

# THE IRISH LIFESAVING FOUNDATION LIMITED



## ANNUAL REPORT - 2008

*Saving lives from drowning - worldwide*

**The Irish Lifesaving Foundation Limited**

**Founded: 2003**

Registered Office:  
11 Iveragh Close,  
Lismore Lawn,  
Waterford City,  
Ireland.

Web: [www.lifesavingfoundation.ie](http://www.lifesavingfoundation.ie)  
E-mail: [lifesavingfoundation@ireland.com](mailto:lifesavingfoundation@ireland.com)  
Companies' Registration Office No. 368309  
Irish Revenue Commissioners Charity No. CHY15102

# THE IRISH LIFESAVING FOUNDATION LTD.



## Object

The main object for which the Company is established is to protect human life by the promotion of technical education in lifesaving, water safety and lifeguarding to the general public in Ireland or elsewhere. To promote self rescue, rescue, resuscitation and first aid skills.

## Subsidiary Objects

- To stimulate public opinion in favour of the general adoption of swimming, lifesaving, water safety, resuscitation and first aid as a branch of instruction in schools, colleges, clubs, etc.
- To encourage safe entries into waters known and unknown, floating and such other swimming and lifesaving skills as would be of assistance to a person endeavouring to save life.
- To arrange and promote public lectures, demonstrations and competitions and to form classes of instruction so as to bring about a widespread and thorough knowledge of the principles which underlie the arts of swimming, lifesaving, resuscitation and first aid.
- To provide for the assessment of any awards the Foundation might decide upon.
- To promote the development of lifeguard training and expertise.
- To promote and endow grants and awards including scholarships and lectureships, for the purpose of promoting research into education and training.
- To publish any newspapers, periodicals, journals, reports, circulars and leaflets the publication of which is conducive to the furtherance of the objects of the Foundation.
- To take such steps by way of personal or written appeals, public meetings or fund raising activities of any kind whatsoever as may from time to time be deemed expedient for the purpose of acquiring funds for the Foundation.
- To disseminate information by way of the holding of lectures, seminars and courses of lectures, and by way of the provision of facilities to persons engaged in the dissemination of information.



Foundation directors Brendan Donohoe and Edward Duffy at the Irish Coast Guard Award Ceremony in Dublin Castle.



Clonea Strand Hotel Swim Club sponsored swim, 2008

## INVITATION

Do you know that you can become a member of The Irish Lifesaving Foundation and help with the work of *saving lives from drowning - worldwide.*

Visit our website and download a membership application form.

[www.lifesavingfoundation.ie](http://www.lifesavingfoundation.ie)

## Secretary's Report

The Irish Lifesaving Foundation is a very small charity with a small number of active members and very limited resources. In our first five years we have made a positive contribution to drowning prevention worldwide – in boxing language we are 'punching above our weight'. The Directors know that much more is possible if we can increase our membership and boost our income. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that although the charity is registered in Ireland membership is open to any person, irrespective of where they live, and with modern electronic communication overseas members can play a full role in our activities. Membership forms are available on our website, [www.lifesavingfoundation.ie](http://www.lifesavingfoundation.ie).

On a personal note I will retire from my primary school position in August 2009 and intend working in a full-time voluntary capacity for the charity.

John Connolly

*Honorary Company Secretary*

## Treasurer's Report

The Charity's income is up on that of last year and the company is debt free with an operating surplus. The Foundation office is provided free of charge and the Secretary, Treasurer and Directors pay all of their own personal expenses including their travel and phone costs. I mention this because the balance sheet does not show such valuable hidden donations. The biggest single source of income was a tax refund. The largest single item of expenditure was the Ireland Medal / Ireland Seminar week-end. This is a bi-annual event and generates valuable publicity for water safety and the Foundation's work. Following a decision at last years Annual General Meeting the board opened a deposit account with St. Dominic's Credit Union, Waterford, which acts as a reserve fund account.

Margaret Bible

*Honorary Charity Treasurer*

### WORLD DROWNING TASK FORCE

Foundation Secretary John Connolly is a member of the World Drowning Task Force. The task force is currently working on distilling the many available pieces of water safety advice into a small number of core key messages that are applicable worldwide. The key messages have been agreed and will be published soon with supporting evidence and advice.



