



Element Pictures
Distribution

WAVERIDERS

In Cinema April 3

www.waveridersthefilm.com

Images available on <http://www.waveridersthefilm.com/download-media-kit/>

Ireland - 88 mins - 35mm

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Directed by Joel Conroy

Produced by Margo Harkin

Written by Joel Conroy & Lauren Davies

Director of Photography Daniel Trapp

Editors Nathan Nugent & Douglas Moxon

Narrated by Cillian Murphy

Featuring

Richard Fitzgerald

Gabe Davies

Kelly Slater

Kevin Naughton

Chris, Keith & Dan Malloy

John McCarthy

Andy Hill

Easkey Britton

An Inís Films and Besom Productions co-production with the participation of The Irish Film Board/ Bord Scannán na hÉireann in association with the European Union Interreg IIIA Programme implemented by ICBAN, Northern Ireland Screen, BBC Northern Ireland and the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland.

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Logline Version

WAVERIDERS tracks the previously untold story of surfing pioneers all linked to Ireland and incorporates an unexpected twist that spins the story across the globe to Hawaii and back again.

(30 words)

Short Synopsis

WAVERIDERS is the previously untold story of the unlikely Irish roots of the worldwide surfing phenomenon and today's pioneers of Irish big wave surfing. The story unfolds through the inspirational and ultimately tragic history of Irish/Hawaiian legendary waterman, George Freeth, the son of an Irishman, who was responsible for the rebirth of this sport of Hawaiian kings in the early twentieth century. With its distinguished cast of world-renowned Irish, British and Irish/American surfers *WAVERIDERS* journeys full-circle from Hawaii to California and back to Irish shores following Freeth's wave of influence. The journey reaches a spectacular climax when the surfers conquer the biggest swell ever to have been ridden in Ireland by catching monster waves of over fifty feet.

(118 words)

LONG SYNOPSIS

WAVERIDERS centres on the little-known history of an Irish/Hawaiian man, George Freeth, who was responsible for the rebirth of surfing that has now become a global phenomenon. The story is driven by this history on a journey from Ireland to Hawaii and California and back to Ireland where we discover the modern day pioneers of big wave surfing. The film opens on Irish shores with colourful and dynamic images of Gabriel Davies surfing Irish waves accompanied by the music of U2. Magical images of scenery are intercut with stunning underwater shots - whetting the appetite for what is to come. A voiceover from North American surfing authority, Drew Kampion, opens the dialogue as he refers to the integration of surfers into the natural world. The tone is instantly poetic, which continues throughout the film with quotes from WB Yeats and Oscar Wilde appearing sparingly on the screen. Surfer and central cast member Richard Fitzgerald from County Donegal gives his opinion of why surfing in Ireland has become so popular and why Ireland is special as a surfing destination. Richard's big wave surfing partner from Newcastle, North-East England, Gabriel Davies, adds his opinion of Irish surfing by extolling the magic of surfing friendly, uncrowded waves. The introduction is summed up by record-breaking now nine-times surfing Champion of the World, Kelly Slater, who simply describes Ireland as 'a cold paradise'.

Irish actor, Cillian Murphy, who provides a beautifully understated voiceover throughout the film, introduces the central thread of the story. *"In the icy waters off the coast of Ireland, surfers are riding exceptional waves that are now rated amongst the best in the world."* These icy images are compared with the Californian beach boys and the original surfers, the Hawaiian Kings. We are introduced to the central historical character of the film, George Freeth, who was responsible for the rebirth of surfing in the early nineteenth hundreds. Freeth, son of an Hawaiian mother and Irish father, sent a wave of influence around the world that would eventually return to the shores of Ireland. *WAVERIDERS* follows this journey, returning full-circle to Ireland to culminate in a dramatic, final sequence.

In the first half the film discusses the influence of Freeth among modern day surfing pioneers through the opinions of Richard Fitzgerald, Gabriel Davies and Irish/American soul-surfer, Kevin Naughton. After the introduction to the film's theme we travel to Hawaii to begin the story of Freeth proper. The sequence of contemporary Hawaii showing surf shops, the beaches, bikini girls and young surfers changes tone into sepia images of ancient Hawaiians surfing in the early days of the sport. Drew Kampion, author of *'Stoked, A History of Surf Culture'*, explains that Hawaii was the location of the first recorded sightings of surfers, as noted in the journals of Captain Cook in the eighteenth century. Surfing was the sport of Hawaiian Kings at the time but, as Historian and L.A. Lifeguard, Arthur Verge goes on to explain, the missionaries banned the sport. Surfing, that had become such an intrinsic part of Hawaiian culture, was seen as too sexual to be acceptable to God. It fell to George Freeth to rediscover this beautiful pursuit.

Cillian Murphy's voiceover tells how Freeth's father is thought to have journeyed from Ulster in the 1870s as part of a tide of immigrants to North America. George Freeth (Senior) travelled further to the Hawaiian archipelago where he married a Hawaiian woman with connections to the royal family. In 1883, George Freeth Junior was born in O'ahu.

We journey on through Freeth's childhood in Waikiki, O'ahu using artistic impressions of Freeth as a boy after he has been bequeathed his first traditional wooden long-board. *"I just see him as a very, kind of intense, focused person who sets his mind to doing something and nothing's going to stand in the way."* states Kevin Naughton as an archive still image of George Freeth as a grown man holding an impressive wooden board placed vertically in the sand appears on the screen. This is the first of many stunning archive photographs that draw us into the history of Freeth. The next is of American journalist and entrepreneur, Alexander Hume Ford, who was instrumental in Freeth eventually leaving O'ahu and taking his love of ocean pursuits with him to California.

Alexander Hume Ford was travelling in search of inspiration, which was precisely what he found the day he witnessed Freeth effectively walking on water as he rode a wave at Waikiki beach. We learn how, shortly afterwards, Hume Ford had a chance meeting with the world famous travel writer, Jack London and his wife Charmaine. Hume Ford chose to introduce London to surfing.

Over archive stills of George Freeth proudly and effortlessly riding a wave, Arthur Verge tells of Jack London struggling to catch a wave himself when he first sights Freeth in the ocean. The screen fills with a graphic sequence of swirling words read in voiceover bringing Jack London's prose, inspired by Freeth, to life. It concludes with the description for which Freeth would later become known, *"He is a Mercury – a brown Mercury. His heels are winged and in them is the swiftness of the sea. In truth, from out of the sea he has leaped upon the back of the sea and he is riding the sea that roars and bellows."*

This first chapter of George Freeth's history ends with the conclusion that Freeth was the original surf star. The film changes gear as we return to Ireland for a memorable night sequence. A lighthouse lamp flashes and we see three surfers preparing to surf in the darkness. They enter the water and surf until daylight dawns.

In a section on Northern Ireland we meet Irish surfers, Andy Hill the six-times Irish Champion, Alistair Mennie and Easkey Britton, who was the first woman to tow into big waves in Ireland during the filming of 'Waveriders'. All discuss their affinity to surfing before Gabriel Davies and Richard Fitzgerald talk us through their own history of surfing throughout Ireland. Endearing archive stills of the two surfers as children in old-fashioned wetsuits illustrate how long they have known each other and how they have formed a bond through surfing. The Undertones track *Teenage Kicks* rollicks over this light-hearted scene as we get to know the central characters better. Richard describes the

development of ocean swells in Ireland, growing from hurricanes hitting the Floridian coast and spiralling across the Atlantic to create monstrous waves, which the surfers track on weather charts to find the best waves.

Cillian Murphy's voiceover leads back into the second chapter of George Freeth's life when, in the early nineteenth hundreds, Freeth left Hawaii to make his own voyage of discovery to California. This was the point at which "*Surfing was poised to become a global phenomenon.*"

With the help of detailed archive photographs, the historical story progresses through George Freeth's life as a celebrity waterman in Redondo Beach where he demonstrated the sport of surfing to the public. Freeth was lauded as the sensational man who could walk on water. However, rather than revelling in his celebrity, Freeth concentrated his efforts on creating a public awareness of the ocean, honing skills that would be used by the Redondo Beach Lifeguards. Arthur Verge enthusiastically describes how Freeth taught people to swim and eventually created the lifeguarding system that still exists today. We learn how the popularisation of beach culture on the West Coast of America led to an increased number of drownings due to a lack of awareness of the dangers of the ocean. Freeth was largely responsible for reversing this situation. He invented the torpedo buoy and focused on physical training and a coordinated response to incidents in a manner that would become the model for lifeguarding worldwide.

The story grows darker as Arthur Verge relates a gripping moment of truth in George Freeth's life on December 16th, 1908 when he was working as a volunteer at Venice Pier. Dramatic artistic impressions (in storyboard style) of the historical events move the story on at a fast pace. We see Freeth braving a fierce storm to try to rescue the crews of a group of Japanese fishing boats in trouble offshore. The atmospherically sketched characters draw in the audience to the extraordinary efforts of a single man swimming through the squall and towing the boats to safety. Freeth made three trips out through the waters to save 9 fishermen before collapsing on shore exhausted and on the verge of hypothermia. The story of Freeth's bravery made the front page of the Los Angeles Times and Freeth was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honour, one of the very few non combatants ever to receive this honour. The inspirational story of one man's bravery culminates with the voiceover informing us how Freeth went on to blaze a trail as a legendary waterman through California spearheading the sport of water polo and becoming an Olympic swimming coach, in which capacity he coached the widely recognised Hawaiian godfather of surfing, Duke Kahanamoku. Duke's image appears on screen as the film pays respect to the man who is seen as the ambassador of modern day surfing.

It is in the closing words of this great summation of a lifetime of achievements that the story of Freeth is cut dramatically short by his untimely death from Spanish flu during the epidemic of 1918. Despite being seen by many as superhuman, the epidemic "*...cruelly proved that George Freeth was vulnerable to a terrible disease.*" A heartbreaking artist's depiction of Freeth's cold body lying under a sheet brings Freeth's history to an end. It is left to

Arthur Verge, a passionate researcher into George Freeth's life, to add a touching moment to Freeth's final hour. Tearful with emotion, he describes how reading archive articles documenting Freeth's death at the age of thirty-five affected him so personally almost a hundred years later. George Freeth's great-niece, May Borthwick, who still resides in his childhood home of O'ahu, states her pride in her ascendant, and aging Hawaiian surfer, Rabbit Kekai, who knew Duke Kahanamoku, reveals the respect the Duke had for George Freeth. Freeth's gravestone marks a moment to reflect on the importance of his remarkable life to the sport of surfing.

With Freeth's place in history complete, the film tracks the influence of surfing as it spread across the globe. We begin in California with images of the Sixties surfing boom; the cars, the girls, the beach boys. The music is upbeat and the images fun and sexy. We move quickly into the pioneering ways of a young Irish/American in the Sixties, Kevin Naughton, who looks back on his own youth. An extremely amiable raconteur, Naughton light-heartedly describes himself back in the day as a 'bit of an odd duck'. Overwhelmed by the over-crowded waves in California, Naughton decided to embark on a trip to Central America that would eventually take him on worldwide on what became known as the first surf safaris. He was joined on his adventures in the early Seventies by a staff photographer at Surfer Magazine, Craig Peterson, who trailed Naughton to El Salvador, at which point the two became inseparable travelling companions.

