of outdoor-instructors in kayaks from Oisín’s former life in Shilebeggan. We spent the next few hours messing about on the river, looking back at the crowds and cadging beers from Tall Ship crews. Overnight was spent in Shilebaggan OE Centre at Ramsgrange.

The following morning we set off for Kilmore Quay. We were joined by Mary McCarthy and Tracey McCormack; Chris Ralphs and Margaret to launch and load three naomogha with endless bags, camping gear, children, food and drink. The weather was beautiful. First warm sunny day of the year and flat calm. The row to Great Saltee (4-5 miles) was, possibly, deceptively easy, but no one was complaining. We rafted up at the Little Saltee

en route, spotted birds, drifted, drank, chatted and sunned ourselves.

That just about set the scene for the rest of the weekend. The sun kept right on shining. The junior Creaghs and friends played all night. The seabirds were stupendous. And incredibly noisy. And incredibly smelly. Ian was endlessly entertaining. The swimming was blue. The barbeque was expansive. The sunset was just like the cowboy movies. The camping was easy; dry, dry ground; short, short grass.

There was much discussion about the need to go home at all. But we did. Well done, Oisín: and a big THANK YOU.

### The Blackwater Row (Sheila Kelleher)

Saturday 10th September; start: Cappoquin 10am. End: Youghal - a few hours later. . .

Crew 1: Cliona, Hugh, Stefan, Martin and Marie (Rinceoir na Greine)

Crew 2: Brendan, Niall, Sheila, Keith and Dervilla (The White Whale)

Conditions were favourable as both crews met on the Banks of the River Blackwater just beyond Cappoquin. Boats were unloaded without incident and we worked well together to

get them on the water. A safety/pep talk by Brendan was followed by a Jane Fondaesque workout led by Stefan. No spandex in sight. Shortly after 10.30 we started off with the White Whale leading the group, there was a brief attempt by Rinceoir na Greine to overtake, this was thwarted by their need to remove garments due to the warm and sunny weather. We rowed on navigating through trees and islands on the river - the river was high and the current was in our favour.

The scenery was really beautiful, wonderful seeing the river from a completely different perspective. We stopped off briefly at Villiardstown to swap around crew members and continued on down river. An otter briefly joined us on our journey and as we drifted down with the current he kept us company. On we went with Rinceoir na Greine briefly in front, we reached our next port of call and disembarked to enjoy lunch.

Now as you may or may not be aware it was the lovely Marie Drew's birthday on the 5th of September and her wonderful but absent (possibly hungover?) husband John's birthday on Friday the 9th and this occasion was marked with a bottle of champagne. We were all a little merrier getting back in the currachs I can tell you. . . We rowed on passing a great big house with gardens and an island with a church and graveyard on it. I have no idea what they were called so if there is a need for enlightenment please enquire from Brendan.

At our last point we made the final swapover - continuing on course we got to the bridge joining Youghal and Waterford and from there on conditions did get a bit more tough. Up to this point The White Whale was miles ahead but sadly Rinceoir na Greine finally managed to overtake us at the final nautical mile. Back at Youghal however even though it wasn't a "race" as such - The White Whale were the first to get a body on land so hard luck lads. . . We all had a well deserved pint/hot whiskey in the pub afterwards and then loaded the boats for the long journey home.

Well done to Stefan and Niall who rowed the whole 4 legs but I think it was the rest of us who were the real winners on the day. . . ;-) And finally to the man himself - Brendan a million

thanks for organising the trip it was absolutely fantastic.

## **Oileán Cléire (Jim Malone)**

Friday 19th August 2005 saw Naomhoga Chorcai set out for a weekend on Cape Clear. The group gathered in Baltimore for a scheduled departure at 5.00pm on Friday. With a strengthening north west wind blowing the route was set to the south of Sherkin Island to afford the 3 four handers in the flotilla as much shelter as possible. Those not rowing chose a more sedate way of travelling to the island by ferry.

We set off shortly after the scheduled departure time having assured Mizen Coastguard that we were all of age, although perhaps slightly mad! All went well to the southwesterly end of Sherkin where we paused to consider the perils of the Gascanain Sound. The wind at this stage had whipped up to a stiff force 5/6 but our full complement of rowers was in good shape. It was agreed that we would press on and aim for landfall at the slipway on the easterly tip of Cape. The trip across the Sound was at times interesting with heavy squalls and a large swell bringing progress to a halt but eventually we made it to the slipway. Given the strength of the wind it was decided to leave the boats here for the night and travel overland to the Hostel and our lodgings for the weekend where our hosts Ristead and Siobhan looked us after superbly.

Friday night allowed time for recuperation, a review of the trip and the taking on of much needed liquid refreshment. Saturday brought a stunning day with a cloudless sky. The boats were collected from the easterly slipway and rowed to North Harbour with Ristead taking the opportunity to try his hand. Saturday afternoon most people did their own thing with some rowing to the Fastnet with others preferring the more leisurely if cooler pursuit of swimming. There was even time for a cameo appearance in a tourist video by a German TV company, choreographed expertly by Pdraig!!