*Mary Greer, Brendan Donohoe,  
Margaret Bible and Vincent Flynn at  
the 2008 AGM*

## Holiday Water Safety Leaflet

Irish citizens are almost twice as likely to travel abroad for a holiday than the average EU citizen – three out of four Irish residents planning a four day or longer holiday break will opt to go abroad. In 2007 Irish residents took just under 8 million trips abroad. According to the Department of Foreign Affairs 130 Irish citizens died abroad in 2007. The majority are believed to have died from natural (medical) causes.

In any holiday area tourists are 15 times more likely to drown than local residents and at least 10 times more likely to be involved in a road traffic accident.

- *At least 10 Irish people drowned in 2007 while holidaying abroad*
- *Children under 15 years of age are likely to drown in a swimming pool*
- *Individuals over 15 years of age are likely to drown in open water*
- *A good number of drowning deaths occurred shortly after the person arrived at his/her holiday destination*
- *Many water sports operators in mainland Europe openly flout basic safety rules*
- *Individual countries have their own regulations and laws concerning beach safety and water sports – there are no EU wide enforced laws or regulations*
- *Safety rules are often only enforced after a drowning tragedy*
- *No statistics are available for non-fatal injuries but research suggests that the number is 10 times that for fatal injuries*
- *Young adults who drown are often not missed for hours*
- *Drinking alcohol can invalidate your holiday insurance – you don't have to be drunk*
- *A person wearing a lifeguard uniform may not be a trained lifesaver*
- *Businesses are only required to have trained first aiders on site for the safety of their own workforce – trained staff may not be present late at night when staff numbers are low.*
- *Spinal injuries are a regular serious problem often caused by the person diving head first into shallow water.*

A copy of the "Water Safety on Holiday" brochure is available for download from our website [www.lifesavingfoundation.ie](http://www.lifesavingfoundation.ie)



## Gambia

The Foundation continues to financially support the work of Whitmore Bay Surf Life Saving Club in Gambia. The club has provided lifesaving training and rescue equipment to the newly formed Sea Rescue Service operated by the Gambia Fire Service. The following extracts are taken from a fire service development report on the Sea Rescue Service;



“After your training, we deemed it necessary to transmit the new skills gained from your able team to our other staff

unable to participate in your course. This compelled us to continue organizing numerous staff trainings in which (44) other staff benefited. As you may already be aware, last year, the Sea Rescue Unit of The Gambia Fire and Rescue Services received a magnificent donation of ten (10) fiber boats with ten (10) out board engines and kits from the Rotary Club of Bristol Aztec. These equipments received coupled with new skills acquired by our staff enabled us to immediately commission a total number of (4) new rescue stations in the different regions of The Gambia which are now giving those communities immediate emergency response services at sea twenty-four hours round the clock.

New Stations are as follows:

1. Albreda Rescue Station operational since - 17th December 2007
2. Gunjur Rescue Station operational since - 21st November 2007
3. Tanji Rescue Station operational since - 9th November 2007
4. Brufut Rescue Station operational since - 19th July 2008

In January 2008, the Tanji Rescue Station mobilized ,coordinated and trained a good number of the local fishermen of the community in sea safety, capsized boat procedures, proper use and importance of life jackets among others which was covered by the media and relayed on the national television (GRTS).

Our Staff in Tanji again influenced the Tanji Community Fisheries project to purchase eight hundred (800) life jackets for the local fishermen all in the spirit of safety at sea.

From 28<sup>th</sup> August 2007 to 25<sup>th</sup> September 2008 emergency calls responded to are as follows:

Total calls	=	45
Total successful rescue activities	=	42
Total recovery incidents	=	3



## Swimming Task Force

Were we to survey any random group of Irish adults asking if they can swim I would expect at least 75% to answer positively. If this were followed with a question asking what people understand by 'being able to swim' I would expect the majority to answer that it means being able to move some distance in water unaided without sinking, with some differences about the depth of the water, the distance involved and the quality of the stroke used. This, after all, is the definition used by many swimming organisations when awarding badges.

The problem this understanding poses for lifesavers is that analyses of drowning incidents show that, when asked by police officers, the majority of families of drowning victims (accidental and suicide) state that the person could swim. Furthermore, we know that about one-third of persons drown within the width of a common swimming pool (8 – 12 metres), two-thirds drown within the length of a common pool (15 – 25 metres) and almost all non-boating drowning deaths take place within the length of a 50 metre pool.