Archive footage and stills flash through Naughton and Peterson's exploits as the first travelling surf pioneers. Driven by a spirit of adventure and a desire to ride uncharted waves, the two surfers paid for their extended travels by documenting their journey for Surfer Magazine. Their articles were published regularly and one of their trips featured as a cover story that has become famous over the years. The magazine cover on the screen depicts a young Naughton in mid-flight as he jumps from a boat into tropical water on his surfboard. Craig Peterson jokes how the pair heard from "*...angry parents about their children who have read the articles and then hit the road and given up their law careers, their doctor careers.*" Naughton and Peterson were the first surfers to make such an impact and effectively created the niche for the travelling soul surfers who now form an essential part of the professional surfing world, such as the Malloy brothers who we meet later in the film.

It is Naughton who brings the journey of 'Waveriders' full-circle once again to Irish shores, having chosen to go to University in the country of his ancestors. Naughton admits he did not know what to expect in Ireland but he instantly recognised the country as a "...green gem" Unlike the crowded waves he had left behind in California, Naughton discovered empty, beautiful surf set in stunning scenery. He knew he had arrived at a special time before too many surfers' eyes were opened to the worldwide potential of Ireland's waves. As we see Naughton as he is today, paddling out to surf in Bundoran, his voiceover recalls the first day he pulled up at the peak in Bundoran to be met by ten to twelve-foot waves. Naughton remembers the sunshine, the offshore winds and the young mothers walking along the promenade pushing their baby carriages and profiting from the beautiful afternoon. "*Hey, there goes*

the next generation of surfers in those baby carriages. “Naughton remembers saying as we see a contemporary image of Richard Fitzgerald and Naughton greeting each other in the ocean. Richard was indeed a baby of that generation in Bundoran who went on to follow Naughton into the water and to become an ambassador for Irish surfing today.

In direct contrast to the soul surfer, Kevin Naughton, the film moves on to treat the audience to the first trip to Ireland of the record-breaking eight-times World Surfing Champion and undisputed greatest surfer of all time, Kelly Slater. We are now very much in the modern age of surfing as we see Kelly make the journey to discover what was drawing surfers to Irish shores.

To illustrate Kelly Slater’s role in the surfing world, he is shown surfing spectacular waves at Pipeline in Hawaii during the Pipemaster’s Championship, the final event of the professional surfing calendar, watched by crowds of avid fans. Kelly modestly describes his own role in the history of surfing as being that he “...*just fits in with anyone else along the evolution of surfing somewhere.*” Kelly admits he was tempted by his friends, the Malloy Brothers and Gabriel and Lauren Davies to visit Ireland, despite the fact that he is “...*not hugely fond of the cold.*” In making the trip, Kelly was hoping to find waves to himself just as Kevin Naughton had done. He admits he was surprised to see over a dozen people in the water. Reluctant at first, the champion paddled out to join what he then describes as a “...*party out in the water.*” The uniqueness of surfing in Ireland in the modern day came not, it emerged, from surfing alone but from surfing with friendly people who were having fun and enjoying good conversation between rides. Kelly surfing spectacularly on a West Coast break completes the section. The close-up images of him gracefully pulling into an aqueous barrel and almost dancing across a wave to land on a rock are some of the most memorable surfing sequences in the film and simply justify Kelly Slater’s place in a historical look at surfing pioneers.

In a new sequence the story returns from the ultimate surfing competitor to the ultimate soul surfers as we meet the American/Irish professional surfer brothers, Chris, Keith and Dan Malloy. The brothers are interviewed on their father’s stunning ranch in Ventura, California. Chris Malloy admits they were riding on the coat tails of Kevin Naughton who inspired the idea of making a living from travelling and surfing by making films and publishing articles on their adventures. Chris Malloy, however, narrows the divide between the likes of Kelly Slater and Kevin Naughton by concluding “*I think everybody that stands on a wave is a soul surfer. I think that if you’ve ridden a wave and it didn’t touch you, then you’d probably never do it again.*”

Chris reflects on how the brothers always dreamt of visiting Ireland after being inspired by the tales their grandmother would tell them about her homeland. Dan and Chris relate stories of learning to surf with their father, who was of the ‘one God, one country, one fin mentality’. Their father encouraged the boys to look for waves without crowds and hence instilled in them their sense of adventure. Keith Malloy admits Ireland was unique because they had travelled to so many tropical destinations in search of their perfect wave.

Over images of the Malloys travelling through the scenic Irish countryside past cattle, castles and lush green fields in contrast to the dusty land of the ranch, Chris Malloy recalls meeting fellow cast member Richard Fitzgerald for the first time in Richard's surf shop in Bundoran. The two immediately connected and, while driving to find surf, Chris took photographs of the cows. He joked, *"We do not have grass like this in California. Those are the fattest cattle I have ever seen."*

Richard Fitzgerald and Gabriel Davies admit the Malloy brothers were the first surfers to come to Ireland and really illustrate the potential of the waves. They arrived with jet-skis and specially adapted tow surfboards weighted with lead so they would be able to take on the big swells when they hit the reefs. Watching *"...the Malloys tow-surfing at Mullaghmore..."* Gabriel Davies remembers, *'...was a real eye opener for us.'* Richard and Gabriel then went on to follow in the Malloys' footsteps, amassing the necessary equipment from Hawaii and training to be able to take on the monstrous swells. It was a steep learning curve. Years later, it would be at Mullaghmore where Gabriel and Richard would step out from the shadow of their mentors and surf the biggest swell ever ridden in Ireland as the climax to 'Waveriders'.

It is at this moment that the film begins to build to a dramatic finale. The tension in the air is palpable as the Malloys arrive in Ireland to meet up with their fellow pioneers, Richard and Gabriel, to surf a new spot they have dreamed of conquering. The new break is described in the voiceover as being *"...beneath cliffs so immense as to make the waters below seemingly inaccessible to surfers."* The soft, Irish voice of County Clare surfer, John McCarthy tells the story of how the surf spot came to be called 'Aileens'. The name of the headland is 'Ail Na Searach' meaning 'Leap of the Foals'. Legend has it that the High Kings at the time of St Patrick were banished to caves locally. Centuries later a ray of light entered the cave and seven foals came leaping out, meeting their fate at the cliffs when they plunged to their deaths. The Irish name was used as inspiration for the modern name of the surf break, 'Aileens'. The story, told in such a manner, and the breathtaking footage of the seven hundred-foot cliffs upon which Richard, Gabriel and the Malloy brothers are observing the wave they are about to ride, creates a very atmospheric moment in the film that perfectly reflects the natural beauty to be found in Ireland. The surfers are full of anticipation and respect for the spot. Chris Malloy admits he has dreamt of this moment after the years he has spent travelling to Ireland as a surfing pioneer. He used to think, *"If it looked this beautiful looking down, what would it feel like on a big wave looking up at those cliffs? I didn't sleep. I didn't sleep for a couple of days."*

The swell is increasing and the surfers have completed the journey to bring George Freeth's influence back to Irish shores. They are ready to make the trip by boat and jet-ski out to the base of the cliffs to surf the magical looking waves crashing on the giant boulders below. The sun hits the water, hundreds of birds circle the cliffs and we find ourselves, not only atop the cliffs as observers, but in the water alongside the surfers as they paddle and then tow into smooth, immense barrels. The water footage brings the audience closer to the experience and the sound of the ocean hitting the rock before

churning itself into a tunnel of water is overwhelming. We see all five surfers performing incredible manoeuvres and taking their life in their hands to freefall from the frothy lip of the wave. They are then joined by woman surfer, Easkey Britton from Rossnowlagh, who produces a further memorable moment by being the first woman to take on the challenge of surfing the break with the assistance of a jet-ski towing her in.

The waves build, the action heats up and the surfers perform to their utmost. To bring the scene to a close, the surfers sum up the incredible experience. Chris Malloy calls Aileens one of the most beautiful places he has seen on earth and the experience as '*a fantasy*'. "*It's bigger than a dream.*" he says, "*It's just come full circle.*" There is a sense the journey is complete and we feel we have seen the climax of the film. However, more is to come. Much more.

"You know, one of these years, the biggest wave of the year is going to be ridden in Ireland." Keith Malloy concludes, which segues into a crackling broadcast warning of severe weather and high waves. "*Strong winds between eighty and one hundred kilometres per hour. Exceptionally rough seas will see significantly large waves. Waves of fourteen metres, the height of a three storey building are forecast on seas off the north-west coast this morning.*"

It is dawn and Gabriel Davies and Richard Fitzgerald anxiously wait to see how big the swell is breaking on the reef at Mullaghmore. They are alone, the Malloy brothers having already departed. There is no false bravado. It is abundantly clear that the big wave surfing team is afraid. They have waited years for this moment. They have followed in the footsteps of the Malloys and Kevin Naughton and George Freeth and now it is their turn to lead. "*It's big, it's big. It's one of the biggest swells there has been in years.*" says Gabriel Davies. "*You don't want to make a mistake out there. It could get heavy real quick.*" The waves thunder on the screen with the force of a volcano erupting. It is impossible to look away from the mountains of water the young Irish and British surfers are about to take on. This is a moment George Freeth would be proud of.

"It's huge, it's huge," says Fitzgerald anxiously. "*Big, dangerous, shallow, nasty waves. This is going to be a big day. A really, really big day.*"

Indeed it was, because, on that day, the final day of filming '**Waveriders**' Gabriel Davies, Richard Fitzgerald, Alistair Mennie and Duncan Scott surfed the biggest swell ever ridden in Ireland. The waves are so dramatic, so powerful and so loud, no spoken words are required. The film lets the surfing do the talking and cleverly brings the story to its crescendo with a simple statement printed on the screen. The day would go down in history and news of the feat would travel around the world, back to Freeth's Hawaii where big wave legends reeled at the world class swell produced by a 'cold paradise'. For '**Waveriders**' it was the perfect end. For the pioneering cast, it was just a new beginning.

Crew List

Directed by	Joel Conroy
Produced by	Margo Harkin
Written by	Joel Conroy & Lauren Davies
Director of Photography	Daniel Trapp
Editors	Nathan Nugent Douglas Moxon
Narrator	Cillian Murphy
Production Manager	Lisa Woods
Sound Recordist	Paul Maynes
Music Supervisor	Matthias Tode
Voice of Jack London	Dylan Pickett
Radio Weather	Met Éireann
Additional Radio Weather	Dick Conroy
Additional Camera Operator	Jason Baffa
Additional Camera Operator	Eric Greenberg
Jet Ski Water Camera	Scott Kassenoff
Photosonics Water Camera	Chris Kelly
Photosonics Camera Technician	Leo Dickinson
Key Focus Puller	Ray Carlin
Additional Focus Puller	Leo Holba
Clapper Loaders	Julia Green Ben Plant Andrew O'Reilly
Clapper Loader California	Ashley Carpenter
Clapper Loader Hawaii	Thomas M Haley
Camera Assistant	Glynn Harrison
Trainee Camera Assistant	Jamie Jackson
Additional Sound	Freddie Claire Simon Kerr
Stills photography	Bernard Testemale Mickey Smith
Production Co-ordinator	Edel Harkin
Production Assistant, Ireland	Nico Sweeney

Waveriders

Production Assistant, California
Production Assistants, Hawaii

Andrew Robinson
Jeremy Le Cain
Ryan Shore

Driver

Killian Stokes

Trainee Production Assistants

Leonne Lindsay
Glen Gallagher
Sean Roe Curran
Kate O'Carroll

Trainee Production Assistant ILBF

Keith O'Grady

Production Accountant
Insurance Brokers
Legal Advisors
Section 481 Funding
Auditors