Saturday night we had a delicious meal for the entire troop at the hostel followed by a singsong at the pub on the hill - X-factor watch out!!

Sunday morning underlined the fickleness of the Irish weather with a heavy fog shrouding the island and putting a question mark over our return to Baltimore. Luckily as the day wore on the weather lifted and we set off in close formation for the mainland arriving safely at about 3.00pm. The boats were loaded onto the trailer with the help of Harry's expert knots and we adjourned to a local hostelry for lunch before departing for Cork.

Trips like this don't just happen and it is important to pay tribute to Cliona O'Carroll for the manner in which she organised our trip. The attention to detail and above all to the safety of all involved was much appreciated and made for a very enjoyable weekend. To sum up we had an absolute ball! Where to next?

## **Great River Race 2005**

Watch the slides ! Attended by Declan and Gareth O'Callaghan (plus two A.N.Others) in a two-handed naomogh; and Brendan Hennessey, Stefan Wulff, Padraig Ó Duinnín and Donagh MacArtain in a similar craft ..... any others ?

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## Bits and pieces

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### Atlantic Challenge ([www.atlanticchallenge.ie](http://www.atlanticchallenge.ie))

The Woodvale Atlantic Rowing Race is a 40 day, 2795 mile epic of endurance and determination, from La Gomera in the Canaries to Antigua in the Carribean. The crew of Atlantic Challenge, Ciaran Lewis and Gearoid Towey (who competed in Ocean to City this year), hope to become the first Irish crew to win the race, whilst raising funds for the Irish

Cancer Society and Merchant's Quay Ireland in the process.

Starting on 26th November, Gearoid Towey and Ciarán Lewis will spend six weeks with their backs facing the Caribbean, trying to become the first Irish crew to win the Transatlantic rowing challenge. Looking east but heading west. Lewis and Towey are two of Ireland's most talented oarsmen. Towey represented Ireland in the Athens Olympic games in the lightweight double sculls, and Lewis has a slew of national titles to his name.

### Distances for training spins

From:	To:	Course	Distance (nautical miles)
Crosshaven	Custom House	Via Roches Point and main channel to east of Spike Island, by Cobh; etc.	14.9
		Directly to Spike Island, by its eastern side, and by Cobh (i.e., leaving out Roches Point), etc.	12.1
		Directly to Spike Island by the western side, and on to Monkstown (and leaving out Roches Point), etc.	10.4
	Rushbrooke	By Monkstown shore; Rochestown side of shipping channel down Lough Mahon	8.7
Buoy 10 (by Spike, start for time trials 3 & 4)	Custom House	By eastern side of island, to Cobh shore; Monkstown shore; Rochestown side of shipping channel down Lough Mahon	10.3
Buoy 15 (by White Point, near Cobh, start for time trials 3 & 4)		By Monkstown shore; Rochestown side of shipping channel down Lough Mahon	7.7
Rushbrooke		By Monkstown shore; Rochestown side of shipping channel down Lough Mahon	6.2

Round trip, there and back, from:	To Lough Mahon buoy number:	Distance (nautical miles)
Shandon Rowing Club	R12	4.6
	R10	6
	R8	6.6
	R6	7.4
	R4	8.4

## Beaufort scale

Wind force	Short description	Specifications for use on land	Wind speed at 10 metres above level ground		
			Knots	Metres per second	Miles per hour
0	Calm	Smoke rises vertically	<1	<0.3	<1
1	Light air	Direction of wind shown by smoke but not by wind vanes	1 to 3	0.3 - 0.5	1 to 3
2	Light breeze	Wind felt on face, leaves rustle, ordinary vanes moved by wind	4 to 6	1.6 - 3.3	4 to 7
3	Gentle breeze	Leaves and twigs in constant motion, wind extends light flag	7 to 10	3.4 - 5.4	8 to 12
4	Moderate breeze	Raises dust and loose paper, small branches are moved	11 to 16	5.5 - 7.9	13 to 18
5	Fresh breeze	Small trees in lea begin to sway, crested wavelets form on inland waters	17 to 21	8.0 - 10.7	19 to 24
6	Strong breeze	Large branches in motion, whistling heard in telegraph wires; umbrellas used with difficulty	22 to 27	10.8 - 13.8	25 to 31
7	Near gale	Whole trees in motion, inconvenience walking against the wind	28 to 33	13.9 - 17.1	32 to 38
8	Gale	Breaks twigs off trees, generally impedes progress	34 to 40	17.2 - 20.7	39 to 46
9	Strong gale	Slight structural damage occurs (chimney pots and slates removed)	41 to 47	20.8 - 24.4	47 to 54
10	Storm	Seldom experienced, considerable structural damage occurs	48 to 55	24.5 - 28.4	55 to 63
11	Violent storm	Very rarely experienced, accompanied by widespread damage	56 to 63	28.5 - 32.6	64 to 72
12	Hurricane		64 and over	32.7 and over	73 and over