

## Uiscebhealach na Sionainne

Táthar i mbun loingseoireachta ar an tSionainn ón aimsir luathstaire, agus é sin cruthaithe ag na mainistreacha tábhachtacha ón 5<sup>ú</sup> agus 6<sup>ú</sup> haois i gCluain Mhic Nóis, ar bhruach thoir na habhann agus i gCluain Fearta ar thaobh na Gaillimhe. Is i gCluain Fearta a adhlacadh Naomh Breandán, an loingseoir is clúití a tháinig as Éirinn, a tugadh ón mainistir in Eanach Dhúin ar an gCoirib lena adhlacadh ann. Thrasnaigh Ó Súilleabháin Bhéarra, agus é ar a theitheadh ó thuaidh tar éis Chath Chionn tSáile, breis agus míle bliain ina dhiaidh sin, an tSionainn ag Port Tulcháin, idir Port Omna agus Míleac. Rinne sé báid mhóra leathair as seithí dhá chapall déag ar chreatlach saileánaigh chun a chuid saighdiúirí a iompar trasna na habhann.

Cuireadh feabhas ar uiscebhealach na Sionainne in dhá chéim ar leith<sup>37</sup>. Ar an gcéad dul síos, i láir an 18<sup>ú</sup> haois, rinneadh na codanna fada inseolta a nascadh le canálacha agus loic, mar iad sin i mBaile Átha Luain, Droichead na Sionainne agus Míleac. Rinneadh forbairt níos cuimsithí sa 19ú haois nuair a ceapadh Coimisinéirí na Sionainne in 1834 faoin innealtóir fuinniúil, John Fox Bourgoyne, a bhí ina chathaoirleach freisin ar Bhord na nOibreacha Poiblí a bunaíodh go gairid roimhe sin. Chuaigh Bourgoyne, i dteannta lena chomhghleacaithe, Griffith, Rhodes, Cubitt agus Jones, i mbun clár forleathan d'oibreachainnealtóireachta sibhialta ina ndearnadh fánsruthanna agus uisce éadomhain a dhreideáil, baineadh amach coraí eascann agus tógadh droichid, coraí agus loic nua agus d'fhág sé uiscebhealach na Sionainne ina dhiaidh mar atá sé inniu den chuid is mó. Rinneadh an Chanáil Ríoga a shíneadh chomh fada leis an tSionainn ag Dromad agus an Chánáil Mhór go Caladh na Sionainne le linn na tréimhse sin freisin, rud a chuir uiscebhealaí inseolta ar fáil a nasc Baile Átha Cliath leis an tSionainn agus Luimneach. Leis an bhforbairt sin, bhain tonnáistí lastais ar uisce a mbuaic amach ar feadh tréimhse giorra sula raibh tionchar ag na hiarnróid orthu ó na 1850dí ar aghaidh. Mar sin féin, leanadh ar aghaidh ag iompar tonnáistí móra, de lastas, pórtar Guinness, braich agus móin, ar chóras uiscebhealaí na Sionainne agus na gcanálacha le linn an Dara Cogadh Domhanda go dtí lár an 20<sup>ú</sup> haois<sup>38</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> Féach Tagairt 18

<sup>38</sup> Féach Tagairtí 18 & 26

## Meelick Lock and Weir



Victoria Lock at Meelick  
Loc Victoria ag Mileac

Meelick and Keelogue nearby, have been an important nexus on the river, for many centuries, first as a ford and then as a lock. The first lock at Meelick, now known as Hamilton Lock, was constructed in 1755 and was replaced by the present Victoria Lock in 1844. Eel weirs were removed to facilitate the work and the new Meelick weir was constructed and progressively improved. The area supported a healthy population who used boats for fishing and to bring turf from Redwood Bog in Co. Tipperary. Regattas were held at Keelogue Pier with the usual mix of water-sports, including rowing competitions. Lighter, specially built boats were used for these rather than the heavy working clinker punts.

In 1937, Siemens, the contractors for the hydroelectric scheme at Ardnacrusha, constructed a training embankment from Meelick Lock to Portumna – a distance of 14 kilometres – to protect the lands on the Co. Galway side from the rise in water levels of Lough Derg, and also carried out improvements to Meelick weir. This altered the geography of the callows below Meelick. Eel and salmon migration and breeding patterns were also disrupted by the hydroelectric works.