Christine Whiteman
Media Insurance
Philip Lee Solicitors
Bank of Ireland
Howath Bastow Charlton

USA Production Consultant
Production Travel Agent
Production Accommodation (USA)

Marcus Fox
Sayit Travel
Mark S Stuplin

Production Assistant, Water Dept.
Key Safety Boat Driver
Safety Boat Driver
Safety Boat Driver
Lifeguard & Jet Ski Driver
Jet Ski Engineer
Rope Specialist

Andrew Doyle
Daniel McGarrigle
Pat O'Brien
Declan Kilgalan
Dylan Stott
Uel McClintock
Irish Rope Access &
Safety Consultants
Ciaran Crowley

Graphics Effects Consultant

Post Production Supervisor
Post Production Co-ordination

Jim Duggan
Audrey Dawson
Peter Tighe

Assistant Editors

Alan Freir
Cian McDevitt
Seán Connolly

Telecine Operator

Anna Kierans
Anne Boyle

Graphic Design

Mark Bailey
Romek Delimata

DI Colourist
DI Finishing

Garry Curran
Warren Dowling

Sound Designer
Re-recording Mixer

Niall Brady
Garrett Farrell

Picture & Sound Post Production

Camera and Lighting Equipment

Film Laboratory UK

Film Laboratory USA

Digital Film Lab

Film Stock

Jet Skis
Couriers

Walkies

Lighting Services USA

Film Stock

Screen Scene

Ice Films Dublin
Panavision Belfast
Lee Lighting London
Hawaii Media
Abel Cine, Los Angeles

Soho Images, London
Wide Screen Centre, London
Fotokem, Los Angeles
Pro8 / Yale, Los Angeles
Lipsync, London

Link Up, Dublin
Kodak
Fuji

Jet Products, Sion Mills
Aerfast, Dublin
City Air Express, Belfast
Patterson Electronics, Belfast
Coffee Sound, Los Angeles

Cine G

Kodak
Fuji

Principal Cast: Surfer List

Richard Fitzgerald

Gabe Davies

Kelly Slater

Kevin Naughton

Drew Kampion

Arthur C Verge

Andy Hill

Alastair Mennie

Easkey Britton

May F Borthwick

Rabbit Kikai

Craig Peterson

Chris Malloy

Keith Malloy

Dan Malloy

John McCarthy

Additional Surfers

Dylan Stott

Dave Blount

Cain Kilcullen

Fergal Smith

Tom Doidge-Harrison

Andrew Keegan

Duncan Scott

The Makers

Director **Joel Conroy**

JOEL CONROY from Dublin has worked in film & television since 1996 as a director/producer. His debut as a feature documentary director is '**Waveriders**' which won the Audience Award at the 2008 Jameson Dublin International Film Festival and the George Morrison Feature Documentary Award at the 2009 Irish Film and Television Awards. It was shortlisted for the 2008 Grierson Awards.



Producer **Margo Harkin**

MARGO HARKIN from Derry has worked in the film & television business as a Company Manager and as an award winning Producer/Director since 1984. Her work as a Producer/Director has spanned many genres from short film, to feature film, long and short format social issue documentary, arts documentary and education series. Her award winning first drama '**Hush-A-Bye Baby**' has been distributed worldwide and has been widely anthologised. One of Margo's most recent and highly personal documentaries, IFTA nominated '**Bloody Sunday – A Derry Diary**', was made over a period of 6 years in the lead up to the publication of the Tribunal of Inquiry Report into the events of Bloody Sunday. Her collaboration with Joel Conroy of Inís Films produced the feature documentary '**Waveriders**' which won the Audience Award at the Jameson Dublin International Film Festival in February 2008.



The **Collaboration**

Joel Conroy and **Margo Harkin** formed a co-production to make 'Waveriders'. Margo's company **Besom Productions** is based in Derry, Northern Ireland and Joel's company **Inís Films** is based in Dublin. The co-production between the two companies was a cross-border project. Soon after starting development on 'Waveriders' Margo and Joel co-produced an award-winning documentary 'The Hunger Strike' for BBC Northern Ireland. This formed a concrete working relationship which preceded '**Waveriders**'. They continue to develop co-productions together.

Writer Lauren Davies

LAUREN DAVIES graduated from Trinity College, Cambridge with both an Honours degree and a Masters degree in Law. She worked as a corporate solicitor in London before following her dream to become a writer. Lauren has published three novels with Time Warner paperbacks under the name Lauren McCrossan. Her first bestselling novel **Serve Cool** reached the top ten debut novels of the year in 2001. Her second novel **Angel On Air** was long-listed for the Romantic Novelists Association romantic comedy of the year in 2003. Lauren's books are translated into Russian, Polish and Croatian and are sold worldwide.

Lauren is also an authority on surfing and was the first female columnist in a British surf magazine. Her freelance surfing journalism has been published throughout Europe and she has written for the Irish Times and the Guardian newspapers. **Waveriders**, on which she collaborated with Joel Conroy, is Lauren's first documentary script treatment. The film won the Dublin Film Festival Audience Award 2008. Lauren has just completed her fourth novel, **Swell**.

The making:

Director **Joel Conroy** talks about making **Waveriders**

About **Margo Harkin**, Producer

Margo brought so much creativity and expertise to the production. There were so many elements for us to consider for production purposes- extreme characters participating in an extreme sport, extreme locations, extreme logistics, extreme health and safety risks of both cliff and ocean filming, all combined with extreme weather dependency. It took Margo and me five years to complete the film.

About **Lauren Davies**, Co-Writer

I had written the original film idea but needed to work with a professional writer who understood the genre. I approached **Lauren Davies**, who is a UK writer and journalist based in France and also a friend and fellow surfer. She has an intimate knowledge of the sport (which can be highly technical), she knows many of the world's top surfers and has travelled for years to all the top surf destinations throughout the world so she was steeped in surf culture. More than anything I found her incredibly easy to work with as we collaborated on how I saw the narrative of the film. Lauren did a fantastic job in transforming the narrative into a full working shooting script. Lauren also introduced me to Kelly Slater and was an invaluable source of information in sounding out various people and locations within the surfing community – especially when we travelled to Hawaii.

About **Daniel Trapp**, DoP

I have a great appreciation for **Daniel Trapp's** creative eye and his style of photography. Daniel and I have scuba dived all over the world so I know him to be a very experienced waterman. He loves the ocean and is comfortable in pretty much any situation involving water – like filming on the back of a jet ski with 20ft waves rolling in. I didn't have to think about it at all really when I asked him to be Director of Photography even though it was his first big feature documentary. Daniel is not from a pure surfing background, so this enabled us to bring a fresh approach to the surfing genre as we discussed how to communicate the emotional rationale and extreme physicality behind the sport for a wider audience.

When it came to filming the final scene– the big wave ending for the film - our crew was dug into a ditch in the cliff for protection from the elements. We all felt the drama and the tension of the event and knew we had only a small window to capture something that we had waited for over a year to arrive. The waves grew and grew and you could hear them roar as if some giant monster was churning the sea, Daniel turned to me and said – “I feel like I am filming in the final scene of the film ‘Point Break’.” We laughed and the tension eased. It all just went perfectly and we got it in the can. Job done.

The Idea

I am a keen surfer and I wanted to make a surf film for many years. When the opportunity came to combine surfing and film making, the temptation was irresistible. I had a strong narrative, strong visual ideas and a unique historic perspective. I wanted to take the surfing genre film out of a niche and present it to a wider audience. I wanted to take the viewer inside the surfers' world to see their special culture and environment on a big screen and create an experience for people they might not ordinarily get.

I got the idea when I was sitting in a London airport waiting for a connecting plane en route to Dublin. I was reading 'The Times' newspaper sport pages. In small text at the bottom of the page, in the 'Questions to the Sports Editor' column, a reader had written a question which caught my attention: *'Is it true it was an Irishman who invented surfing?'* The answer was: *'You are partly correct. It was an Irishman who re-invented the sport of surfing - his name was Freeth'*. From that moment I was captivated. My imagination went into overdrive. I needed to know more about this Irish character called Freeth.

Straight away I started researching George Freeth Junior's life but it was hard going as I discovered that very little was known about him as his story had not been properly told yet and there were barely any contemporaneous accounts of his life or achievements. The American writer, Jack London, was the first person to write about Freeth in *The Cruise of the Snark* in 1911- when he excitedly reported on the strange new sport of surfing but, beyond that, there were no extensive accounts of his life.

I presumed it was unlikely that any archive images of Freeth would have survived down the years considering the general lack of research material. I searched newspaper archives, photographic archives and libraries with very few results. I reckoned that if I could find some archive images or reports, I would be sure to find his character among the bits and pieces of his life! I obtained one lead which I thought was interesting. It was a t-shirt website in the USA and I thought one of their images looked similar to the few pictures I had seen of George Freeth. The website was owned by the Witt family who I duly contacted. I eventually got to visit Tommy and Linda Witt in southern California. To my astonishment I discovered that Tommy's father had carefully maintained wonderful photograph albums which contained many different photographs of George Freeth. It turned out that his father, (Tommy's grandfather), has been trained by George Freeth. These photos had never been in the public domain. I had brought my laptop and scanner and got busy carefully scanning photographs and notes. I even scanned original framed photographs from the wall. In some cases when I removed the photographs from their frames to scan them I discovered little treasures of discreet hand written notes about the photos. They were invaluable clues and leads to further people such as May Borthwick - George Freeth's great-grand niece still living in Hawaii who I interviewed for the film. It was a pleasure to meet two generations of the Witt family, Tommy and Linda, who were very generous with their time and archives, and their son who is a surfer. I learned that Tommy still surfs and he and his son are both active lifeguards.

Arthur Verge was another unstintingly generous benefactor of time and information on George Freeth Junior. Arthur is a lifeguard with the Los Angeles County Lifeguard Association and has made a special study of the man he looks upon as a neglected hero. Arthur has made it his personal mission to get Freeth's story into the public domain so he also supplied us with great photographs and old journal cuttings and did an interview for the film.

The Background

I made a no-budget, short documentary in 2003 titled 'Eye of the Storm', which featured Richard Fitzgerald and Gabe Davies. As our relationships grew so did the aspirations to make a more ambitious film. I spent several years researching the key people that were needed to tell a story about the progression of surfing from the 1900s to the current day. A key factor for me was that I wanted to make the film primarily on the island of Ireland.

The Film Production

Surfing takes place in a beautiful, dynamic environment where epic moments are best seen from the surfer's point of view. By taking a camera into the waves I wanted to give the viewer a glimpse of a place they might never go without us; to give people a chance to get inside the ocean, the environment, the culture and the minds of surfers. We shot all the surfing footage on high-

speed super 16mm film cameras, in slow motion, to capture the action at a speed and quality that is designed for the big screen.

For the surfing sequences we filmed, using simultaneous cameras, both on land and in the water. When we were filming from cliff tops, or far away inaccessible places, we used Aaton and Arri film cameras with massive zoom lenses. On days with 6ft surf, the water camera team used Photosonics IVN cameras, which were small enough to enable the camera operator to take the water rig inside the waves.

I considered filming using HD cameras and digital tape, which are more cost effective than film, but the new generation of HD cameras were still unproven in harsh weather conditions and could not film the high speed I wanted for slow motion sequences which would capture the more precious, visual moments involved during surfing.

