



Big Boat Build - Participant Testimonial

“To spend a few days working on rebuilding a 56ft wooden sailing ketch must be every wooden boat enthusiasts dream. To do so in a real working boatyard in West Cork with boat builders who still build wooden boats and know more about the craft than probably anyone else in the country is an added bonus. I had the opportunity to do just that by taking part in the February Big Boat Build Workshop in Hegartys Boatyard, outside Baltimore. A great opportunity to work with and learn from Fachtna, Liam and John, men steeped in boatbuilding tradition, who are only too happy to share their knowledge and talk about boats and boatbuilding (particularly traditional wooden boats).

The workshop is very practical and hands-on in approach and you are encouraged to get stuck in to the work from the start which is, of course, the best way to learn. Watching Fachtna select the most suitable sections of oak, helping to shape them into new frames and refit them inside the hull of the Ilen was extremely rewarding, especially when you can see the results of your labour on the last day. You really get an appreciation of the craft and skills involved in building boats from wood, as well as the satisfaction of working on a boat that is such an important part of our maritime heritage.

The atmosphere in the boatyard is relaxed and friendly, full of like-minded people enthusiastic about their work and every one of them with a genuine interest in boats, boat building and all things to do with the sea. The clear, crisp weather and perfect West Cork scenery and the great food served up every day in the nearby Oldcourt Inn all added to the enjoyable experience. Like many workshop participants before me I left Hegartys Boatyard certain that I would be back to help out again on this worthy project, and with renewed enthusiasm to build a wooden boat myself some day (but maybe something a bit smaller than the Ilen!).”

Michael Dunne