



news

Killybegs Fishermen's

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MARTIN HOWLEY 1952 - 2015

PROGRESSIVE, INSPIRATIONAL AND GREAT COMPANY A HUGE LOSS TO THE KILLYBEGS FISHING COMMUNITY

*"He was a man, take him for all in all,
we shall not look upon his like again."*

William Shakespeare

Martin Howley was interested in many things and excelled at most. He viewed life from a simplistic, ingenuous perspective which gave him the vision to see his objectives clearly and achieve what he saw. He looked past the obstacles and clutter of everyday life to the important goals on the horizon and soared above the mundane to reach them. And he did, most definitely, reach them.

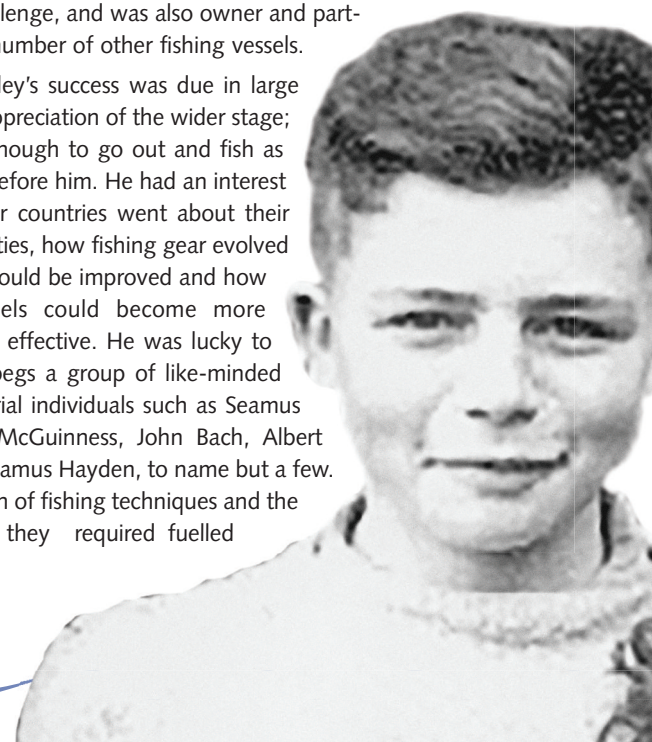
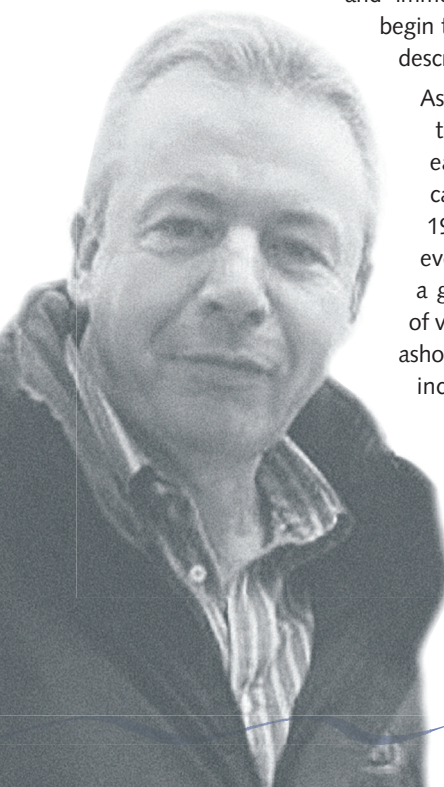
Martin, born in 1952, the eldest of five, grew up in Castleconnor on the Mayo-Sligo border. His mother died when he was 10 years old leaving his father to rear a young family and run a farm single-handed. Bord lascaigh Mhara visited his school when he was 17 as part of a promotional campaign to recruit young men to the fishing industry; obviously it was a very successful effort because the young Martin Howley was inspired by the idea of a life at sea, and immediately set off for Killybegs to begin the career which now can only be described as legendary.