## Canal and Shannon Barges

Many of the iron and steel barges of the Grand Canal Company have been converted to recreational use, mainly by members of the Heritage Boat Association, which has catalogued them superbly in their book *Cool Metal Clear Water*<sup>39</sup>. The book contains the individual histories of 72 of Ireland's inland trading boats, as well as general articles about Bolinder engines, the Guinness fleet and sand barges on Lough Neagh.

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<sup>39</sup> See References 20 and D2

Barge 70M at Portumna

Báirse 70M i bPort Omna



#### Canal and Shannon Barges

The barges are typically about 60' long by 13' beam, with a displacement of 60 tons. Construction is of riveted steel or Lowmore iron plate, except for the G-boats which were wooden. Many are known by their registration numbers only: in plain for horse-drawn barges or followed by the letters M (mechanised), E (engineering), B (bye-trader's barge) or G (Govt. turf barge).

#### Báirsí Canála agus na Sionainne

De ghnáth bíonn na báirsí tuairim is 60 troigh ar fad le seas 13 troigh, le toillfacht de 60 tonna. Déanta as cruach sheamaithe nó pláta iarainn Lowmore, seachas na G-bháid, a bhí déanta as adhmad. Níl aithne ar go leor díobh ach óna n-uimhir aitheantais agus sin amháin: gan litir i gcás báirsí arna dtarraingt ag capaill, nó leis an litir M (meicnithe), E (innealtóireacht), B (báirse fo-thrádála) nó G (báirse móna Rialtais).

#### Loc agus Cora Mhílic

Is nasc tábhachtach ar an abhainn é Míleac agus An Chaolódh máguaird, le blianta fada, mar áth ar dtús agus ansin mar loc. Tógadh an chéad loc, a dtugtar Loc Hamilton air, ag Míleac in 1755 agus cuireadh Loc Victoria, atáanois ann, ina áit in 1844. Baineadh amach coraí eascann chun an obair a eascú agus tógadh cora nua Mhílic agus cuireadh feabhas uirthi de réir a chéile. Bhí daonra mór sa cheantar a d'úsáid báid le haghaidh iascaireachta agus chun móin a thabhairt as Portach Choillte Rua i gCo. Thiobraid Árann. Thionóltaí geallta ag Cé Na Caolóige leis an ngnáthmheascán de spóirt uisce, lena n-áiritear comórtais iomartha. D'úsáidtí báid éadroma a dhéantaí go speisialta le haghaidh na ngeallta seachas na puntaí clinse oibre troma.

In 1937, thóg Siemens, conraitheoirí don scéim hidrileictreach ag Ard na Croise, claifort traenála ó Loc Mhílic go Port Omna – achar 14 ciliméadar – chun an talamh ar thaobh Cho. na Gaillimhe a chosaint ó ardú sa leibhéal uisce i Loch Deirgeirt agus chuir siad feabhas ar chora Mhílic freisin. D'athraigh se sin tíreolaíocht na gcaláí taobh thíos de Mhíleac. Chuir na hoibreacha hidrileictreacha as do phatrúin imirce agus pórúcháin eascann agus bradán freisin.

#### Báirsí Canála agus na Sionainne

Tá go leor de na báirsí iarainn agus cruach de chuid Chuideachta Chanáil Laighean athraithe le haghaidh úsáid áineasa, ag baill de Chumann na mBÁD Oidhreachta den chuid is mó, a bhfuil taifid den scoth acu ina leith ina leabhar *Cool Metal-Clear Water*<sup>39</sup>. Tá stair aonair 72 báid trádála intíre de chuid na hÉireann sa leabhar, chomh maith le haitl ghinearálta faoi innill Bolinder, flít Guinness agus báirsí gainimh ar Loch nEathach.

#### Cúrsóirí le Fruliú ar an tSionainn

Sa lá atá inniu ann – ó na 1960dí – tá an tSionainn athchruthaithe mar limistéar mór áineasa agus turasóireachta, agus tá méadú mór tagtha ar fhliéanna de chúrsóirí tráchtála agus príobháideacha agus ar an infreasturtrú a theastaíonn chun freastal orthu – mar mhuirínte, dugaí agus saoráidí ar an mbruach. Is ionad tábhachtach é Loch Deirgeirt don tseoltóireacht áineasa, go háirithe ag suímh mar Drom Inbhir ar a bhruach thoir.