We used a selection of different film cameras and lenses specifically for certain shots and sequences to give us the quality and visual look for the cinema screen. The cameras we used were three Photosonics IVNs with two custom built surf waterproof housings, two Aaton A-Minimas, an Arri SR2, Arri SR3, two Bolexs along with many different film prime and massive zoom lenses.

I wanted to separate the two worlds of the surfer – the land and the water. In embracing this treatment we used Fuji film stock in the ocean, as we felt it gave a greener colder look, and we used Kodak film stock on land as it gave a reddish, warmer look. Using film instead of HD tape enabled us to better capture the subtle and changing definition of coastal light in Ireland. We never used lights on the film.

The highly skilled water photography progressed over the course of production. Chris Kelly, our water photographer based in the UK, was brought in to film the close-up, more personal water footage. Leo Dickinson, our film technician, got his hands on three Photosonics IVN camera bodies and he got two custom water housings made from carbon fibre for use with different lenses. We used Nikon still photographic lenses mounted on the IVN cameras which gave a particular style and look to the pictures.

The IVN cameras were originally used by the American military to film inside the cockpit of fighter airplanes to film the reaction of G-Force on their pilots. The cameras can shoot up to 500fps, so we had them adapted and had water housings built for our specific requirements. We needed three of these cameras as each only lasted a couple of minutes before the film ran out. One of the water team swam out with a loaded camera into the waves where the operator was positioned. He then swapped out the shot camera for the new one and swam back in over the dangerous, rocky reef. This helped conserve the extremely specialised water camera operator's energy levels. When the swimmer returned to shore the camera was re-loaded and then sent back out again. This cycle went on for as long as the tide, surfers and swell allowed us.

In filming the bigger wave days (15ft+), it was impossible for the camera operator to swim in the water due to the rips / currents. We had a land team led by DoP Daniel Trapp and another water based boat camera team and Jet Ski camera team for the water.

During pre production I was in touch regularly with two of the best surf / water cinematographers in the world; Sonny Miller in the USA and Jack McCoy in Australia. Unfortunately they were both unable to come to Ireland to film the bigger surf footage due to commitments. Through the brothers Malloy I was introduced to Jason Baffa – one of California's finest surf genre film makers. Jason was brought over to Ireland on two occasions and filmed with us using his Bolex cameras.

During the 'really big wave' day (end sequence), Jason filmed from a boat we had situated as close as was possible to where the surfers were riding the massive swell. Everyone in the boat was lashed by the waves and got soaked really quickly. Jason's hands got so cold that his fingers went numb and he was unable to operate the camera under the hindrance of a protective splash bag. In the adrenalin of the situation and in his enthusiasm to get the shots, he dumped the splash bag to enable his weakened and numb fingers to pull focus. In exceptionally harsh conditions and suffering from sea sickness to boot Jason got the shots. However a result was that his camera eventually got completely soaked in salt water. When he got back to land he dumped the whole kit into a fresh water bathtub. Margo had to give him a cup of hot soup in his hands just to thaw out his fingers first. He rinsed the gear and then laid it out on his bed and went to work with a hair dryer. By the evening the camera was fully functional. I am sure a HD digital camera would not have survived that particular ordeal.

In the led up to the big wave the surfers and the entire production watched the swell charts for months as we wanted to get a the best possible climax for the film finale to show the power and awesome beauty that the Atlantic ocean can produce. Eventually the call was made at the very end of November 2007 and surfers and crew came from California, France and the UK as we descended upon the sleepy coastal village of Mullaghmore for the massive swell that would reach its peak on 1st December. The health and safety issues were massive mainly for the surfers but also for the safety crew and camera crew. Our boat captain was an off duty RNLI coxman with his super charged rib boat. There were two jet skis towing in the surfers and we had an additional jet ski as a back-up, just in case of equipment failure. It was truly an anxious time for everybody. Due to the horrendous conditions we could only film from the boat and from land. In the film's climax we see waves in the 50ft +++ range – the biggest waves ever surfed off the island of Ireland and arguably the biggest ever surfed in this part of the world. I think the footage says how gruelling and unique the whole experience was, but the rewards for both the surfers and crew was worth it all.

The Locations

The coastline of Ireland is one of the most beautiful surfing backdrops in the northern hemisphere. Ireland is blessed with some of the best, uncrowded surf Europe has to offer. Primary filming took place in Counties: Clare, Mayo, Sligo, Leitrim, Donegal and Antrim.

In supporting the historical story elements of the film the production travelled to LA, Encinitas, Redondo and Ventura in California; Honolulu and the North shore of O'ahu in Hawaii to retrieve historic archive photographs, sketches, illustrations, news clippings, documentation and interviews about George Freeth.

Through extensive research in California, I managed to track down and get in contact with George Freeth's great grandniece - May Borthwick whom I met in Honolulu. I found her very welcoming and discovered she is even married to an Irishman! May had found a chest in her attic a number of years ago. She showed me the contents which contained many photos that had never been seen before. She even had Freeth's Congressional Medal of Honor.

The Edit

One quote that stuck out from location filming, which became a guiding light in the edit, was Drew Kampion's philosophical view of the surfers' world:

"Surfers because they are exposed to the wild, have something that most of society has lost. Most of society is completely cut off from the wild, completely cut off from the natural world. They live in climate controlled automobiles or offices or houses or whatever they are. In this day and age where you have such fractured societies – who is there more prepared and more globalised and more integrated into the natural world and the global community than surfers?"

Drew Kampion (transcript from Waveriders)

Nathan Nugent and I started editing before we had shot the final sequence. As a result of pushing the time envelope to enable one last shot at filming a big day, Nathan ran out of time before his next assignment. By the time we eventually filmed the big day Nathan had already moved onto his next job. At that stage Doug Moxon came over from England and picked up the edit and saw it through to completion.

A working narrative timeline was built, visual treatments were developed, storyboard artwork created, stylised photographic treatments were developed using digital special effects, literary quotes were animated, special effects were imposed on contemporary moving imagery, music was specifically composed and published music was identified.

At a very early stage in the edit process, Niall Brady, our sound designer at Screen Scene, was already listening and watching as the various elements of the edit were coming together. He created a library from the massive bank of

sound effects which we had recorded on set and he also obtained some effects he had in his library which he thought fitting. His sound design was vast and contained everything I could imagine - from silence to a 'volcanic eruption', which he laid on the end sequence over 'thunder'. It is perfectly fitting when visually accompanied on the big screen with Dolby surround sound.

When we had completed the final edit all the film was transferred again, at a much higher resolution, straight to a digital intermediate (DI). The DI was then graded and transferred to 35mm film.

The making:

Producer Margo Harkin talks about making Waveriders

The Collaboration

I remember the first day that Joel walked into our office in Derry back in early 2004. I really had no idea what to expect. I had received a phone call from him out of the blue and had very little to go on apart from the fact that he wanted to make a feature documentary about surfing in Ireland and was looking for a co-producing partner in the north-west. I am not the most obvious person you would think of to make a film about surfing so I was suitably intrigued but I understood the financial advantages of a Dublin based company and a Derry based company pitching together to avail of cross border financial incentives. I had done a few co-productions and knew they were all about the working relationship between the partners – how they understood what they were involved in and how they could match their creative and business abilities in a truly respectful relationship. My past experiences had been mixed.

When this young man walked in I wondered how he could trust that a middle aged woman – who had never been on a surf board in her life - could tune in to what he was doing. In fact the truly great quality that Joel showed straight away was in having no preconceptions at all - other than being armed with the fact that I had been recommended to him as a producer. He was open to whatever it took to get his film made. I was immediately impressed with Joel's passion for this idea he had been carrying around in his head for a few years. His total commitment and personal investment in his project were obvious. Any experienced filmmaker knows that work relationships and friendships will be severely tested when you set out to make an ambitious film – so you try to gauge as best you can if you will risk going on that journey with your main collaborator. You start with the idea and with the person and the collaboration process continues when you put your team together. I thought it was well worth taking the chance.

It turned out to be one of the best decisions I have ever made as we evolved a truly equal, creative and business partnership. It just got stronger and

stronger because we stuck to our original guiding principles for working together and we discussed the film at every level and at every stage. The film and our working relationship grew organically and the strength of that is on the screen in the final film. I like to say that Waveriders is an example of what can be achieved when you bring the right talent, hard work and money together. Both of us went grey making 'Waveriders' but only one of us is owning up to it!

The Idea

I loved the idea of making a film about surfing – mainly because of the intense, visual pleasure it would give to an audience and I liked the fact that it would be a 'feel good' film about Ireland. It may sound strange but it seemed to me that extreme surfing was nothing less than a magnificent type of ballet performed on water – where the principals extend themselves to the utmost in synchronicity with nature to achieve a momentary brilliance. Making a film about it would be bringing that same recognition to an audience and when Joel talked about his ideas it became clear that we had a chance to bring it to a wider audience with 'Waveriders'. I asked him a lot of questions and was immediately impressed by the flood of knowledge and aspirations that spilled forth – everything from funding opportunities, to the great waves that existed in Ireland, to marketing studies, to the narrative, to how he would film underwater. He struck a nerve when he said he wanted to achieve a strong narrative in the film as the surf genre does not generally contain this. He felt that if he could achieve this - 'Waveriders' had the chance to cross over to a wider audience. Narrative is my thing. I had attended many courses on the subject and I apply the principle of the dramatic arc in my own documentaries. I think that is the point where Joel and I first tuned in creatively and it was crucial for me at least. He told me about George Freeth and the Irish connection to surfing and a whole vista for the film as a narrative opened up for me. The rest is practical stuff – demanding, hair-raising (and I don't just mean the surfing shots) and a mental and physical endurance test.

Co-Production Agreement

After that first meeting we worked out a co-production agreement. I remember quoting the principle of U2's working relationship which has stood to them down the years, i.e. that we split everything equally. It has worked a dream in that sense as it became the main parameter for everything we did – we never did anything without consulting each other. It took two exacting years to raise the money for 'Waveriders' and in that time we managed to successfully test our working relationship by co-producing a documentary on the 1981 hunger strike for BBCNI and TG4.

The Production Team

Joel and I are not shy of hard work and we both worked whatever hours it took to realise his aspirations for the film. We were profoundly engaged in all the processes but allowed each other our strengths. The film was demanding in so many ways and we built a team that could be adapted as we went through the various stages. Joel is good on the technical and creative side of things and had already forged strong creative relationships with his co-writer Lauren Davies, our Director of Photography Daniel Trapp and with our Special Effects Supervisor Ciaran Crowley. I brought creative players to the team by introducing Joel to Screen Scene's post production capabilities and in building our crew. We were both involved in the writing processes throughout as there were always adaptations to be made for different funding application and press purposes. Our crew was truly international coming from Belfast, Dublin, London, Cornwall and California – all devoted to making the best possible film. I learned so much from all of them.

The Cast

In keeping with a drama style ambition for the film we called our key crew – 'the cast' as if they were actors and the film was planned with them to a degree which took it beyond a regular documentary. Joel had already filmed Irish champion surfer Richie Fitzgerald from Bundoran and his long time friend, UK champion surfer Gabe Davies from Newcastle, in 'Eye of the Storm' – which became like a pilot film for 'Waveriders'. When I first met them I was struck by Richie's combination of boisterous good humour and a deeper sensitivity and by Gabe's witty, gentle containment. They were clearly totally in tune with each other and incredibly fit. In the early days it was a joke among the female crew that the cast was very easy on the eye. It soon wore off when everyone was doing 4.30am starts to catch first light. Richie has a great friendship with the superlatively talented Malloy brothers and helped bring their involvement together for the film. Gabe and his wife Lauren, the film's co-writer, have a special relationship with world surf champion Kelly Slater and that was how Joel was introduced to him and got him to appear in the film. There were so many people involved with the film at different stages but Richie, Gabe and Lauren were central and loyal to its realisation from the beginning to the end and are the people we still maintain contact with today.