Why do people, who are known to be able to swim, drown within the length of a swimming pool from safety? Why don't they just swim to safety and climb out?

Most people learn to swim in warm pools and drown in cold open water. This is a factor but how?

Competitive swimmers have drowned in non-boating incidents. Why?

The Irish Lifesaving Foundation has established an international task force to investigate the question of why swimmers drown. There is no doubting that being able to swim makes a person safer in, on and around water but it most certainly doesn't drownproof a person. We are certain we know some of the answers but do we know all the questions?



*Bob Stallman (Norway), Stathis Avramidis (Greece), Brendan Donohoe (Ireland), John Connolly (Ireland) and John Long (UK) at the inaugural meeting of the Swimming Task Force.*



*Stathis Avramidis presenting a copy of his newly published lifesaving handbook to John Connolly. The book was financially supported by the Foundation.*

## Soweto Project Report

Once again I must begin with my heartfelt thanks to all at the Irish Lifesaving Foundation for your belief in this project and ongoing financial support. Without both it would be a much more difficult project to run. Thanks too for the hospitality extended to my husband Gus and myself when we were with you in June. Despite the wet weather we felt really welcome and part of your special foundation with members as passionate about lifesaving as I am.

On my return to South Africa I started recruiting candidates and since then the following have qualified: Chad, Grant, Declan, Claude and Ricardo. It was a very mixed group. One young man had been working as a general worker (labourer) at the pools and had at last attained the swimming entry level.

I have 4 new candidates, including Lerato a young lady from Dobsonville in Soweto who has been training since last season to attain the swimming entry level. Other enquiries have come from 2 young men from Pretoria who had somehow heard about me and 4 from Klerksdorp in the Northwest Province. So the New Year looks promising. It is good to have candidates from various areas so that we do not flood an area and then there are no jobs.

Unfortunately there was a drowning this week at one of our private schools. The child is related to the Mandela family, which meant there was considerable media coverage. These tragedies however do make people more conscious of the need for safety and the role lifeguards play.

Ellis Park Pool, which has been out of action all year reopened last week. I am thrilled as I have been using Coronationville pool on the other side of the city and which has no 'space' for showing videos, teaching CPR or teaching theory. The pool area as with all indoor pools is very noisy. Ellis Park is very central for public transport and about 40km closer for me. Traffic in Jo'burg is chaotic at present as we prepare for 2010 Soccer World Cup.

Thank you all once again for your support.

Pat Wilcox

South Africa



Pat Wilcox addressing the Ireland Seminar.

*The capsizing of overcrowded boats and absence of lifejackets remains a leading cause of on-water drowning death worldwide.*



## The Ireland Medal

The Ireland Medal is a joint project between The Irish Lifesaving Foundation and RLSS IRELAND, the Royal Life Saving Society in the Republic of Ireland. The medal was introduced in 2003 and has as its aim the recognition of an outstanding contributions to the saving of life from drowning by an Irish organisation or by an Irish citizen, resident or person of Irish descent.

The inaugural Ireland Medal was awarded to An Garda Síochána for the 20 plus swimming rescues performed annually by serving gardaí. The medal was presented by Taoiseach Bertie Ahern (Prime Minister).

The 2004 Ireland Medal was awarded to Cork born naval surgeon Admiral Frank Golden RNRtd for his research into hypothermia and cold water immersion. The medal was presented to Admiral Golden by the Irish Navy's Commodore Frank Lynch

The 2005 Ireland Medal was awarded to Australian military doctor Major General John Pearn, whose family emigrated to Australia from Sligo, for his work in the field of child drowning deaths. The medal was presented by Irish General Pat O Sullivan.

The 2006 Ireland Medal was awarded to retired Garda Commissioner Eamonn Doherty for his work as Royal Life Saving Society Ireland Region chairperson in the 1980's and for the Doherty Report into air sea rescue in Ireland. The medal was presented by Mayor of Waterford City, Mary O Halloran.

The 2007 Ireland Medal was awarded to Foyle Search and Rescue for its work in saving over 1000 lives from drowning in the River Foyle, Derry, Northern Ireland. The medal was presented by Mayor of Waterford City, Mary O Halloran.

The Ireland Medal is presented bi-annually in conjunction with the Ireland Seminar.