As happens with many epic stories, timing played a crucial role in the early development of Martin's career. In the late 1960s and early 1970s Irish fishing was growing in every way – bigger, modern vessels; a growing professionalism; a cohort of visionary operators both at sea and ashore; better communications, and increased contact with fishing communities outside Ireland. All these factors came together to create a "can-do" atmosphere, an essential ingredient when an industry is growing rapidly and

moving into new territory.

In the course of his apprenticeship, Martin fished on several boats beginning with the 70ft *MFV Ard Aidhm* and followed by the *MFV Basalt*. These were followed by a stint on the *MFV Fingafjord* and then the *MFV Day Star* skippered by Killybegs man Sean O'Carroll, who took delivery of the new 65ft *MFV Sepdemar* in 1971. In 1975 he joined the new steel fishing vessel *MFV Carmarose* to be followed in 1980 by the *MFV Western Viking*, Killybegs Fishing Enterprises first RSW vessel, where he joined Skipper John Bach as Mate. In 1981, Martin himself graduated to Skipper when the company purchased the *MFV Jasper Sea*, and so began the phenomenally successful partnership of these two vessels and their Skippers. However, in recent years, Martin will be more associated with the *MFV Atlantic Challenge*, of which there were three, all built in Norway in 1986, 1996 and 1999 respectively. Martin was joint owner of the current *Atlantic Challenge*, and was also owner and part-owner of a number of other fishing vessels.

Martin Howley's success was due in large part to his appreciation of the wider stage; it was not enough to go out and fish as others had before him. He had an interest in how other countries went about their fishing activities, how fishing gear evolved and how it could be improved and how fishing vessels could become more efficient and effective. He was lucky to find in Killybegs a group of like-minded entrepreneurial individuals such as Seamus Tully, Sean McGuinness, John Bach, Albert Swan and Seamus Hayden, to name but a few. The evolution of fishing techniques and the fishing gear they required fuelled





communications with other fishing areas, in particular the Scottish North Sea ports such as Fraserburgh and Peterhead, as Skippers from there began to travel to Killybegs to source their gear from Swan Nets. The implications of this international trade were not lost on Martin who as years went on became more and more involved with this end of the fishing industry. His activities were not confined to Europe; in recent years he became a well-known figure in fishing circles from Alaska to Chile, Africa to China and further afield.

As the fishing industry became a target for progressively more complex rules and regulations, particularly after the introduction of the first Common Fisheries Policy in the early 1980s, Martin Howley became more and more convinced that Ireland's fishing industry needed to be well represented both nationally and internationally. He had been a Board member of Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation since it was founded in 1979 and could see how effectively his colleagues in the Scottish industry used their representatives to look after their interests. It was obvious that information and data were essential tools in the corridors of power but they also needed to be used as effectively as possible. He played an increasingly active role in the KFO as time went on and became a well-known figure in Brussels where he fought unswervingly for all Irish fishermen no matter where they were located.

His final project as KFO member was his involvement in the setting up of the Bio-Marine Ingredients Ireland plant in Killybegs. This work is ongoing and is a perfect example of the broad vision of a man who could see the benefits of combining the health supplement industry with a fishery product. In this instance the marriage of a fish species, which on its own merit might not be a very attractive economic proposition, with

a range of highly-prized, globally sought-after health supplements, has all the hallmarks of long-term, sustainable success.

Of course, Martin's talents were not confined to fishing – where he saw a gap or an opportunity he filled it and, as usual, with style and flair. His first venture into the hospitality business was the purchase of the Fleet Inn in Killybegs, a pub & guesthouse which his daughter Marguerite helped put on the map through her culinary skills. In 2003 this was followed by a joint father-daughter venture when they bought Castle Murray House and very rapidly made it a byword for fine food in an idyllic setting.

