

contracts of employment. We estimate that there are between 200 and 300 such contracts in the Mid West," he said.

Such a measure would affect many different staff groups and it was impossible to know exactly how many staff could be dismissed.

"It might be very few, but potentially could run into the hundreds across the three counties [Limerick, Clare and Tipperary]. We have referred the issue to the Labour Relations Commission for urgent conciliation."

"We informed the HSE today that if it proceeded with the termination of contracts we would be in a serious

on the way across the hospitals and health services in the region

industrial dispute very quickly. IMPACT has a collective agreement with the HSE that states that no temporary employee with more than 12 months service will be dismissed. The Croke Park agreement clearly states that the government will not make public servants compulsorily redundant. Yet before the ink has dried on the pages of the agreement, the HSE appears to be intent on breaching one of the most crucial elements of the new national agreement by dismissing staff," Mr Pike added.



The HSE confirmed it was "examining all temporary work contracts" but insisted no decisions had been made.

"Currently that examination process has not been completed and there are no indications of staff numbers that will be affected. The HSE will meet regularly with staff representatives to engage on this process," a Limerick spokesman said.

"We are entering into one of the most financially challenging times that we have ever seen within Irish health services. Based on current esti-

mates the overspend for the HSE West Area is like to be €90 million euro if we do not take action. Like every other public service we have to live within the budget that we have been allocated in 2010."

"Local managers are working with their teams to finalise break-even plans and we anticipate that these budget plans will affect some patients, clients and staff but we are working to minimise these effects. If we do not take immediate action to reduce costs, there may be a requirement for severe actions to be

taken later in the year that will have an even greater affect on services into the future.

We have to work together to ensure that every euro we spend is spent in an appropriate way, we have to eliminate waste and inappropriate ways of working. A euro wasted or spent inappropriately is a euro denied to patients and service users."

The HSE has proposed the closure of one ward at the Regional Hospital Dooradoyle and closing another for two days a week. A ward and an

We have to do the right things for the future and we have to eliminate inefficiency and maximise the use of our resources to protect the future of our services.

"There are challenges in all health services across the country at the moment given the current economic climate but we have to be in a position here in the west, now and for the future, to meet those challenges and ensure we have the best possible services for the people living in our area."

Labour health spokesperson Deputy Jan O'Sullivan has described the proposed cuts as "savage" and predicted they would be fiercely opposed.

Sean McGowan's boat is returning home - to be sold

By ANNE SHERIDAN

HISTORIC rower Sean McGowan, who became the first Irish man to row solo across the Atlantic in May, will bring his vessel back to Limerick this week.

But the occasion will be tinged with sadness, as he is putting the boat up for sale with a price-tag of nearly €20,000.

A number of offers from fellow rowers have been made, but Mr McGowan is hoping the boat could somehow be kept in Limerick.

"It's going to be great to get her back. It's funny that you miss her. it's kind of like being in a relationship with someone. But it's going to be a sad day to see her go; we've gone through thick and thin. And she holds a number of records as well, so it'll be a pity to see the first Irish solo boat to go out of the country," he said.

The boat originally cost €21,000, with a further €4,000 invested, however it did suffer

some damage while at sea.

Tess, which was named after a neighbour of his who passed away from cancer, measures 24 feet long and six feet wide.

The 42 year-old is bringing Tess home from Southampton in the UK this Thursday or Friday, some seven months after he set off on his mammoth journey from the Canaries to the Caribbean.

It is hoped it will go on display in Limerick prior to sale, at a location yet to be specified.

A rower since the age of 13, he bought the boat three years ago and he had been planning the trip ever since.

He is currently writing a book about the voyage, in which he suffered sleepless nights, rogue waves which knocked him out of the boat, awaking to find several of the hatches flooded and dramatic weight loss.

He also contracted scurvy - the vitamin C deficiency condition -

after his food rations ran out, leaving him unable to drive once he returned home.