*Mayor Mary O Halloran and 2006 Ireland Medal recipient Eamonn Doherty*



*Members of Foyle Search and Rescue receiving the 2007 Ireland Medal from Mayor Mary O Halloran*

## The Sri Lanka Women's Swimming Project *"I Can Swim – Can You?"*

The Sri Lanka Women's Swimming Project charity was established by Christina Fonfe and her husband Mike in 2005 following the tsunami disaster.. Four out of five persons who drowned were women or children who could not swim. The project, with it's motto "I can swim – Can you?"; aims to teach women and teenage girls how to swim. Swimming instruction is not normally available to Sri Lankan females for cultural reasons. The Project sources private swimming pools where Chris and her small team of female instructors can teach the women to swim. The most able swimmers receive further training as community swimming instructors with a few going on to fully qualify as swimming teachers.

The Foundation was able to financially support the Project in 2008. Mike Fonfe came to Waterford to attend the Ireland Medal ceremony and speak at the Ireland Seminar. The current financial crisis has resulted in a loss of sponsorship for the Project's planned swimming academy. The Foundation will fund the salaries of the local swimming teachers for 2009 giving Chris and Mike space to look for new sponsors for their training academy.



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## Kenya Lifesaving Federation Activities Report

KLF has continued to engage in water safety advocacy , over the years we have offered lifesaving training to Kenya's lifeguards, we have certified and re-certified over 500 pool lifeguards. KLF uses the two National aquatic stadia i.e. the M.I.S.C –Kasarani stadium and Nyayo stadium presently known as Coke Cola Stadium.KLF has been running survival schemes awards, junior lifesaving and national swimming programmes at various secondary schools and primary schools namely the Kenya High, Nairobi Academy Premier Academy etc.

At the international arena KLF has renewed its 2009 affiliation to the ILS-International Lifesaving Federation; KLF recently became a full member of the International Federation of Swimming Teacher Association-IFSTA. We are also the official branch of the Royal Lifesaving Society-RLSS. KLF has continued to enjoy some support from other International lifesaving organisations namely the Irish Lifesaving Foundation, RLSS Australia, RLSS Commonwealth.

With the KLF office establishment courtesy of the Irish Lifesaving Foundation funds for the office administration cost, KLF will now offer improved services to its members and the community at large. We are trying to expand nationwide as we have established several districts branches; so far we have KLF Mombasa branch for the coast region, KLF Nakuru branch for the rift valley region, KLF Nairobi branch for the Nairobi environs, KLF Kisumu for the Nyanza region. Plans are underway to form new KLF branches in Nyeri, Thika, Kiambu and Machakos branches.

JOB KANIA - PRESIDENT KLF.

## The Ireland Seminar

The Ireland Seminar is a bi-annual event held in association with the Ireland Medal presentation ceremony. The themes of the 2008 seminar were **Lifesaving in Ireland** and **Lifesaving in the Developing World**. The seminar was hosted by Waterford Teachers' Centre and chaired by Garda Commissioner Eamonn Doherty (Rtd) and Admiral Frank Golden (RNRtd). The aim of the seminar is to provide a vehicle through which those attending the Ireland Medal ceremony can share their lifesaving expertise and experiences. Formal presentations were made by

Brendan Donohoe (Working with Bystanders), Foyle Search and Rescue (River Rescue), John Connolly (Holiday Water Safety), John Long, RLSS Commonwealth Secretary General (Drowning and Lifesaving Worldwide), Michael Fonfe (Sri Lanka Women's Swimming Project), Pat Wilcox (Lifeguard Training in South Africa), Cliff Nelson (Gambia Lifesaving Project) and John Connolly (The Irish Lifesaving Foundation – The First Five Years).

Attendance is open to all interested persons free of charge.



*Speakers Mike Fonfe, John Long, John Connolly, Cliff Nelson and Pat Wilcox with chair Admiral Frank Golden at an Ireland Seminar open forum session.*



*Brendan Donohoe and Mike Fonfe relaxing post Ireland Medal and Ireland Seminar functions.*