The Financing

Northern Ireland Screen was a key first funder demonstrating confidence in the idea. We then we got involved in a protracted funding application with a European Union fund under the Interreg IIIA Programme locally implemented by a cross border agency called ICBAN. The Irish Film Board came in at a crucial point to complete our financing with an award that acknowledged the hard work we achieved bringing together 5 financiers. The compliance work required for the financiers has been challenging to say the least. I learned that while raising the budget may have looked like a success story on paper it

involved an unimaginable workload at the contractual and reporting stages. Our financiers were brilliant in trusting our judgement throughout the process and came on board with a creative input when needed. Richard Williams, Andrew Reid and Elsie Brown at Northern Ireland Screen maintained a very supportive relationship throughout. Alan Maher and Patrick O'Neill were an incredibly creative part of team at the Irish Film Board and Alan pulled off a special coup when he helped us get the very modest Cillian Murphy to do the voiceover at exceptionally short notice. Caitriona Mullan for the Interreg programme was exceptional in her department for having the vision to see how the film could benefit economically disadvantaged areas in the North West of Ireland. We also made a slightly different, shorter version of the film for BBCNI mentored with his usual good nature by Fergus Keeling. The BCI did not have a major financial input to the film but Diarmaid Breathnach and Brian Furey have been invaluable in promoting the film at festivals and events.

Managing the Unmanageable

Surfing in Ireland is highly unmanageable in terms of capturing it on film, so that was a huge challenge for us, working us how to manage something that is entirely weather dependent and then fit our interviews in around that. We were very reliant on our key cast, Richie and Gabe, to call the best surf opportunities for us. Other key Irish surfers such as the hugely talented big wave surfer, John McCarthy from Co Clare, were doing the same.

In order to best manage our schedule we constructed 3 main blocks of filming, starting out in Ireland by introducing Richie and Gabe surfing on the north-west coast, moving to California and Hawaii to capture the historical element of the story and returning to Ireland to bring up to date the contemporary story of pioneering tow-in surfing in Ireland. This was essentially our 3 act drama arc.

The two shoots in Ireland, in the peak shoulder seasons of autumn and spring, also allowed for the best opportunities to film a big wave sequence. I was always concerned that if we got our big wave too early on it would psychologically disturb our chronological development of the narrative. In fact the chronology worked out perfectly but not without a prolonged and highly tense episode where we thought the opportunity for the big wave would never come.

On one occasion Joel and I were sitting in a meeting with 3 lawyers and financial personnel signing off on our Revenue Commission of Ireland, Section 481 financing when Joel kept getting urgent texts from John McCarthy down in Doolin. It seems the biggest swell ever at the now legendary 'Aileens' break was fast developing. Joel was flying out to Los Angeles the next day and the rest of the crew and I were following suit soon after. That was just one example of when we couldn't make the window of opportunity work. At other times we could not get our key cast to Ireland in time – although I will forever remember the shoot when we did finally film at 'Aileens'. If you're lucky you

might get a 72 hour window to bring everything together. Our amazing production crew, Production Manger Lisa Woods, Production Co-Ordinator Edel Harkin and Production Assistant Nico Sweeny made lightning arrangements to fly Chris and Keith Malloy and surf cameraman Jason Baffa from California, Daniel Trapp from London and, most dramatic of all, Gabe Davies from Indonesia *and* they had to sort the accommodation, equipment, stock and transport.

Gabe was among the first to see the swell developing and was so devoted to the film that he started travelling immediately from Indonesia when he thought there might be a chance to capture a good opportunity. He brought his wife - Lauren Davies who was also our writer - and French surf photographer Bernard Testemale along with him and that turned out to be a great call. Lauren and Bernard joined Gabe en route in Paris. Richie was the anchor back in Ireland and he had a terrific relationship with the Malloys so the team aspect was crucial at every turn. Meanwhile our Production Manager Lisa Woods arranged for our PA Nico to physically pick up the special photosonics camera kit that had been delivered from Cornwall to Manchester for repair and bring it down to Co Clare at indecent speed. As soon as she arrived in Clare Nico had to turn around and fly out from Shannon to London to deliver the test rushes to the lab. At the end of that day she was literally dizzy and disorientated from all the flights she undertook. I think we unwittingly breached health and safety with her on that day.

The underwater side was a particular eye opener. I am in awe of the sheer strength and skill required of those underwater cameraman who have to paddle out into big waves with their gear and capture the optimum moments of surfers often engaged in highly dangerous conditions. Joel and Daniel used specialised equipment to maximise those shots. At Joel's request, Paul Maynes, our principle sound person on the shoot, experimented with recording conversations out in the water but the technology has not evolved enough for that to work yet.

The Big Wave Finale

The big wave sequence was a nightmare for the production side. Lisa was our Health & Safety officer and she did rigorous risk assessments throughout the film. We all thought the shoot at 'Aileens' was going to be the big one at that time but the swell dropped a little so it turned out to be a great test shoot for the big wave when it finally came at Mullaghmore in Co Sligo. The big wave climax arrived miraculously at a point when Joel and I had agreed we could no longer hold off on completing the edit if we wanted the film to be ready in time for Gráinne Humphreys' première invitation to the Dublin Film Festival. Joel was just about to call everyone to say it wasn't going to happen when the stubbornly awaited, vital call that a massive swell was rising finally came. I spent a long time on the phone to our brilliant insurers in those hours while everyone else was pulling together a by now well oiled team. And we got the 'pay off' in grand style. Joel and I know that the film would not have been the same without that climax.

Post Production

I cannot finish without saying what a great post production process we enjoyed at Screen Scene. We made a good call the day we asked Jim Duggan to be our post production supervisor and I dread to think of what might have happened if we had got involved in a bitty process with lots of different facilities. We got the benefit of a customised service involving a great creative team that we could add to as we wanted.

Audience Feedback

If I never make anything again I will be happy to say I am so proud of what we all achieved on 'Waveriders'. The first night screening at the Jameson Dublin International film festival on 22 February 2008 will always be a treasured memory. Gráinne Humphreys started it off by saying that she could have sold the film out many times over – such was the anticipation for the film. It was such a treat to walk on stage after the screening and face a sea of smiling faces.

The making:

Gabriel Davies talks about making **Waveriders**

Surfing for the film Waveriders was a lot more difficult than I had imagined it would be. I've surfed for video and stills cameramen around the world many times as a pro surfer, but this was on a whole new dimension. Firstly we were shooting entirely on film. There are very few people in the world who are able to operate the sort of film cameras that were used and who also have the ability to swim and film surfing in really serious (and cold!) conditions. The other equipment we needed to surf and to film in the waves was also really extensive and rare and difficult to source. Technically we had to have jet-skis, camera boards, water housings, all customised for our use, then tested under the pressure of the huge waves we wanted to surf in. We took the safety aspect very seriously. Richard and I obviously trust each other in the water, but on this shoot we also had cameramen and soundmen on various jet-skis, safety boats and perched on all kinds of cliffs. We had to surf to our outmost and push the limits and yet always keep the cast and crew safe as some were not experienced surfers who have spent years in or around the ocean.

Also of course the one thing we needed most of all were the waves. They don't just appear when you want them! We had to survey weather charts and forecast when and where the waves would arrive. Any mistake or bad call would involve huge costs to the budget and disappointment for all concerned. For one shoot I flew back early from my sponsor's photo trip in Bali. For another I drove non stop from the South of France with a jet-ski on the back of my car, caught a ferry to the UK, drove non stop to catch another ferry to Ireland before surfing at 7am in huge frozen February waves!

The climax to the film was the result of a weather chart that is rarely seen in the North Atlantic. We basically had a 3-hour window to catch the huge swell under 'the eye of the storm' before a monster storm would blow us all to pieces. We had waited years for that day and it all came together like a dream.

The making:

Richard Fitzgerald talks about making **Waveriders**

It has been a brilliant experience for me working on 'Waveriders' over the last 5 years with Gabe and Joel. Gabe and I have been mates for years and to be able to surf and travel with him to California, Hawaii and all over Ireland during filming was a dream project for me. I've known Joel for over 10 years now and we have worked on several projects together. Joel is an artist and works with a conscientious attitude putting quality rather than quantity first in everything he does, so it's no surprise with 'Waveriders' that he has directed a high quality surf documentary with his unique style reflected throughout.

I think audiences will be pleasantly surprised with the mixture of top quality surfing, history, narrative, characters and most impressively, I think, the aesthetic beauty of all the locations captured by some brilliant camera work.

When it comes to riding big waves, Gabe and I have a strong two man team surfing partnership. We were the first tow-in team to start riding big waves in Ireland back in 2001. Since then we have pioneered the sport here, discovered and surfed some incredible waves and locations all along Ireland's Atlantic seaboard. For us it's an ongoing project whether a camera is capturing it or not. Fortunately while we were working on 'Waveriders' we had some of our best and most memorable big wave sessions to date. Joel and his crew managed to film the waves from a fantastic array of imaginative prospects and angles. So, for me, it is a real thrill to see those sessions up there on the big screen captured throughout the film.

When we were on location in California and in Co. Clare it was a really great opportunity for me to surf and be filmed with my good mates the Malloy brothers. Chris, Keith and Dan have been friends of mine for a long time and happen to be three of California's most respected and high profile pro-surfers. They are also adventurers, environmentalists, writers, producers, musicians and film makers. I have collaborated on two previous surf film projects with the Malloys, but to get the opportunity to work together with them on 'Waveriders' was the best yet. 'Waveriders' is unique in the film world due to it being an original, high quality indigenous Irish surf documentary shot entirely on film. As you can imagine it was great to have the brothers involved as friends and fellow surfers and their input to the film both in and out of the water was priceless.

As part of the initial screenings of 'Waveriders' we got the opportunity to have a private screening in my home town of Bundoran for family, friends and the wider local community. Bundoran is ground zero for 'Waveriders', with a large amount of the spectacular surf and land footage being shot in and around the Bundoran area. The town also acted as a base for the cast and crew. 'Waveriders' highlights some of the world class waves in Ireland and it was important to me that these included the spectacular surf in and around the town of Bundoran. The hometown screening was the one I anticipated the most as I think the real test for Waveriders was being screened to my home audience. Thankfully it was really well received by the audience of local people from all walks of life that night and so for me the film has already passed the hardest test. The local communities were very enthusiastic and proud of what they saw and are eagerly anticipating its official release.

Biography Director **Joel Conroy**

Joel Conroy was born in Dublin, Ireland and has worked for over twelve years in the film and television industry as a director, producer and writer. Joel has worked extensively throughout Ireland, UK, Australia & America, and has successfully completed large-scale production projects for leading entertainment companies.

His first feature documentary as director is **Waveriders** (2008). The film won the Audience Award for Best Film at the 2008 Dublin International Film Festival and was short listed for the 2008 Grierson awards.

Joel was Co-Producer of **The Hunger Strike** (2006) a 60-min documentary made for the 25th Anniversary of the 1980/81 Hunger Strikes, commissioned by BBC1 Northern Ireland. **The Hunger Strike** won the Best Documentary award at the 2007 Boston Irish Film Festival. He was also co-Producer of **Ocras** (2006) an Irish language documentary on the Hunger Strikes for TG4. It was co-funded by the Northern Ireland Film & Television Commission and the Broadcast Commission of Ireland for a co-production with Besom Productions.

