

A whale called 'BALTIMORE'

By Micheal Cottrell

Bank Holiday Monday of St. Patrick's weekend 2013 is one that will live in my memory as a special day - the day that we were the first people in Ireland and possibly the world, to see and record a new Humpback whale to the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group ID catalogue (www.iwdg.ie). I was granted the honour of naming the whale, but this was a task that deserved to be shared by all involved.

How did all of this come about? I was on a fishing trip off Kedge Island, Baltimore, West Cork, with David O'Neill and Pat Collins when David drew our attention to something he saw in the water. Grabbing the binoculars I studied the object and made the ID that it was a Humpback Whale, slowly circling, blowing and tail fluking. The position and time were logged and phone calls made, to Pádraig Whooley sightings co-ordinator with IWDG, and to Youen Jacob and Simon Duggan, Baltimore. Youen and Simon contacted Mark and Robbie Murphy on Sherkin Island, who brought along young whale watchers Aidan, Jason and Dylan Murphy for the adventure. They all headed to the area, with cameras capable of zooming in

close enough to capture the detail necessary for ID purposes. These photographs were then submitted to the IWDG and it was confirmed as being a new whale to the Irish catalogue and, as it was a young animal, possibly to the international catalogue. To be fair to all involved in the ID process, the naming was shared and HBIRL#22, the 22nd Humpback whale in the Irish catalogue, becomes known as 'Baltimore'. The boats and the people involved are all connected with Baltimore, and the whale was first logged off Baltimore. My own particular reason for the name is that Humpback Whales are global travellers, and wherever in the world this Humpback is seen and its ID checked, its name will come back as Baltimore. A world ambassador for the Baltimore area, and all who come from here.



Images courtesy of Robbie Murphy

'Baltimore' or HBIRL#22, the 22nd Humpback whale in the Irish catalogue of whales (www.iwdg.ie).



The village of Baltimore, Co. Cork, which now has its own ambassador travelling the world's oceans.



'Baltimore' the Humpback Whale, passing by the Beacon, which marks the entrance to Baltimore Harbour, West Cork.