<sup>39</sup> Féach Tagairtí 20 & D2

## Shannon Hire Cruisers



Lockstar type from Emerald Star fleet

An cineál Lockstar ó fhlít an Emerald Star

In modern times – since the 1960s – the River Shannon has been re-invented as a major recreational and tourist area, with a proliferation of fleets of commercial and privately-owned cruising boats and the infrastructure required to cater for them – marinas, docks and onshore facilities. Lough Derg is an important centre for recreational sailing but principally, at locations like Dromineer, on its eastern shore.

One of the most significant modern developments on the river has been the growth of leisure cruising and the development of large fleets of motor cruisers for hire. The movement started in the early 1960s with the setting up of K-Line Cruisers by the sailor and naval architect George O'Brien Kennedy, who designed and built the first boats for his fleet in Shannon Harbour<sup>40</sup>. His example was followed by a number of others, including Carrick Marine and Mitchell Marine. Guinness followed in 1970 with the Emerald Star Line, which became established as the leading hire company on the Shannon. New fleets of boats were added to the fleet every year, many of them based on Aquafibre hulls and built by the established builders on the Norfolk Broads, such as Freeman, Harvey Eastwood and Broom. Except for the K Line boats, which were built of plywood and timber framing, most of the hire fleets were of GRP. As hire fleets are regularly upgraded the older boats are sold off. Many of them, more than 25 years old and thus qualifying as heritage boats, are still afloat on the inland waterways and elsewhere, but are widely dispersed.

## Cross-River Links

While the river is a geographical and administrative boundary it has always been a connecting factor between the people living on either shore. They are and have been closely connected by family, commerce, migration and the to-and-fro of daily life. As has been seen the local boats of the callows – clinkers and cots – were often the means of conveyance by which people went to shop, church or funeral or to bring home turf for fuel. The cultural phenomenon of cross-river movement and connections involving counties Galway, Offaly, Roscommon, Clare and Tipperary warrants further study.

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<sup>40</sup> See Reference 23

Ceann de na forbairtí nua-aimseartha is suntasaí atá tarlaithe ar an abhainn is ea an méadú ar chúrsáil áineasa agus forbairt na bhflíteanna móra mótarachúrsóirí le fruiliú. Cuireadh tús leis an ngluaiseacht go luath sna 1960dí nuair a bhunaigh an mairnéalach agus ailtire cabhláigh George O'Brien Kennedy, *K-Line Cruisers*. Ba é féin a dhear agus a rinne na chéad bháid dá fhilit i gCaladh na Sionainne<sup>40</sup>. Lean roinnt eile a shampla, lena n-áirítear *Carrick Marine* agus *Mitchell Marine*. Lean Guinness é i 1970 leis an *Emerald Star Line* atá ina phríomhchuideachta fruilithe ar an tSionainn. Cuireadh flíteanna nua bád leis an bhflít gach uile bhliain, go leor díobh bunaithe ar chabhlacha *Aquafibre* agus déanta ag saoir bhunaithe ar Leathánaigh Norfolk mar Freeman, Harvey Eastwood agus Broom. Bhí formhór na bhflíteanna déanta as GRP seachas na báid *K-Line*, a bhí déanta as frámaí sraithadhmaid agus adhmad. De bhrí go ndéantar flíteanna fruilithe a uasghrádú go rialta díoltar na seanbháid. Tá go leor díobh, atá níos sine ná 25 bliain d'aois agus atá ina mbáid oidhreachta mar sin, fós ar snámh ar na huiscebhealaí intíre agus eile, ach tá siad scaipthe go forleathan.

### Naisc Tras-Abhann

Cé gur teorainn gheografach agus riarrachán í an abhainn, is nasc a bhí inti riagh idir na daoine ina gcónaí ar gach aon bhruach. Tá agus bhí dlúthcheangal eatarthu ó thaobh na dteaghlach, na tráchtála, na himirce, agus an teachta agus imeachta ó lá go lá. Mar a bhí le sonrú, ba mhiniic gurbh iad báid áitiúla na gcaláí – báid chlinse agus coití – na bealaí a ndeachaigh daoine go dtí an siopa, an séipéal, an tsochraid nó an bealach le móin nó breosla a thabhairt abhaile. Tá gá le tuilleadh staidéir a dhéanamh ar an bhfeiniméan cultúrtha a bhaineann le gluaiseacht agus naisc tras-abhann idir contaetha na Gaillimhe, Uíbh Fhailí, Ros Comáin, an Chláir agus Thiobraid Árann.

