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Rory Hoy Inspector
PSNI (N. Ireland)

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Investigating Drownings in Northern Ireland
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Co Fermanagh is known for its beauty and unspoilt waterway, Lough Erne, which bisects the county. The lough is used for a wide range of water sport, recreational activities, fishing, shooting, cruiser & day boat hire and other commercial use. It attracts thousands of visitors annually and is very busy during the summer months but it is used all year round. Local police are involved in policing events on & close to water and the District has three boats at its disposal, two of which are kept afloat jetty facilities at Enniskillen Police Station. Fermanagh & Omagh District is unique within the PSNI as no other District has Police Boats, trained Coxswains & Crew available within their establishment. Outside Fermanagh Police Boats are operated by Operational Support Dept which services the rest of the organisations boating requirements.

Rory has been involved with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's (RNLI) Enniskillen Lifeboat Station since 2003 holding a range of operational roles within the station and he has been a Royal Yachting Association Powerboat Instructor since 2014. He promotes interagency working on Lough Erne and has arranged several interagency exercises to test preparedness & organisations ability to work seamlessly together. He developed a Memorandum of Understanding with Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) in 2010 re transportation of Fire & Rescue Personnel to incidents on Lough Erne which has been used several times since its inception. Police in Fermanagh regularly work with NIFRS, RNLI, HM Coastguard, Waterways Ireland, North West Mountain Rescue Team & Northern Ireland Ambulance Service on Lough Erne.

During his presentation Rory talked about his role as a Police Coxswain in Co. Fermanagh and gave an overview of Policing Lough Erne. He outlined what happens in Fermanagh when a missing person investigation 'points' towards water, how police & agencies, both voluntary & statutory, search together, coordinate efforts, link in with lines of inquiry, and, importantly, deal with and assist families. Search methods and agencies involved were discussed including use of Victim Recovery Dogs and Police Divers. He talked through what police do when a body is discovered/located to recover the victim and secure and preserve evidence often while dealing with distraught relatives close to or at the scene.

He touched on the investigative process when a death is not being treated as suspicious where a local officer will compile a Coroner's File and subsequent Inquest procedures. He covered details included in a Coxswains Statement of Evidence and an Inquest File and gave examples of searches he has been involved in. Looking forward he talked about preventative work Police are involved in within Fermanagh & Omagh District.



Rory Hoy is a Neighbourhood Inspector in the Police Service of Northern Ireland's (PSNI) Fermanagh and Omagh District which includes Lough Erne. His core duties as Neighbourhood Inspector include managing a dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Team and dealing with a range of policing and community issues. Rory has been a Police Coxswain since 2005 and has responsibility for Police Boat deployment on Lough Erne. Rory's experience includes covering security & safety for a range of deployments including the water-based element of the G8 Conference in 2013; conducting searches and numerous victim recoveries from Lough Erne and subsequent investigations. He is involved in the multiagency response to incidents afloat and has managed several exercises to test preparedness of the Lough Erne Emergency Plan.