Joel was Producer, Director and writer of **Eye of the Storm** (2003) a 52-min documentary co-funded by the Irish Film Board and broadcast on RTÉ 1 (Ireland) and Odysée (France).

Joel worked for MTV's (USA) **Meet The Barkers** (2004), a reality show about the US rock band Blink182; the hit FOX Family US reality television series **Scariest Places on Earth** (2002) on-location in Ireland for iCandyTV, Traige Entertainment and FOX USA; **Round Ireland Jet Ski Challenge** (2001) for Red Bull and TV3, Ireland; and the **Red Bull Surf Safari - UK & Ireland** (2000) for Channel Four UK.

Between 2000 and 2005 Joel directed and filmed specialty under-water and extreme sports filming for Widervision Ireland, Vodafone and Red Bull. He

started his film and television industry career in 1996 working with Jonathon Taylor and Marcus Fox of iCandyTV in Australia in association with Bunim Murray Productions and MTV. Before film and television Joel worked for *Attic Press* book publishers (1992-1995) as a graphic designer and production manager overseeing a catalogue of over 500 books and authors.

Joel is a member of the Screen Directors Guild of Ireland, Screen Producers Ireland and The Irish Film & Television Academy.

Profile of Inís Films – Managing Director Joel Conroy

Joel Conroy's filmography with Inís Films includes the following credits:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| WAVERIDERS | 2006/08: Director , Feature length creative documentary about the evolution of Irish/American surfing.
Co-production with Besom Productions.
Financed by: the Irish Film Board, Northern Ireland Screen, EU Interreg III / ICBAN, BBC NI, Revenue Commission of Ireland S481 and the Broadcast Commission of Ireland.
<i>Waveriders</i> won the Audience Award at the 2008 Jameson Dublin Int. Film Festival, the George Morrison Feature Documentary Award at the 2009 Irish Film & Television Awards and was shortlisted for the 2008 Grierson Awards. |
| THE HUNGER STRIKE | 2006: Co-Producer , 60' documentary on the 1980/81 hunger strikes for BBCNI and the Broadcast Commission of Ireland.
Co-production with Besom Productions.
The film won Best Documentary at the 2007 Boston Irish Film Festival. |
| OCRAS | 2006: Co-Producer , 63' documentary in Irish language on the 1980/81 hunger strikes for TG4 and the Broadcast Commission of Ireland.
Co-production with Besom Productions. |
| EYE OF THE STORM | 2003: Director/Producer , 52' documentary about surfing in Ireland.
Co-funded by the Irish Film Board.
Broadcast on Odysée (France), and RTÉ (Ireland) as part of <i>Townlands Series</i> . |

Biography Producer **Margo Harkin**

Margo was born in Derry and continues to live and work there through her company Besom Productions. She is a graduate in Fine Art (Hons) from the Ulster College of Art & Design 1974 and completed a post graduate course in theatre design with Percy Harris and Hayden Griffin at The Theatre Design Course, Riverside Studios in 1981.

In the 1970s she was employed as a secondary school teacher, community worker and festival organiser but reached a creative turning point in her career when she joined Field Day theatre company founded by Brian Friel and Stephen Rea in 1980. Starting out as Assistant Stage Manager Margo progressed to Stage Designer for Field Day and other companies before co-founding the Channel 4 funded Derry Film & Video Film Workshop in 1984. Her Filmography with Derry Film & Video includes Producer on the documentary **Mother Ireland** 1988 and co-writer and Director on the drama **Hush-A-Bye Baby**, 1990, both award-winning films.

Hush-A-Bye Baby was broadcast on RTÉ and C4 with TV broadcast sales internationally. Sinéad O'Connor wrote the score for the film and was cast in a small role. The film has been widely anthologised and forms part of Media Studies and Irish Studies curricula and discourse in universities in Ireland, Europe and America. In a recent anthology of Irish film it was described as 'a groundbreaking film'. When the workshop closed in 1990 Margo worked as a freelancer for a short while directing her first documentary '**The Bloody Sunday Murders**' with journalist Eamonn McCann for Channel 4 Television before forming Besom Productions in 1992.

Margo has been a guest speaker on many third level media courses and events and at national and international conferences, seminars and film festivals. As a long time advocate and lobbyist for film interests her board memberships have included:

- Co-founder & Director of the Board Northern Ireland Film Council
- Elected Director of the Board of the second phase - membership based - Northern Ireland Film and Television Council
- Vice Chair and D.E.N.I. appointed Director of the Board of the third phase - reconstituted Northern Ireland Film and Television Commission now known as Northern Ireland Screen
- Director of the Board, the Tyrone Guthrie Centre
- Director of the Board, The Irish Film Institute
- Director of the Board, The Irish Film & Television Academy

Profile **Besom Productions Ltd – Managing Director Margo Harkin**

Margo Harkin's filmography with Besom Productions includes the following credits:

PARADISO	2009: Producer 60' doc on 'the Fountain' a Protestant enclave in Derry for BBCNI
RUA	2007: Producer 52' doc. on the history of Red Hair in Irish language for TG4
WAVERIDERS	2006/08: Producer , Feature length creative documentary, in co-production with Inís Films, about surfing on the North Coast of Ireland. Financed by IFB, NIS, Interreg III ICBAN, BBCNI, Revenue Commission of Ireland, S481 and BCI
BLOODY SUNDAY A DERRY DIARY	2002-07: Producer/Director : 83' long term doc following the Tribunal of Inquiry into Bloody Sunday from the POV of three people profoundly affected by the original events. Finance RTÉ, Irish Film Board, ZDF Germany, NIFTC Lottery Fund. TX on RTÉ 6 Feb.07 & ZDF/Arte on 29 Jan 07.
OCRAS	2006: Co-Producer/Director , 63' doc in Irish language on the 1980/81 Hunger strikes for TG4. Co-production with Inís Films, Dublin. TX on TG4 on 4/10/06
THE HUNGER STRIKE	2006: Co-Producer/Director 60' documentary on the 1980/81 hunger strikes for BBCNI. Co-production with Inís Films, Dublin.
YOU LOOKING AT ME?	2002/03: Producer/Director , 75' drama on Personal Development for 4 Ventures, Channel 4 TV, co-financed by C4, NIFTC, IFB & The Community Relations Council. TX 1.12.03
THE LAST STORYTELLER?	2002: Producer , 52' doc directed by Desmond Bell. Co-produced with Asylum Pictures on the storyteller Seán Ó hEochaidh for RTE, TG4, the Irish Film Board & The Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Lottery Unit.
COOLABOOLA	2001: Producer , 3 x 30' series on dialects: for 4 Learning, C4
AT THE CUTTING	2001 – Producer , 52' doc on cosmetic surgery in Ireland

EDGE	for RTÉ
LOOKING FOR LUNDY	2000 – Producer/Director , 25' doc personal journey by Unionist Roy Garland into the traitor Lundy at the Siege of Derry – for BBCNI
A PLAGUE ON BOTH YOUR HOUSES	1999 – 25' Producer/Director , doc on Mixed Religion Marriages for BBCNI
FATAL EXTRACTION	1998 – Producer , short drama in film noire style for BBCNI
CLEAR THE STAGE	1998 – Director , 40' arts doc on internationally acclaimed Irish playwright Frank McGuinness for BBCNI
12 DAYS IN JULY	1997 – Producer/Director , 52' doc on the politically volatile Orange march at Drumcree for Channel 4, critically acclaimed in reviews
DOWN TO EARTH	1996/97 – Director, 5 x 15 'Geography series for C4 Schools in Co-production with Doubleband Films, Belfast
SONGS & SOUNDS BY LEAPS & BOUNDS	1996 - 5 x 15' Producer/Director , series on music and movement for C4 Schools
NYPD NUDE	1995 - 25' Director , doc shot in New York, about female cop who posed for Playboy, Channel 4.

Margo Harkin Awards, Mentions & Shortlists

Mother Ireland

Best Documentary Femmes Cathodiques, France

Hush-A-Bye Baby

Best Drama Celtic Film Festival, Gweedore 1990

Ecumenical Prize Locarno Intl Film Festival, Switzerland 1990

Best Actress, Bronze Leopard (Emer McCourt) Locarno Intl Film Festival 1990

Official Irish Entry, Young European Film of the Year 1990

Best Film, Orleans Film Festival, France 1991

Best Actress, Pescara Film Festival, Italy 1992

Fatal Extraction – 8' short film directed by Colin McKeown.

Special Mention at Festival Mondial du Cinema de Courts Metrages, Huy, Belgium, 1998.

The Last Storyteller, directed by Desmond Bell for RTÉ & TG4

Selected for the 59th Venice Film Festival Aug. 02

The Hunger Strike

Winner Best Documentary the Boston Irish Film Festival 2007

Bloody Sunday- A Derry Diary

Nominated for Best Documentary Prix Europa 1997

Nominated for Best Documentary Irish Film & Television Awards 1997

Waveriders

Winner: The Audience Award at the Jameson Dublin International Film Festival 2008

Winner: The George Morrison Feature Documentary Award at the Irish Film & Television Awards 2009

Winner Best Documentary, Beloit International Film Festival, 2009

Winner Best Sports Documentary, Celtic Media Festival, Caernarfon 2009

Nominated for the 2008 Grierson Awards 2008

Biography: Narrator **Cillian Murphy**

Born in Cork in 1976, Irish actor Cillian Murphy first made his mark with his stunning performance in the award-winning stage version of *Disco Pigs*. After the production received Best Fringe Show at the 1996 Dublin Theatre Festival and the Fringe First Award at the Edinburgh Festival 1997, it went on to tour extensively in Ireland, the UK, Toronto and Australia. Murphy later starred in the award-winning film version directed by Kirsten Sheridan. In the theatre Murphy continued to attract attention for his role as Claudio in *Much Ado About Nothing* and in two plays for Tony Award Winning



director Garry Hynes as the lead role in *The Country Boy*, as Johnny Boyle in *Juno and the Paycock*. Since then he has appeared as Adam in Neil La Bute's play *The Shape of Things* at Dublin's Gate Theatre, as Konstantin in *The Seagull* at the Edinburgh International Festival directed by the acclaimed German director Peter Stein and huge acclaim, as Christy Mahon in Garry Hynes' 2004 production of *The Playboy of the Western World*. His major film and television credits include John Carney's *On The Edge* for Universal, Stephen Bradley's *Sweetie Barrett*, *The Ambassador* for the BBC, William Boyd's *The Trench*, Nelson Hume's *Sunburn* and Goran Paskalijevic's *How Harry Became a Tree*. Murphy appeared in the role of Paul Montague in David Yeats BBC television drama *The Way We Live Now* in 2002. Cillian's short film *The Watchmen*, which he co-wrote with Paloma Baeza, was short listed for the Turner Classic Movie Short Film Award. In 2002 Cillian made a huge international impact in the leading role of Jim in *28 Days Later* directed by Danny Boyle for Fox Searchlight. Since then he has appeared as Pieter in *The Girl With The Pearl Earring* directed by Peter Webber and as Bardolf in *Cold Mountain* directed by Anthony Minghella and in the leading role of John in *Intermission*, directed by John Crowley for Company of Wolves. Cillian appeared in the role of Prof. Jonathan Crane (The Scarecrow) in Warner Bros. *Batman Begins* directed by Christopher Nolan and in the leading role of Patrick 'Kitten' Brady in Neil Jordan's feature *Breakfast on Pluto* for which he

was nominated for a Golden Globe in 2005. He also appeared as Jackson Rippner opposite Rachel McAdams in *Red Eye*, directed by Wes Craven for Dreamworks SKG in 2005. Cillian recently appeared as Damien in Ken Loach's new feature film *The Wind That Shakes The Barley* for Sweet Sixteen/Pathé Films which won the Palm D'Or at Cannes 2006. Cillian appeared as Capa in Danny Boyle's *Sunshine* for DNA Films/Fox for which he was nominated for a British Independent Film Award for Best Actor. He recently appeared in *Watching the Detectives* opposite Lucy Liu, directed by Paul Soter for Hart-Lunsford Pictures. He recently starred as Bean, in *Love Song* at the new Ambassadors Theatre in London's Westend; by John Kolvenbach, directed by John Crowley.