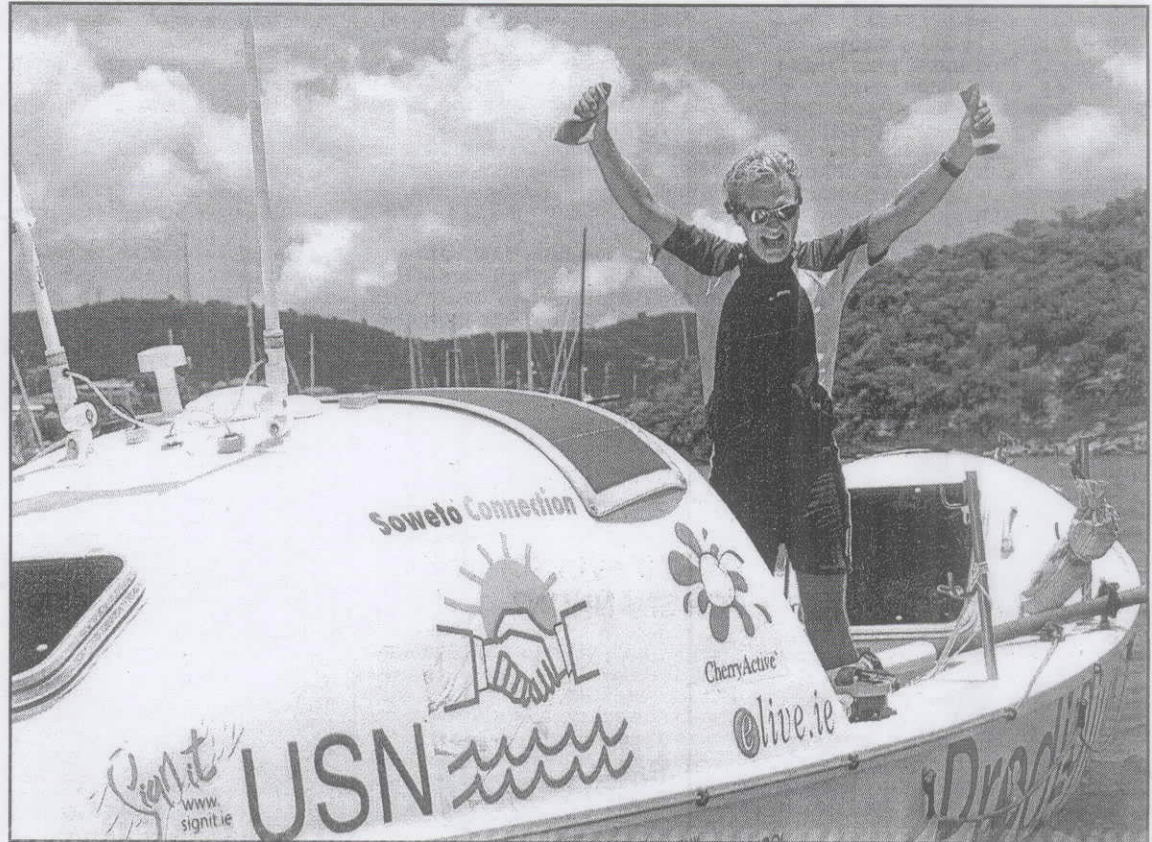
He left La Gomera in the Canary Islands in early January and completed the Woodvale Ocean Race in May after 118 days, one hour, 14 minutes and 59 seconds at sea.

As part of his adventure, the Farranshone native raised in the region of €20,000 to build a nutrition centre for families in South Africa - for the charity, the Soweto Connection, which was set up in Limerick.

A further fundraising event will be held in Dolan's in September.

See visit www.soweto-connection.org to make a donation.

Farranshone man Sean McGowan aboard his boat Tess crossing the finish line at Antigua to become the first Irish man to single-handedly to cross the Atlantic



EX: LIMERICK LEADER
26th July 2010 PAGE 11