His hobbies were challenging, skilful and, at times, dangerous. He was a very active competitor in Donegal motor sport and when not an active participant, played a huge role in administration and organisation as evidenced by his record in the annals of Donegal Motor Club. Other interests included horse racing, his own horse MacSwynes Bay had a number of successful outings, and clay pigeon shooting.

To all his activities, fishing, sport, representing fishing interests, Martin brought a sense of humour and fun which never took from his professional approach but made us all feel a bit better for him being there. Martin is survived by his widow, Teresa, sons Noel, Pauric and Shaun, daughter Marguerite, brothers Frank and Pdraig, sisters Mary and Eilish, and extended family. The esteem in which he was held is best shown by some of the many tributes which were paid after his untimely death on August 17, 2015.



"I'm sure I speak for all the members of the IFPO when I say that Martin's passing is a huge loss to the Irish fishing industry. Although Martin had been at the very top of the Irish fishing industry he always seemed to take time to say hello to any fishermen he met regardless of what size of boat they came out of and always with a smile."

Cara Rawdon, Chairman, IFPO

"Martin was a friend to all fishermen around the coast and he will be greatly missed as both a spokesperson and a leader of our industry."

Hugo Boyle, Chief Executive, IS&EFPO

"Martin Howley personified everything that we want to be proud of in the fishing industry; he was kind, unfailingly generous and, ultimately, a humble man. He was a friend to all and treated each with respect and kindness. He was also a true entrepreneur; a giant of the industry who built up a hugely successful fishing business in Killybegs and beyond. Martin was passionate about seafood and was instrumental in driving forward with new ideas and innovations across the sector. Many of us in BIM had the pleasure of working closely with Martin over the years and we will all miss him greatly. On behalf of the Board and staff of BIM, I would like to extend our sincere condolences to Teresa and to all Martin's family at this sad time."

Michael Keatinge, BIM

"I was very saddened to hear of Martin's passing. I got to know Martin really well since I became Minister. He was a progressive and thoughtful leader in his community and always very helpful to me in terms of advice on the Fisheries sector, but more importantly, he was a really decent and likeable person. My thoughts and prayers are with his family at this difficult time."

Simon Coveney, TD, Minister for Agriculture, Food, Marine and Defence

"We have lost a true friend whose larger-than-life presence brightened our every day. Martin was an inspirational figure to all, who went out of his way to help so many people. Martin will be sorely missed."

Evelyn Kierans, MD, Swan Net-Gundry Ltd.

"On Monday the Donegal Motor Club and Irish Rallying lost one true friend, gentleman and competitor. That man was Martin Howley.

Martin was the DMC Vice Chairman, a true club man and real stalwart. The nature of the man was that he was always at the end of the phone if anything needed to be done and many things that he did will be remembered for a long time. Martin will be fondly remembered for competing in Escorts, Cosworths and Evos all over the country, on tarmac and forest. The quiet gentleman will be forever in our thoughts and hearts. Our prayers are with his family, friends and all who knew the great man. R.I.P." **Donegal Motor Club**, Facebook page

"Martin was a true pioneer of pelagic fishing, who introduced many new concepts into the industry, such as ship design and gear technology to name but two. One of the many great attributes Martin possessed was his willingness to help his fellow fishermen, no matter the circumstances. We will sorely miss his intellect, his practical way of dealing with sometimes very challenging situations, but most of all his great sense of humour."

Ian Gatt, Chief Executive, Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association

And finally, an extract from the eulogy delivered by his great friend and comrade-in-arms, **Eugene McBrearty**, at Martin's funeral:

"These last few days since Martin passed away people have said to me that Martin is a big loss and has left a big dark hole in the community. I say that Martin has left a big white hole of love and light as Martin did not believe in the dark – he saw the light in everything and every person – this was Martin. He has prepared for this day and he is on the starting line for a new life challenge and there will be a big party for him as he crosses the finishing line. All of us here and our family and friends who have passed on know the good Martin did for us and they are going to give him a great welcome. Thank you Martin, until we meet again, Good Bye."