Cillian will soon appear as Richard Neville in *Hippie Hippie Shake*, directed by Beeban Kidron for Universal, and has recently appeared as The Scarecrow in *The Dark Knight* directed by Christopher Nolan for Warner Bros and in *The Edge of Love* directed by John Maybury for BBC Films. He recently completed filming the role of John Skillpa in *Peacock* directed by Michael Lander for Mandate Pictures and is currently filming the role of Michael in *Perriers Bounty*, a new feature film by Mark O'Rowe, directed by Ian Fitzgibbon for Parallel Films.

Cillian narrated the feature documentary *Waveriders* due for release in April 2009. The film won the Audience Award at the Dublin International Film Festival 2008 and was shortlisted for a Grierson Award in 2008. *Waveriders* is currently nominated for two IFTA awards.

Surfer Cast Biographies

RICHARD FITZGERALD was born and raised in Bundoran, County Donegal, which has become known as a world-class surfing destination largely due to Richard's role as an ambassador and best known face of Irish surfing. Having represented Ireland at both World and European Championships, Richard chose not to pursue a competitive surfing career and concentrated on soul surfing and owning and managing the West Coast's first and leading surf shop, Surfworld.

Richard first met Gabriel Davies while surfing in Donegal at the age of thirteen and the two developed a close bond, which has seen them become Ireland's premiere big wave surfing partnership. Richard was the co-lead character in *Eye of the Storm* directed by Joel Conroy in 2003, which aired on RTE to critical acclaim. Richard also appeared alongside the Malloy Brothers in the surfing documentary, *Step Into Liquid* directed by Dana Brown in 2003. Richard is featured devoting his time to the cross border integration scheme that attempts to integrate children from the North and South of Ireland through surfing. Richard has been featured worldwide in the mainstream and surfing Press. He faced the biggest surfing challenge of his life on the final day of filming *WAVERIDERS* surfing the biggest swell ever attempted off Ireland to become Ireland's most renowned big wave surfer.

GABRIEL DAVIES from Newcastle in the North East of England is Britain's most successful big wave surfer. After turning professional at the age of seventeen, Gabriel left the icy waters of the North Sea to embark on a career that has seen him surf every ocean in the world. His exploits were documented early on in the BBC2 Video Diary, *Wet Dreams*, which was watched by an audience of millions. Gabriel also co-presented the Channel 4 series *Surf Trip* with Tess Daly.

Gabriel has won four British surfing titles, numerous English titles and has represented his nation at the World and European Championships. Moving beyond competition surfing, Gabriel then carved a niche for himself in the challenging pursuit of big wave surfing and has divided much of his time between the west coast of Ireland and Hawaii training to surf waves several storeys high. Gabriel first worked with Director, Joel Conroy to make *Eye of the Storm* in 2003, which followed Gabriel's pioneering attempts to tow into Ireland's biggest waves with the help of a jet-ski alongside Gabriel's friend and tow-in partner, Richard Fitzgerald from Co. Donegal. While filming *WAVERIDERS*, Gabriel surfed the biggest wave ever ridden in Ireland and the resulting photograph was nominated for the Billabong XXL Big Wave of the Year Award 2008. Gabriel won the H3O Surfstock 'biggest wave of the year' award 2008.

The MALLOY BROTHERS from Ventura, California are all well respected and successful professional surfers, filmmakers and environmentalists. All three brothers are ambassadors for the environmental surf brand Patagonia and have a hand in designing environmentally sound wetsuits, apparel and accessories. This awareness for the environment also extends into their everyday life to the extent that the brothers drive cars powered by vegetable oil. The Malloys formed the company The Moonshine Conspiracy along with their cousin, Emmet Malloy and world famous singer, Jack Johnson to produce films and music that would bring them worldwide success. The brothers share a passion for Ireland where their paternal grandmother was born before she made the journey to America by boat. The Malloys have spent years exploring uncharted waters around the Irish coast to find empty, world-class waves. They featured in the Irish section of the 2003 blockbuster surf film *Step Into Liquid* and then returned to Irish waters to film *WAVERIDERS*.

DAN MALLOY is the youngest of the three brothers and lives in Ventura overlooking the ocean. Dan was a successful competition surfer, finishing second in the US Open in 2000 but after competing on the World Qualifying Series, he chose to focus on the travels that would help to make his mark in films and the international Press. Dan is an intrepid traveller, favouring such challenging destinations as Liberia for his surf trips. At over six feet tall and with model looks, he modelled for Ralph Lauren in New York but quickly returned to his true passion of surfing and appearing in films alongside his brothers.

KEITH MALLOY was the most successful contest surfer of the three brothers, qualifying for the elite top forty-four World Championship Tour. However, Keith also chose to concentrate on his favoured niche in the surfing world of travelling and filmmaking. Keith is a consummate waterman who enjoys marathon paddling expeditions between the Hawaiian Islands he often called home before settling in Ventura. He has appeared in numerous films as himself, including *Thicker Than Water*, *Step Into Liquid* and *The Buried Life* directed by Brad Tiemann, which is currently in post-production. Keith also recently doubled for Matthew McConaughey for a Hollywood surfing production.

CHRIS MALLOY, the eldest brother, was taught to surf at the age of five by his father who also instilled in him a desire to search for uncrowded, unriden waves. He started the hugely successful surf accessory line OAM and was driven to become a filmmaker when a serious surfing injury in Hawaii left him incapacitated. Chris directed the first Moonshine Conspiracy film, *Thicker Than Water* and the recent hit *Brokedown Melody* featuring the music of Jack Johnson and Eddie Vedder. He also appeared as himself in *Step Into Liquid*. Chris is a renowned big wave surfer and was invited to surf the prestigious Eddie Aikau big wave event at Waimea Bay in Hawaii.

KELLY SLATER is the record-breaking nine-times surfing World Champion. He grew up in Cocoa Beach, Florida and from humble beginnings went on to become the greatest surfer of all time. Kelly became the youngest person to win a world title at the age of 21 at the end of his first year on tour. Incredibly he now holds the record for being the oldest champion. In 2005, he achieved the first perfect score in a modern ASP world tour competition of two ten-point rides. This he achieved at one of the world's deadliest, hollow reef breaks, Teahupoo in Tahiti. In September 2007, Kelly also took the record for the most career contest victories to seal his reputation as the toughest competitor to beat on the ASP World Tour.

In addition to surfing, Kelly has appeared in countless film and television productions including *Baywatch*, *Kelly Slater and the Young Guns* and advertisements for *L'Oreal*. In 2007, he was immortalised as a surfing penguin in the Hollywood animation, *Surf's Up*, for which he provided the voice. Kelly's biography *Pipe Dreams* published in 2004 became a New York Times bestseller and has sold throughout the world. He also featured in his own computer game, *Kelly Slater Pro Surfer*.

While filming *WAVERIDERS*, Kelly visited Ireland, the country of his mother's ascendants, for the first time and his first surf was captured on film to create one of the documentary's memorable scenes. A keen musician, having performed on stage with Pearl Jam and Jack Johnson, he took time to attend a traditional music session and vowed to return to Ireland to further explore not only the potential of the waves but also the musical heritage.

GEORGE FREETH (posthumous biography) was born in Honolulu on November 8, 1883 of royal Hawaiian and Irish ancestry. As a teenager, George revived the spirit and the Polynesian art of wave riding while standing on a board surfing! While on vacation in Hawaii a Real Estate developer, Henry E. Huntington, was astonished at Freeth's surfing and swimming abilities.

He persuaded George to come to Redondo Beach in 1907 to help promote the new Los Angeles to Redondo beach rail service and the building of the largest saltwater plunge pool in the world. Freeth was advertised as 'the man who could walk on water'. The arrival of George Freeth in California and the publication of Jack London's articles about his personal first experience of surfing, combined with the popularity of the automobile and the newly discovered Beach Culture, sparked the start of popular interest in the modern sport of surfing. George would mount his big 8 foot-long, solid wood, 200-pound surfboard far out in the surf. He would wait for a suitable wave, catch it, and to the amazement of all, ride onto the beach while standing upright.

Thousands of people gathered to watch this astounding feat. Freeth's many accomplishments included the advent of ocean life guarding and introducing the game of water polo to the California coast. He trained many champion swimmers and divers and was recognised as the first official professional lifeguard on the Pacific Coast. George invented the torpedo shaped rescue buoy that is still used today in various updated versions, worldwide.

On December 12, 1908, during a violent south bay storm, George Freeth displayed his lifesaving prowess as he rescued 6 Japanese fishermen from a capsized boat. For his valour he was awarded The United States Life Saving Corps Gold Medal, The Carnegie Medal for bravery and The Congressional Medal of Honor.

George Freeth died on April 7, 1919 in Oceanside, California at the young age of 35 as a result of respiratory infections aggravated by the extreme exhaustion he suffered from his valiant but strenuous rescue at sea. Archive photographs, original surfboards and written accounts of George Freeth's life have been made available to us various museums.

Fleeing the beach crowds of 1960's California, twenty-year-old Irish/American **KEVIN NAUGHTON** packed his surfboard, backpack, compass and several months supply of surf wax and went exploring the world for surf with his best friend Craig Peterson. It was a time when all they wanted from life was to hit the road and go as far as they could for as long as he could in search of elusive waves.

Kevin went on an intrepid surf trail for months on end and, thanks to a series of articles in 'Surfer Magazine', that trail extended into a decade of travel throughout South America, Africa, Asia and Europe. Out of the material gathered on their adventures, Kevin and Craig released a cult 8mm surf film 'The Far Shore'. Together they ignited the worldwide spread of the 'surf safari'.

Kevin Naughton's journey to discover new and untouched wave destinations brought him back to his ancestral home in Ireland. His early exploration for surf in Ireland seeded the beginning of surfing and firmly established the introduction of this unique sporting philosophy. Kevin documented his travels through written accounts and photography; with both super 8mm film footage and 35mm stills.

DREW KAMPION from California was one of the founders of world surfing media. Drew is an historical authority and cultural expert on world surfing. He has been involved in writing about surfing since he first saw the ocean in 1959. Drew has been editor of 'Surfer Magazine', contributing editor of 'Surfing Magazine', editorial director of 'Wind Surf Magazine', Author of 'Stoked - A History of Surf Culture' and the 'Book of Waves'. He is currently the editor of 'The Surfers Path' US edition. Drew has witnessed and written about the development of world surfing and has frequently featured the exploits of adventurous individuals searching for waves.

