

Fastnet hero Ger set for county council honour

By ANNE SHERIDAN

LIMERICK man Ger O'Rourke, who became the first Irish winner of the Rolex Fastnet Yacht Race last week, is to be honoured by Limerick County Council next month.

The skipper of the Chieftain and managing director of the construction company of the same name, will be officially recognised at a civic reception in County Hall on Monday, September 24, at 4.30pm.

Now that he is back on dry land, Mr O'Rourke said he is "trying to catch up with all the paperwork" and is considering possible sailing ventures at home and abroad in October.

"I'm very humbled by the honour [from Limerick County Council]; it's very nice of them and a bit of a surprise. The amount of support from people has been fantastic - if it gets more people out on the water it will be good," said the 46-year-old skipper from the South Circular Road and father of three.

He was accompanied on the mammoth 608-mile race by his 18-year-old daughter Deirdre, who has been following in her father's footsteps since the age of eight.

The day of the historic win last Wednesday was made extra special for Mr



O'Rourke as he was also celebrating his 21st wedding anniversary with wife, Majella.

Cllr Kevin Sheahan, chairperson of Limerick County Council said they are delighted to hold a civic reception for Mr O'Rourke to recognise his "significant and momentous" achievement.

"This is the highest accolade at the disposal of Limerick County Council for any individual, group or organisation. Limerick and its sportsmen and women are known the world over and have been a source of pride for the county for many years. Ger O'Rourke's success in the Fastnet Race further enhances Limerick's proud sporting tradition and ability to compete at the top level nationally and internationally," said Cllr Sheahan.

Cllr Sheahan added that Mr O'Rourke's victory, who was Limerick Sports Star Of the Year last year, was especially significant considering his yacht was only given clearance to compete 48



The Chieftain, led by Ger O'Rourke, above left, sailing to Plymouth during the Rolex Fastnet race

hours before the event began.

The 50-foot Chieftain, designed by world famous designer Bruce Farr and built by Cookson Boat-

yard in New Zealand, beat off competition from 300 other entries in the biennial Fastnet race, which saw half of the entries pull out due to gale force

winds.

The Chieftain also received the Boat of the Year accolade last year from the Irish Sailing Association.

Mr O'Rourke was named as Cork Dry Gin Sailor of the Year earlier this year and famously won the Sydney to Hobart race in 2005.



A welcome touch of the exotic

By CLODAGH O'LEARY

A MUCH-NEEDED injection of colour this summer will be provided by a dozen artists in a new exhibition opening in the city this Thursday.

Charles Harper RHA, will open Modern

Brian MacMahon, Henry Morgan, Jennifer O'Connor, Allyson Keehan, Pat Normoyle, Richard

Slade, Joyce Shee, Lorraine Wall and Ruth Wood will be displayed in the exhibition, which runs for two weeks.

Co-ordinator for this unique selection of

ents to be one of the liveliest displays of painting on view in Limerick in recent times," he enthused.

Modern Exotics opens to the public this Thursday at 8pm at The Georgian House and Garden on Pery Square. All are welcome to attend the