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<sup>40</sup> Féach Tagairt 23

## Kinvara – Oranmore

[Area 13]



Hookers at Parkmore Quay, loaded with turf for Cruinniú na mBÁd

Báid Mhóra i gCéibh na Párce Móire, iad luchtaithe le móin le haghaidh Cruinniú na mBÁd

The inner end of Galway Bay is characterised by large shallow bays sheltered by long, low-lying headlands and islands. These are perfect grounds for the oyster fishery for which the area is famous. The oyster-beds, a substantial portion of which were owned, in the past, by the St. George family of Tyrone House and Kilcolgan Castle, have supported generations of fishermen, working in boats that have evolved and adapted to meet their needs<sup>41</sup>.

A myriad of landing places serve the oyster fishery. Some like Tarrea Pier, Clarinbridge, Nimmo's Killeenaran, Parkmore and Kinvara itself have substantial piers or harbours; others, like Blackweir, Pollagh, and Newtownlynch are small stone piers which dry out on each tide. A substantial number like Cave, Mulroog and Crossooha are no more than sandy beaches where boats lie at anchor or take the ground at low water. The maritime heritage of this area has been recently highlighted by the discovery by scientists and archaeologists of what are thought to be nausts on Island Eddy<sup>42</sup>. These are man-made excavations on the land which serve to prop and moor a boat which is drawn up out of the sea, usually above high water mark, and to shelter them from strong winds. They are also associated with the northern and western islands of Scotland.

The southern shore of the bay, west of Kinvara, merges into the Burren. In times past the nearest source of fuel was the bog-land of Connemara. Cruinniú na mBÁd, the great Galway Hooker festival held in Kinvara each August commemorates that trade and the boats that pursued it – the *Báid Mhóra* and *Leathbháid* that unloaded their turf by hand at Kinvara quay<sup>43</sup>.

<sup>41</sup> See Reference 27

<sup>42</sup> See Reference 28

<sup>43</sup> See Reference 24



## Cinn Mhara – Órán Mór

[Ceantar 13]

Tá na cuanta éadoimhne móra faoi fhoscadh na n-oileán agus na gceann téire fada, ísele ina saintréith den chuid laistigh de Chuan na Gaillimhe. Is áit den scoth é sin don iascach oisrí a bhfuil clú air ina leith. Tá slí mhaireachtála bainte amach ag glúine iascairí sna beirtreacha, a raibh cuid mhaith díobh faoi úinéireacht roimhe seo ag muintir St. George de chuid teaghlaigh Theach Thír Eoghain agus Chaisleán Chill Cholgáin. Bhíodh na hiascairí ag obair i mbáid atá forbartha agus curtha in oiliúint chun freastal ar a riachtanais<sup>41</sup>.

Tá go leor áiteanna ann le hoisrí a thabhairt i dtír. Tá céanna móra nó calafoirt i nDroichead an Chláirín (Cé an Aimhréidh), i gCoillín Árann (Cé Nimmo), ar an bPáirc Mhór agus i gCinn Mhara féin; tá céanna beaga cloiche eile ann amhail an Chora Dhubh, Pollach agus Baile Nua na Línseach, a bhíonn tirim nuair a thránn sé. Níl i gcuid mhór mar atá an Chéibh, Maol Rúg agus Crois Uatha ach tráonna gainimh, áit a mbíonn báid ar ancaire nó ar thalamh nuair a bhíonn sé ina thrá. Tarraigíodh oidhreacht mhuirí an cheantair ar aird le déanaí nuair a d'aimsigh seandálaithe agus eolaithe loig ar Eide<sup>42</sup> a mheastar gur *nausts* iad. Is loig shaorga ar an talamh iad sin a bhíonn mar thaca agus fheistiú do bhád a tharraingítear as an bhfarraige, os cionn líne bharr láin, agus chun foscadh a thabhairt dóibh ó ghaoth láidir. Is ar oileán ar chósta thiar agus thuaidh na hAlban is mó a fheictear iad.