ARTHUR C. VERGE is an Irish-American historian living in California. He is a full time professor of history at EL Camino College and a Los Angeles County Lifeguard since 1974. Arthur is an authority on George Freeth's life. He has written two publications about George Freeth; 'Images of America – Los Angeles County Lifeguards (2005) and a short biography of George Freeth for the Bibliography of American History, Oxford University Press (1999).

The Music

The music for Waveriders is a mix of Irish influenced music and contemporary artists from both licensed and especially composed sources.

SILVER AND GOLD

Written by: Adam Clayton, David Evans,
Paul David Hewson, Larry Mullen

Performed by: U2

Published by: Blue Mountain Publishing,

Courtesy of: Mercury Records / Universal Music International Ltd.

DAWN

Written by: Phil France

Performed by: The Cinematic Orchestra

Published by: Just Isn't Music / Freibank Musikverlags GmbH

Courtesy of: Ninja Tune Records (UK)

EYES ARE AT THE BILLIONS

Written by: Cortney Lara Williamson

Performed by: Cortney Tidwell

Published by: SMV 5-7 Publishing GmbH & copyright controlled for the US

Courtesy of: Ever Records / !K7 Records

DISCOVERING

Written by: John Gibbons, Ray Brand

Performed by: John Gibbons

Publishing copyright controlled by Authors

TONBUEROS WAVE

Written by: Eike Hosenfeldt; Moritz Denis

Performed by: Tonbuero Berlin

Published by: Salon Mondial

Courtesy of: Salon Mondial Recordings

BLINDFOLD

Written by: Rory Pierce

Performed by: Rory Pierce

Publishing copyright controlled by Author

GITARREOHNEHAWAII

Written by: Eike Hosenfeldt; Moritz Denis

Performed by: Tonbuero Berlin

Published by: Salon Mondial

Courtesy of: Salon Mondial Recordings

WATERMARK

Written by: Rory Pierce
Performed by: Rory Pierce
Publishing copyright controlled by Author

YOUR HEART IS SO LOUD

Written by: Cécile Schott
Performed by: Colleen
Publishing copyright controlled by Author / Woodwork Music
Courtesy of: The Leaf Label Ltd.

TEENAGE KICKS

Written by: John O'Neill
Performed by: The Undertones
Published by: West Bank Songs Ltd. / Universal/MCA Music Ltd.
Courtesy of: Universal Music International Ltd.

CHILD SONG

Written by: Jason Swinscoe
Performed by: The Cinematic Orchestra
Published by: Just Isn't Music / Freibank Musikverlags GmbH
Courtesy of: Ninja Tune Records (UK)

SAVING JAPANESE BOATS

Written by: Eike Hosenfeldt; Moritz Denis
Performed by: Tonbuero Berlin
Published by: Salon Mondial
Courtesy of: Salon Mondial Recordings

FAMILIAR GROUND

Written by: Jason Swinscoe, Phil France
Performed by: The Cinematic Orchestra
Published by: Just Isn't Music / Freibank Musikverlags GmbH
Courtesy of: Ninja Tune Records (UK)

HANSEL'S THEME

Written by: Rory Pierce
Performed by: Rory Pierce
Publishing copyright controlled by Author

THE HILLS - PART 1

Written by: Todd Hannigan & Jesse Sienbenberg
Performed by: Todd Hannigan
Publishing copyright controlled by Authors
Courtesy of: Brotheryn Studios

WALLPAPER

Written by: Eike Hosenfeldt; Moritz Denis
Performed by: Tonbuero Berlin
Published by: Salon Mondial
Courtesy of: Salon Mondial Recordings

OVER THE HILL

Written by: Ian David McGeachy

Performed by: John Martyn

Published by: Warlock Music Ltd.

Evergreen Copyright Acquisitions / Kobalt Music Publishing Ltd.

Courtesy of: Bug Music Ltd.

IN YOUR TOWN (LIVE)

Written by: William Rory Gallagher

Performed by: Rory Gallagher

Published by: Strange Music Ltd / Universal Music Publishing Ltd.

Courtesy of: RCA / Sony BMG Music Entertainment

LATE IN THE DAY

Written by: Simon O'Reilly

Performed by: Simon O'Reilly

Publishing copyright controlled by Author

THE HILLS - PART 2

Written by: Todd Hannigan & Jesse Sienbenberg

Performed by: Todd Hannigan

Publishing copyright controlled by Authors

Courtesy of: Brotheryn Studios

COMING RIGHT OVER

Written by: Paul Allan, Stephen O'Brien

Performed by: HAL

Published by: EMI Music Publishing Ltd.

Courtesy of: Rough Trade Records Ltd. / Beggars Banquet UK

FAR AWAY

Written by: Todd Hannigan & Jesse Sienbenberg

Performed by: Todd Hannigan

Publishing copyright controlled by Authors

Courtesy of: Brotheryn Studios

WEST

Written by: Rory Pierce

Performed by: Rory Pierce

Publishing copyright controlled by Author

RESEARCH

Written by: Andrew James Aitken, Daniel Jonathan Buchanan,
James Alexander Del Rio,

Jessica Dawn Del Rio, Graeme John Moorcroft

Performed by: The Race

Published by: Bucks Music Group Ltd.

Courtesy of: Shifty Disco

SUENO CON SERPEINTES

Written by: Simon O'Reilly

Performed by: Simon O'Reilly

Publishing copyright controlled by Author

BREATHE

Written by: Jason Swinscoe, Phil France, Patrick Watson, Lhasa

Performed by: The Cinematic Orchestra

Published by: Just Isn't Music / Freibank Musikverlags GmbH /

Intrigue Music Publishing / LCC Kobalt Music Publishing Ltd.

Courtesy of: Ninja Tune Records (UK)

THE GREAT DRIVE BY

Written by: James Patrick Braddell

Performed by: Funki Porcini

Published by: Just Isn't Music / Freibank Musikverlags GmbH

Courtesy of: Ninja Tune Records (UK)

THE RECKONING

Written by: Scott Doran, Caspar Kedros

Performed by: Scott Doran & Caspar Kedros

Publishing copyright controlled by Authors

Courtesy of: April Media Music

FLOATING

Written by: Richard Christopher Anthony Egan

Performed by: Jape

Published by: Universal Music Publishing Ltd.

Courtesy of: Trust Me I'm a Thief / Marine Parade / Hope Recording

OVERVIEW OF FINANCE AGENCIES

The following are the film & financing agencies which have contributed financially and creatively to the film *Waveriders*.

Bord Scannán na hÉireann / The Irish Film Board

Bord Scannán na hÉireann / the Irish Film Board (IFB) is Ireland's national film agency. The agency supports and promotes the Irish film industry and the use of Ireland as a location for international production.

Their role sees them directly involved in the creative process of Irish films from script to screen. They provide investment for the development, production and release of Irish feature films, television, animation, documentaries and short films.

Northern Ireland Screen (NIS)

Northern Ireland Screen (NIS), formerly known as the Northern Ireland Film & Television Commission (NIFTC) is the national screen agency for Northern Ireland whose aim is to accelerate the development of a dynamic and sustainable screen industry in Northern Ireland.

NIS' mission is to promote Northern Ireland as a major production location, to celebrate Northern Ireland product, talent and culture to the world and to ensure that a range of learning opportunities are delivered, so that growing numbers of people in Northern Ireland are motivated to enjoy, understand and explore the moving image.

European Union through the Interreg IIIA Programme managed by the Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) Partnership

In 1995 ICBAN was established as a network of councillors from the central Ireland/Northern Ireland border area with one common aim: to respond to the unique economic and social needs of the central border region.

ICBAN's mission is to continue to improve the quality of life and prosperity of the Central Border Region by creating a dynamic model of best practice and partnership in Cross-border Development.

The member councils in Northern Ireland are: Armagh City & District Council, Cookstown District Council, Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council, Fermanagh District Council and Omagh District Council. The member councils in the Republic of Ireland are: Cavan County Council, Donegal County Council, Leitrim County Council, Monaghan County Council and Sligo County Council.

ICBAN funded the *Waveriders* project under its Priority Measure 1.1 Business and Economic Development.

BBC Northern Ireland

BBC Northern Ireland aims to provide a broad range of programmes and services which inform and stimulate debate, celebrate and support cultural and sporting life and reflect local interests and experiences for audiences within Northern Ireland and across the rest of the UK.

BBC NI was the only broadcaster involved in funding the *Waveriders* film project. Two of our other funders, Northern Ireland Screen and the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland "Sound and Vision" rules stipulated that a broadcaster was necessary in order to prove a market for the film.

The BBC requested a shorter version of the film aimed at the Northern Ireland television audience. The BBC version will not be broadcast until the theatrical and DVD potential of the film has been realised in Ireland and the UK. It is expected that the BBC version will be broadcast in late 2009.

The Broadcasting Commission of Ireland “Sound & Vision”

The Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI) is an independent statutory body responsible for a number of key areas of activity with regard to television and radio services in Ireland. The functions of the Commission can generally be described as licensing, monitoring and developmental work.

“Sound and Vision” is a grant scheme designed to support the production of new television and radio programmes in the areas of Irish culture, heritage and experience and adult literacy.

Office of the Revenue Commissioners of Ireland: Section 481

The Office of the Revenue Commissioners has responsibility for collecting taxes and duties and implementing Customs controls in the Republic of Ireland. Section 481 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 provides tax relief for investments in qualifying films. The aim of Section 481 is to stimulate the economy through film production in Ireland and to promote Ireland abroad culturally and as an international location for film. It is a tax incentive investment scheme which releases money to independent producers in Ireland. It is based on a percentage of money that qualifies as Republic of Ireland spend. This includes fees paid to people who may not live in the Republic of Ireland but who qualify when they are working in the territory of Ireland - as long as they are citizens of the European Union.

Awards & Nominations

Waveriders won the Audience Award for Best Film at the Dublin International Film Festival 2008.



Waveriders was short listed for a Grierson Award (2008)



Waveriders is nominated for Celtic Media Awards 2009



Waveriders won an Irish Film and Television Awards (IFTA) for best feature documentary.

Surfer Achievements as a result of the Big Wave filmed in `Waveriders`

While filming *WAVERIDERS*, Gabriel Davies surfed the biggest wave ever ridden in Ireland and the resulting photograph was nominated for the international Billabong XXL Big Wave of the Year Award (2008). Gabriel also won the H3O UK Surfstock Award for the biggest wave of the year (2008).

Reviews

*“The best Irish documentary on show - and possibly the best new Irish feature - was, however, Joel Conroy's cracking `Waveriders`. The surfing doc is now a genre in itself, and Conroy's overpowering picture deserves to take its place alongside earlier classics such as *Riding Giants* and *The Endless Summer*. *Waveriders* begins and ends with considerations of the recent surfing boom in Ireland. Along the way, using excellent archive footage, Conroy explains the reinvention of the sport in early 20th-century America and finds time to identify an Ulsterman, George Freeth, as the surfing faith's John the Baptist. The film deserves to be seen on a big screen, where, to quote one of the contributors, its "gnarly, vicious, hollow slates" can be properly appreciated. *Waveriders* was a deserved winner of the festival's audience award.”*

Donald Clarke, The Irish Times

“Waveriders is an assured documentary that puts Ireland at the centre of the surfing story. But it is at its best among the waves - raw and exhilarating, director Joel Conroy harnesses something intangible: the spiritual purity that lures extreme surfers to the ocean. The final breathtaking images, captured in the maw of an angry ocean, still linger large in my mind.”

Paul Lynch, Film Critic