In 2013 a delegation from the European Parliament's Committee on Fisheries are pictured at the KFO Office, from left to right, Ted Breslin, KFO; Cathal Boyle, Vice Chairman KFO; Martin Howley, Chairman KFO; Ulrike Rodust, MEP from Germany; Pat the Cope Gallagher MEP; Struan Stevenson MEP from Scotland, and Sean O'Donoghue CEO of the KFO.



Martin Howley and Stephen McSharry on board the *Atlantic Challenge*



At the launch of Bio-marine Ingredients Ireland (BII) in Killybegs in 2014, from left to right are: Minister Dinny McGinley TD; Martin Howley, Chairman KFO and interim CEO BII; Sean O'Donoghue, CEO KFO; Arne Petter Holli MD Biomarine Science Technology Ltd. and Minister Simon Coveney, TD.

MAJOR SURPRISES IN LATEST ICES ADVICE

ICES advice on stocks of interest to the Irish pelagic fleet was issued on September 30, 2015. The advice for mackerel and blue whiting indicates very substantial reductions on last year which is very surprising and a cause for concern. However the advice for Western horse mackerel shows an unexpected increase which is also very surprising and, as anticipated, the advice for North Sea horse mackerel remains the same as 2015. There is also an increase for Atlanto-Scandian herring but boarfish has been reduced.

Mackerel

ICES advises that when MSY approach is applied, catches in 2016 should be no more than 667,385 tonnes. ICES further advises that the existing measures to protect the North Sea spawning component should remain in place. The triennial egg survey is the basis of ICES mackerel advice; it is now two years since this survey has been done and there has been an upward revision of egg production. However, the results of the Nordic Summer Survey, a partial index of the stock, have created uncertainty resulting in the reduced catch advice.

Blue Whiting

ICES advises that when the MSY approach is applied, catches in 2016 should be no more than 776,391 tonnes. The uncertainty of the assessment and forecast is considered higher than in previous years. The model estimated very high F and catch values for 2015 in order to fit the low 2015 survey (March–April) abundance indices. This is considered unrealistic. Overall, the approach chosen may have resulted in a higher than 50 per cent probability of overestimating the stock.

Western Horse Mackerel

ICES advises that when the MSY approach is applied, catches in 2016 should be no more than 126,103 tonnes which is an increase on 2015. This increase is a surprising development and highlights the need for a management plan.

North Sea Horse Mackerel

ICES advises that when the precautionary approach is applied, catches in 2016 should be no more than 15,200 tonnes. ICES advised significant reduction in catches for 2015. This led to a nearly 50 per cent reduction in the agreed TAC (2014-2015) for this stock. The impact of this reduction in TAC on the catch in 2015 and the stock cannot yet be observed; hence, no further change in advised catches is considered necessary for 2016.

Boarfish

ICES advises that when the precautionary approach is applied, catches in 2016 should be no more than 42,637 tonnes. The stock status is still reckoned to be uncertain and considered to be data-limited. The acoustic survey data were considered to be reliable estimates and showed some increase. The results of the genetic survey indicate the management area is correct and does not include fish from outside the area.

Atlanto-Scandian Herring

ICES advises that when the EU, Faroe Islands, Iceland, Norway and Russia management plan is applied, catches in 2016 should be no more than 316,876 tonnes which is an increase on last year's recommendation.

Editorial

by Sean O'Donoghue

CHIEF EXECUTIVE, KFO



We have dedicated this issue of the KFO Newsletter to the memory of our dear friend and colleague Martin Howley, who passed away on August 17 last. He will be irreplaceable in this organisation, the Irish fishing industry, the local community and, most of all, to his own family.

Martin moved to Killybegs in the early 1970s as a boy beginning a career in fishing; he quickly became the man who was renowned worldwide as one of the most progressive figures in modern fishing. He was been a Board member of the KFO since it was formed in 1979 and served as chairperson for 18 years at various times including his most recent three year term which ended in May of this year. During that period he became the lion of the fishing industry in Donegal, in Ireland and indeed, in Europe.

