

Press Release - Vintage Cars & Heritage Boats on Barrow banks - Jun 2011

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PRESS RELEASE

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Vintage Cars and Heritage Boats on Barrow banks

On a summer Saturday afternoon a week from now the beautiful valley of the River Barrow will echo to the bygone sound of ancient engines. Vintage and Veteran cars participating in the Gordon Bennett Rally will be travelling the old towpath along the river bank. There to greet and salute them with a dip of their ensigns will be the Heritage Boats of the Three Sisters Fleet. These magnificent cars and boats share an era when men were men and machines were mighty. They will meet up on the river bank as part of Barrow 220 which celebrates the opening of this unique river navigation two hundred and twenty years ago.

The Irish Veteran and Vintage Car Club (IVVCC) and the Heritage Boat Association (HBA) announced today that a gathering will take place on Saturday afternoon, June 11th, when the Mercedes Benz IVVCC International Gordon Bennett Rally will drive on the Barrow towpath. Setting out at 14:00 from historic Graiguenamanagh the cars will stop to meet up with the Heritage Boats at beautiful Bahana Woods above St Mullins Lock and Weir.

The Rally commemorates the race that was held in Ireland in 1903 and this year the cars participating date from 1904 to 1930. Amongst the Heritage boats will be Grand Canal Company barges 68M and 72M, both built in the same period and who in their earlier lives carried cargoes along Irish rivers, lakes and canals.

The Barrow Navigation linked the Grand Canal with the rivers Barrow, Nore and Suir and opened up a large area of the hinterland to the ports of Dublin and Waterford. Following the excellent work by Waterways Ireland on the river and towpath, the cars have been granted a unique opportunity this year; permission to drive along parts of the towpath from Fenniscourt to St Mullins.

The afternoon's events will culminate in St Mullins where Carlow Tourism will greet the drivers and crews. Both the IVVCC and the HBA welcome this opportunity to work with Carlow Tourism and Waterways Ireland in highlighting the exquisite River Barrow and its environs. Ian McCulloch, Clerk of the Course for the Rally, stated "driving along some of the most beautiful stretches of the Barrow is an opportunity not to be missed".

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Contacts:

Paul Martin, Chair HBA 087 2523908 or pro@heritageboatassociation.ie

John Wilkinson, IVVCC, 086 7333486 or secretary@gordonbennett.ie

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Websites: www.heritageboatassociation.ie and www.gordonbennett.ie

History of the Gordon Bennett Race in Ireland www.gordonbennetroute.com/1903race.html

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