



Angling Boats at Lake-side at Corr na Móna

Báid slatiascaireachta ar Bhruach na Locha i gCorr na Móna

## Na Lochanna – Loch Coirib agus Loch Riach [Ceantar 9]

Léiríonn cúrsa fada, caismirneach Loch Coirib deighilt shuntasach idir sléibhte agus portaigh Chonamara san iarthar agus an talamh chothrom aolchloiche san oirthear. Tugtar an Choirib air, agus is abhainn atá ann chomh maith le loch, agus san am a caitheadh bhí sé ina uiscebhealach chomh maith le meá. Sa 19ú haois agus go luath san 20<sup>ú</sup> haois bhí na báid shleamhna seoil agus iomartha coitianta ar an loch chun beostoc, móin agus daoine a iompar mar a chonacthas le tragóid 1828 a bhfuil tuairisc uirthi i ndán Antaine Raiftearaí “*Anach Chuain*”. Bádh naoi nduine dhéag nuair a chuaigh bád den sórt sin go tóin poill ar an taobh thoir den loch in aice le hEanach Dhúin. Bhí na báid throma shleamhna imithe roimh na 1950dí. Ní féidir teacht orthu ar an loch inniu. Labhraíonn siopadóirí fúthu agus é a cuimhneamh ar an gcéad leath den 20<sup>ú</sup> haois.

*ó bhailiúcháin Chnuasach Bhéaloideas Éireann,  
Coláiste na hOllscoile, Baile Átha Cliath<sup>33</sup>.*

*Bringing Turf from Oughterard in Boats  
(ó John O'Toole, 66, Feirmeoir & Siopadóir, Áth Cinn,  
Co. na Gaillimhe, 28/12/1967)*

The people from Inishmicatreer and my own village Curraghmore, used to go over to Oughterard in boats to cut turf. They'd bring it home in boats. It was cut in the bog and then changed out, and brought to the pier in Oughterard, and then to the pier in Inishmicatreer, and then they had to bring it home from there. It was very wasteful on the turf, changing it so often.

Supplies for the shops around used to come down from Galway on the Corrib, to the pier at Kilbeg, and there was a store there for them. They were brought from there to the shops in carts.

And my wife's father, Whelan, who had a shop in Houndswood, near Cross, used to get his stuff down from Galway to Inishmicatreer in sailing boats and bring them from there to Houndswood in carts. They have a sailing boat still in Inchiquin, and use it for bringing cattle to the islands in the Corrib.

<sup>33</sup> Féach Tagairt 25

Galway's lake-boats are concentrated primarily on Lough Corrib. They number in the hundreds, mostly mass-produced glass-fibre models, concentrated, on the western shore, above and below Oughterard and at An Fhairche (Clonbur) and, on the eastern side, from Inishmicatreer south to Eanach Dhúin. The original clinker lake-boats were built of wood (predominantly native European larch planking on steamed oak ribs). It is with this tradition that we are principally concerned.

How the wooden clinker boats evolved here is difficult to determine. Local tradition and records go back only about 100 years. In the past local people living on the lake's islands and along its shoreline fished to supplement their income from smallholdings. The tourist anglers who came for the mayfly in May and later in July and August were also an important source of income. Each group required a different type of boat.

### The Boat-builders and The Boats



One-man rowing Punt

Punta beag iomartha aon-duine

To service the local people's need for good rowing boats several families established wooden boat-building traditions that continue to this day. Among the oldest is the Kinneavy family originally of *Inis an Ghaill* (Inchagoill island) where they had built boats since 1700. Stephen Kinneavy currently builds boats at Oughterard just by the Owenriff river. The now-retired master builder Tommy Mallon was apprenticed to Stephen's uncle and Mallon himself trained the Glann-based builder Jackie Mons, who continues to build beautiful boats there. Tommy Philbin's family has built boats on the north shore of the lake near An Fhairche (Clonbur) for three generations and continues to this day. The Kavanagh family built at Woodquay in Galway and the last boats they built are still valued on the lake. No Kavanaghs build boats today.

Of the two types left on the lake today the oldest by far is a fine, small, one-man rowing 'punt' about 14ft. in length with a small wineglass stern and lying very low in the water. In living memory every house around the lake had a punt, some had three or four. Today they are rarely to be seen, having been largely replaced by the 18ft. and 19ft. models originally rowed by two men and used

Tá báid locha na Gaillimhe le fáil den chuid is mó ar Loch Coirib. Tá na céadta díobh ann, cinn snáithíngheolaine olldeántúsaíochta den chuid is mó, feadh an chladaigh thiar taobh thíos agus taobh thuas d’Uachtar Ard agus ar an bhFairche agus ar an taobh thoir, ó Inis Mhic an Trír ó dheas go hEanach Dhúin. B’as adhmaid a dhéantaí na báid locha chlinse i dtús aimsire (plancra learóige Eorpaí dúchais ar easnacha darach galaithe). Is leis an traidisiún seo is mó a bhaineann an t-iniúchadh.