In addition to losing our dear friend, we have lost our stalwart champion whose knowledge, understanding and vision were complemented by an innate modesty. Whether negotiating on

behalf of the industry in the most challenging of times or working at the 'coalface', Martin was extremely popular and earned the trust of fishermen, their families, colleagues, as well as the political establishment. He was comfortable in any company, be it with political leaders and decision makers or neighbours and fishing families. Martin touched so many lives; he possessed a charisma and warmth that endeared him to so many people in Killybegs, and further afield, where he was enormously respected at all levels. Martin Howley was somebody who had real vision and throughout his career he constantly encouraged and spear-headed progress; this was very evident as he drove his most recent project at Bio-Marine Ingredients Ireland (BII). He was always exploring new opportunities for the sector,

working with science and thinking ahead, to leave a sustainable industry and livelihood for the generations to follow. BII is a prime example of Martin spotting the opportunity for the fishing industry in the extraction of globally sought, high-value health supplements and fish oils. It would be most fitting now for us to deliver the Bio-Marine Ingredients project, we owe it to Martin and his legacy.

Martin would consider it remiss of me not to comment on the ICES advice for pelagic species issued recently on September 30 (see article page three.)

The ICES advice for catches of mackerel and blue whiting in 2016 are very disappointing. They show reductions of more than 30 per cent and 40 per cent respectively, which is a complete contradiction of both the trends in recent years and the reports from industry on the ground. In the case of mackerel, a management plan needs to be developed as a matter of urgency to replace MSY advice. Both KFO and the Pelagic Advisory Council urge the Coastal States to address this issue as soon as possible as the EU industry and Coastal States believe there is a problem with the current methodology. Next year the European industry will participate in the international egg survey; Ireland will carry out its survey in August 2016 for 14 days.

As regards the blue whiting, it is incredible that scientific advice can take such large swings up and down; there have been four massive changes in catch advice since 2004, which begs the question, do the scientists themselves trust this advice? This situation calls the credibility of ICES into question and cannot continue. The increased scientific advice for Western horse mackerel catches of 27 per cent on last year is very surprising and highlights another species where a management plan is needed urgently before this stock runs into problems. The North Sea horse mackerel advice remains unchanged as expected but there will be a substantial industry-based project launched to improve the knowledge base for this fishery.

The advice for Boarfish catches in 2016 has been reduced by 20 per cent; it is classified as a data-limited stock but the acoustic survey data is considered to be reliable and shows an increase in stock. Industry continues to play an active role in developing management strategy for this species and the on-going genetic studies which confirm the management area is correct should contribute greatly to future management.

We are pleased with the small increase advised for Atlanto-Scandian herring, and of course point out that the ICES advice is not the last word on TACs for 2016. All these recommendations will be further discussed and negotiated between now and December 2015.



Important Dates October - December 2015

October 2	Industry /Science Partnership	Oranmore
October 6	NPWG	Edinburgh
October 7	PelAC WG1 & WG2	Edinburgh
October 8	PelAC General Assembly & Executive Committee	Edinburgh
October 9	Commission meeting with DAFM & Stakeholders	Clonakilty
October 12-16	Coastal States Blue Whiting & Atlanto-Scandia Herring	London
October 20-22	Coastal States (Mackerel)	Clonakilty
October 21	Whitefish Quota Management	Clonakilty
October 22-23	Fisheries Council	Luxembourg
November 3	Discard Implementation Group	Dublin
November 9-13	NEAFC AGM	London
November 16-17	Fisheries Council	Brussels
November 16-20	EU/Norway Bilateral first round	Copenhagen
Nov 30 - Dec 4	EU/Norway Bilateral second round	Bergen
December 14-15	Fisheries Council	Brussels

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