## Summary of the major water accidents in Uganda between 2002 and 2004. Also included is the 1996 drowning incident

S.N.	Date	Number of people involved in accident	Number of people drowned	Number of survivors	Water Source	Source of Information
1	May 96	1114	1000	114	Lake Victoria	The New Vision
2	May 02	20	20	0	Lake Victoria	The New Vision
3	June 02	79	70	9	Lake Victoria	The New Vision
4	Dec 02	28	23	5	Lake Victoria	The New Vision
5	May 03	8	8	0	Lake Victoria	The New Vision
6	June 03	18	12	6	Lake Victoria	The New Vision
7	July 03	20	20	0	Lake Victoria	The New Vision
8	Feb 04	75	45	30	Lake Victoria	The New Vision
9	Mar 04	9	9	0	Lake Victoria	The New Vision
10	Oct 04	13	13	0	Lake Victoria	The New Vision
11	Dec 04	40	30	10	Lake Victoria	The Daily Monitor
	<b>Total No.</b>	<b>1424</b>	<b>1250</b>	<b>174</b>		
	<b>Total %</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>87.8%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>		

N.B these are reports which were reported in the local press. Many more incidents go unreported. Also these incidents don't include incidents on Lake Victoria in Kenya and Tanzania. *Details from Jerome Dralega.*

# Lesotho



The Foundation continues with its partnership with the Royal Lesotho Lifesaving Association. The following water safety information was provided by Stephen Mabula, Lesotho's leading lifesaver.

“Lesotho has water in abundance, but is faced with water phobia. It is estimated that about 80% of the people don't know how to swim nor know water safety techniques to rescue people when in danger. In this 20% (who can swim), about 10% is adult, 2% to 3% is children (2 years to 16 years). Both adults and children know just the basics or can paddle or just float while the other 5% is youth who can be regarded as competitive swimmers. Most of the people in homes are caught up with a fear that emanates from the community or from our cultural background. People and children are always threatened with myths. Knowing how to swim it is one of the biggest challenges to our community or to those who want to teach people to swim in outdoor or sports centres they have clear water.

## **TEN PRE-CAUTIONS COMMANDMENTS IN DROWNING IN AFRICA BASED ON DAMS AND RIVERS**

1. *Never do washing by the dam while a child is playing around.*
2. *Drawing water from the edge of flooded river is dangerous.*
3. *Be careful of sudden river floods. Some times people get washed away because they are not been aware that it is raining up stream and find a sudden flooding river and get washed away.*
4. *Holding a cow's tail or horse's tail to cross a flooded river is dangerous. Never hold on to a cow's tail to cross because if you slip off or lose hold you will be in danger, especially if you don't know how to swim.*
5. *Never use 20-litre container when learning to swim especially in a dam nor polystyrene or any floating container as an aid to learn to swim. It can slip from your hands and leave you to drown*
6. *Never learn to swim on your own or in the absence of the competent swimmer.*
7. *Avoid learning to swim in a deep and slippery edge of a dam or deep river.*
8. *Avoid swimming too close to non-swimmer if you are not confident in your swimming because they can drown you by crabbing and hold you to drown.*
9. *A drowning person can be dangerous to the rescuer. Therefore the rescuer needs to be knowledgeable in rescue skill or techniques.*
10. *It is better to take precautions if you have water sport at heart.  
**Learn safe, teach safe and stay alive.***

# THE IRELAND MEDAL

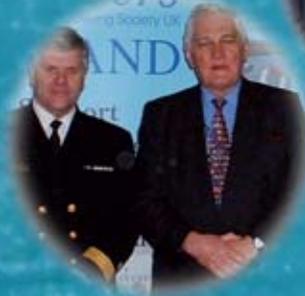
2004  
Surgeon Admiral  
Frank Golden



2005  
Prof. John Pearn,  
MD., PhD.



2003  
An Garda  
Siochána



2006  
Garda  
Commissioner  
Eamonn Doherty



2007  
River Foyle  
Search & Rescue



## Company Information 2009

Companies Registration Office Number: CRO 368309

Irish Revenue Commissioners Charity Number: CHY 15102

Directors: Mr John Connolly (Secretary); Mrs Margaret Bible (Treasurer);

Mr Brendan Donohoe; Mr Edward Duffy; Mr Robert Cadman

Registered Office: 11 Iveragh Close, Lismore Lawn, Waterford City, Ireland.

Auditor: Mr Barry Kennedy, Park Chambers, 96 Lower Yellow Road, Waterford City, Ireland.

Solicitor: Mr. Gerard O Herlihy, Nolan Farrell & Goff, Newtown, Waterford City.

Bankers: Bank of Ireland, Lisduggan, Waterford City :: Sort Code: 90-62-16 :: Account: 18573923