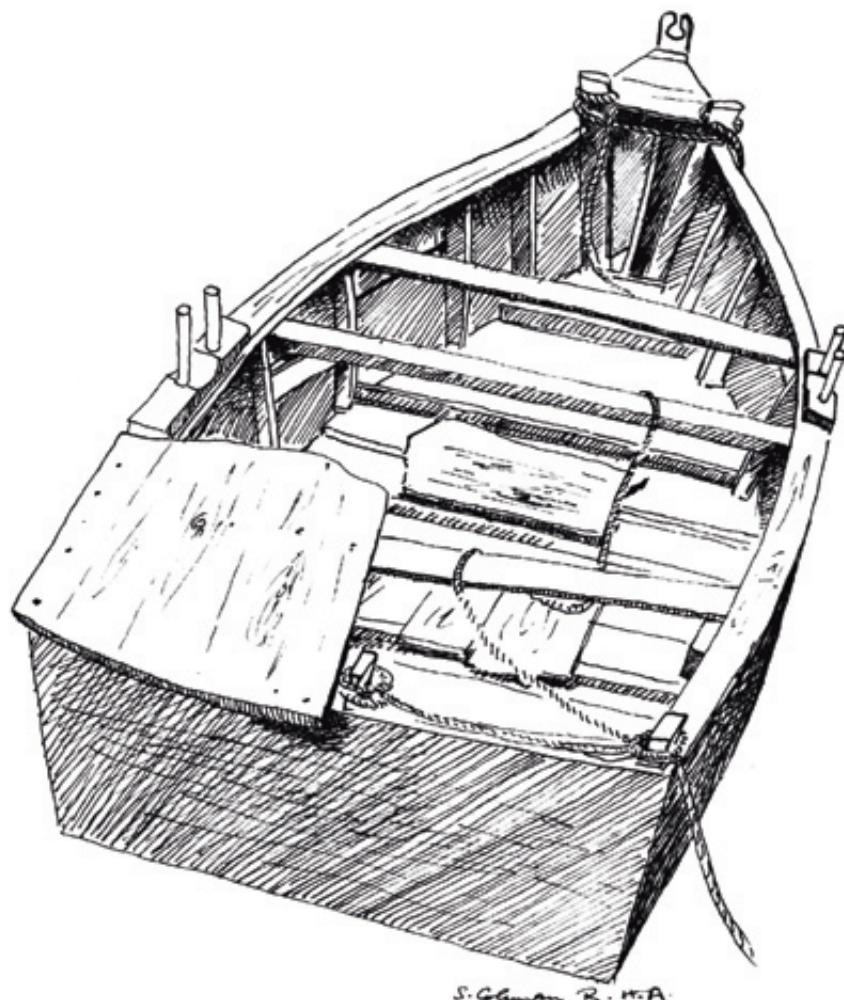
Is cuid den Bhoirinn é cladach theas an chuain, atá taobh thiar de Chinn Mhara. Ba iad portaigh Chonamara an fhoinsí breosla ba ghaire san am a caitheadh. Le Cruinniú na mBáid, féile mhór na mBáid Mór a bhíonn ar siúl i gCinn Mhara gach mí Lúnasa, déantar an gnó sin agus na báid tráchtála a bhíodh ina bhun – na Báid Mhóra agus na Leathbháid a mbíodh a móin á díluchtú le lámh ar ché Chinn Mhara – a chomóradh<sup>43</sup>.

<sup>41</sup> Féach Tagairt 27

<sup>42</sup> Féach Tagairt 28

<sup>43</sup> Féach Tagairt 24

## The Evolution of Oyster Dredgers



Galway Bay Flat  
S. Coleman R.H.A.

The evolution of the Oyster Dredgers, in the Clarinbridge/Kilcolgan area offers a fascinating insight on the adaptation of boats in response to their working environment. There were a number of distinct types, the Flat, the Yawl and the Curach being the most distinctive.

The **Galway Bay Flat** was the simplest of the boat types; in essence a cot, flat-bottomed, of light and cheap construction. Its use was confined to sheltered inshore bays. None of this type remains in use and their flimsy construction ensured that only a few survived on shore. One example, found recently, has been moved to a boat refuge. Another is in storage at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum at Cultra.

The **Yawl** was used on open water and was favoured because of its sturdy construction and seaworthiness. It is an adaptation of the smaller Galway Hooker type, but modified so that the tumblehome disappears, the bilges are flattened and scantlings lightened. The rake of the transom is progressively reduced, so that the most recent examples have square sterns suitable for outboard motors. However the characteristic mullards and mooring cleats of the hooker are retained at stern and bow and adapted as guides for the scoping. The evolution of the Yawl can be seen in the examples of differing ages illustrated.

These two classes of traditional boat share the distinction of having double thole pins and (slightly) bladed sweep oars, although, in some of the Yawls, these are being superseded by the more widely-used oar-block and thole pin (*glamba agus cnoga*) of the curachs.

The Yawls are being gradually replaced by a new generation of oyster dredgers, based on the Curach Adhmaid and known simply as **Curachs**. The Curachs show some of the same adaptations as the yawls – reduced sheer, flattened bilges, increased beam, etc. – to make them suitable for oyster dredging.

