

Filming Finishes on ‘Tarrac’

Irish Language film pulls to a close in Dingle

Despite facing a number of challenges due to bad weather, filming of the Irish language film “Tarrac”, which loosely translates as ‘pull’, was completed in early November 2021. This contemporary drama set on the Corca Dhuibhne peninsula in Kerry and in the unique world of Naomhóg boat racing was filmed in and around the town of Dingle in Co. Kerry during the months of September and October.

The focus of the film is a story about a West Kerry woman returning reluctantly to her home town to look after her ill father and making reconnections through naomhóg racing which help her to deal with unresolved issues in her life. Screenwriter, Eugene O’ Brien was inspired by his experiences of the Dingle Regatta which he had attended when on holidays there. The

Many different places in the greater Corca Dhuibhne area are featured in the film. There were various locations used as background settings. The film’s primary locations were piers such as those in Ventry, Dúinín, Dingle and Brandon. A number of beaches were also locations for filming including the panoramic Inch beach and the dramatic strand of Coumeenole.

A considerable number of local people were involved in this project. It created much needed employment late in a summer season which had been heavily impacted by the Covid pandemic. Some local fishermen were hired to assist with safety boats on the days when filming of the Naomhóg races were in action. Dingle Coast and Cliff Rescue assisted on occasions where there were any possible safety concerns. Local taxi drivers also saw brisk business as crew and cast required ferrying to the various locations.

A critical production focus was on getting the right extras for the cast when filming the Naomhóg boat races. In particular it required the recruitment of a cohort of teenage girls who could row the traditional Naomhógs competently. Advertising for these extras took place primarily on social media resulting in a high degree of interest. Twenty local fifteen and sixteen year olds were selected through this recruitment process. One of the local rowers who was chosen, Kila Masset explained how “it was a unique experience. I won’t lie some parts were

very tiring and challenging as we were often freezing cold and wet to the skin. But the crew always took care of us with warm blankets and hot drinks. I'm really looking forward to seeing it with all my friends.”

A vital local cog in the entire process was local champion oarswoman Maunza Heidtke of Cumann Rámhaíochta an Daingean (Dingle Rowing Club). Monza played a critical role in preparing actors in their ability to row in the naomhógs and in choreographing the race scenes. She said, “I was very happy when Eugene approached me about the project as I am very proud of the tradition of naomhóg rowing in Dingle. The film captures the excitement and happiness that rowing these brings and especially the binds that form when racing. I can't wait to see this on the big screen and for the world to see beauty of our boats.”

With a budget of only €1.2 million the director Declan Recks and producer Clíona Ní Bhuachalla had their work cut out for them. Declan has directed some of the top rated shows on Irish Television including the critically acclaimed "Pure Mule" winner of 5 IFTA's including Best Director; Best Drama IFTA winner "The Running Mate", and "Scúp" Nominated best Irish Language IFTA.

The film was developed and produced by Clíona Ní Bhuachalla of Icebox films under the cine4 funding programme. The film was also supported by Kerry ETB in particular giving opportunities to those from the Kerry College Monavalley Campus Broadcast Production Skills course.

It was expected that the editing and post production work on the film would be completed in early 2022 after which it is expected that “Tarrach” will be toured on the international film circuit where it is hoped it will draw attention to the unique beauty of Naomhóg racing.