### Evolution of the Oyster Dredger Yawl

Éabhlóid an Gheolta Dreideála Oisrí



Bád lomartha, showing sheer-line and rake of transom

Bád lomartha, an lagbhord agus ráca an transaim léirithe



Yawl, with reduced sheer and rake

Geolta, an lagbhord agus an ráca laghdaithe



Evolved yawl, wider, shallower and more lightly built, but retaining some features of the Bad lomartha

Geolta forbartha, níos leithne, níos éadoimhne agus níos éadroime, ach cuid de ghnéithe an Bháid lomartha fós aige.

### Forbairt na nDreidire Oisrí

Le forbairt na nDreidirí Oisrí, i gceantar Dhroichead an Chláirín / Chill Cholgáin, faightear léargas iontach ar oriúnú bád mar fhreagairt ar a dtimpeallacht oibre. Bhí roinnt cineálacha ar leith ann, agus is iad an Flat, an Geolta agus an Churach na cinn is sainiúla.

Ba é an **Galway Bay Flat** an cineál báid ba shimplí; coite go bunúsach, réthónach, éadrom agus saor le déanamh. D'úsáidtí an bád i gcuanta foscúla cois cladaigh. Ní úsáidtear aon bhád den chineál seo agus níl mórán díobh fágtha mar nach raibh siad déanta chomh láidir sin. Cuireadh sampla amháin, ar thángthas air le déanaí, go dtí tearmann bád. Tá sampla eile á stóráil i Músaem Daonchultúir agus Iompair Uladh i gCúl Trá.

Bhíodh an **Geolta** in úsáid ar an bhfarraige oscailte mar go raibh sé láidir agus acmhainneach. Is oriúnú ar chineál beag den húicéir é, ach é modhnaithe sa chaoi is nach bhfuil aon bhoilsc ann, tá na rumaí leacaithe agus na railsí éadromaithe. Laghdaíodh ráca an transaim diaidh ar ndiaidh, agus sna samplaí is déanaí tá deirí cearnógacha a bheadh oriúnach d'innill transaim orthu. Ach, tá mullaíd agus cléataí mórála tréitheacha an húicéara coinnithe ag deireadh agus ag ceann an bháid agus curtha in oriúint mar threoir do na téada. Is féidir forbairt an Gheolta a fheiceáil sna samplaí de na réanna éagsúla a léirítéar.

Is tréith den dá aicme seo de bhád traidisiúnta go n-úsáidtear cnogaí dúbalte agus maidí rámha le beagán de bhos, cé i gcás roinnt de na Geoltaí go bhfuil an glamba agus cnoga a úsáidtear níos minice sna curacha ag teacht ina n-áit.

Tá cineál dreidire oisrí nua, bunaithe ar an gCurach Adhmaid, ag teacht in áit na nGeoltaí de réir a chéile, ar a dtugtar **Curach**. Tá roinnt de na hoiriúnuithe céanna a bhí sna geoltaí sna Curacha – lagbhord laghdaithe, rumaí leacaithe, bíoma méadaithe agus mar sin de – le go mbeidh siad oriúnach le haghaidh dreideáil oisrí.



Oyster Dredger Curach, evolved from the *Curach Adhmaid*, at the Weir, Kilcolgan

Curach Dreideála Oisrí a d'eascair as an gCurach Adhmaid i gCill Cholgáin

The influence of Connemara men coming to work on the oyster fishery in the winter has been cited to explain the adoption of the *Bád Iomartha* and *Curach Adhmaid* successively as models for adaptation by the oyster fishermen. While this may be a factor it should be remembered that the turf trade and sea-borne commerce had familiarised the people of Kinvara and surroundings with the *Báid Seoil*, their culture and their boat builders from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and earlier. The builders of the Yawls would have been the established hooker builders of Connemara and Galway, building boats to the particular specifications of their clients in the oyster fishery. Likewise the oyster fishermen have generally gone to the established builders of *Curachaí Adhmaid* for their Curachs. While a boat-building tradition has never put down deep roots in Kinvara there have been local boat-builders, like Mick O'Toole of Kinvara and Bill Crampton, who built Hookers and larger boats for the shell-fish trade, on Island Eddy, in the 1970s. Jackie Mons of Oughterard, the versatile lake-boat builder, has also built both Yawls and Curachs for the oyster fishermen.