Tá sé deacair an tslí a forbraíodh na báid chlinse admhaid anseo a dhéanamh amach. Ní théann béaloideas agus taifid áitiúla siar ach tuairim is 100 bliain. San am a caitheadh, bhíodh daoine áitiúla a raibh cónaí orthu ar oileáin an locha agus cois locha ag iascaireacht chun cur leis an ioncam a d’fhaighidís ó ghabháiltais bheaga. B’fhoinsé thábhachtach ioncaim na turasóirí arb slatiascairí iad a thagadh i gcomhair na cuile Bealtaine i mí na Bealtaine agus níos déanaí i mí Iúil agus Lúnasa. Bhíodh cineál báid éagsúil ag teastáil ó gach grúpa.

### Na Saoir Bháid agus na Báid:

Chuir roinnt teaghlach tús le déantús na mbád adhmaid, traidisiúin atá fós inniu ann, chun freastal ar an ngá a bhí ag daoine áitiúla do bháid mhaithe iomartha. I measc na dteaghlach is sine tá muintir Kinneavy de bhunadh *Inis an Ghaill*, áit a raibh báid á ndéanamh acu ó 1700. Bíonn báid á ndéanamh ag Stephen Kinneavy in Uachtar Ard, i ngar d’Abhainn Ruibhe. Bhí an máistirshaor, Tommy Mallon ina phrintíseach ag uncail Stephen agus chuir Mallon é féin oiliúint ar Jackie Mons, an saor a bhí lonnaithe sa Ghleann, agus a lean ar aghaidh le báid áille a dhéanamh ansin ar feadh go leor blianta. Tá báid á ndéanamh ag muintir Tommy Philbin ar bhruach thuaidh an locha in aice leis an bhFairche le trí ghlúin agus tá siad fós i mbun na hoibre sin. Bhíodh báid á ndéanamh ag muintir Chaomhánaigh i mBarr an Chalaigh i nGaillimh agus tá na báid deiridh a rinne siad fós ar an loch. Ní dhéanann aon duine den chlann báid anois.



Two-man Lake-boat with Anglers on Owenriff river, Oughterard  
 Bád Locha dhá sheas agus iascairí ann ar Abhainn an Chnoic, Uachtar Ard

for the tourist anglers. Already the lightly built, fine-lined, 18 ft. model, which had 8 planks and rocker in the keel, is rare. It has been surpassed by the more heavily-built 19ft. or even 20ft. model, with 9 planks, built to take increasingly powerful outboard engines. Only a few punt men still row out to the fishing areas today. The punt is designed for rowing by one person only and is used by the local fishermen mostly in early spring, trolling for trout. Although it may appear to be narrow and unsteady, in the hands of a skilled local fisherman it is very safe. None have been lost in living memory.

Simple<sup>34</sup> described these remarkable little craft.... “the local builders designed these unique craft to deal with the many squalls and gales encountered on the lake and the very short waves that characterize lower Lough Corrib. Up to three lines could be fished from the punt attached to home-made hazel rods and a bell attached to the top of the hazel rods signalled a fish strike. So these men were always referred to as ‘the bell-fishermen’ ... ”.

The 18 or 19ft. boat on the other hand was rowed by two men, each with two oars and are still referred to as ‘two-oar’ boats. They are the dominant boat on the lake now, carrying outboard motors, and largely made of GRP.

Two groups of fishermen use the lakes today, the ‘locals’ and the seasonal visitors. Among the former the traditional wooden lake-boat is, without argument, acknowledged to be the more efficient, lighter, safer and a better designed fishing platform. A minimum amount of cleaning, maintenance, and proper storage will be repaid with many years of use. Some of the boats encountered during the survey were over 50 years old.

This lake-boat tradition has survived because of the remarkable skills and craftsmanship of these builders, whose fine boats are still sought out by discerning anglers. Everywhere along the Corrib Kinneavy, Mons, Mallon, Philbin and Kavanagh boats are highly valued among the Galway-based fishermen who still know the qualities that distinguish a wooden boat from a glass-fibre one.

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<sup>34</sup> See Reference 14





Boat-builder Stephen Kinneavy with 19 ft. boat, Oughterard

An Saor Báid Stephen Kinneavy agus bád 19 troithe, Uachtar Ard

As an dá chineál a fheictear ar an loch inniu is ‘punta’ beag iomartha aon-duine breá, tuairim is 14 troigh ar fad le deireadh beag ar chuma gloine fíona a luíonn an-íseal san uisce an ceann is sine go mór. Le cuimhne na ndaoine, bhíodh punta ag gach teach cois locha, bhí trí cinn nó ceithre cinn ag roinnt tithe. Ní minic a fheictear iad sa lá atá inniu ann, tá na báid 18 agus 19 troigh ina mbíodh beirt ag iomramh tagtha ina n-áit agus is iad a úsáidtear i gcomhair shlatiascairí ar turasóirí iad. Tá an bád 18 troigh éadrom fíneáilte, a raibh 8 gclár ann agus é cuarchíleach, neamhchoitianta cheana féin. Tá an bád 19 troigh atá níos troime tagtha ina áit nó fiú an bád 20 troigh, le 9 gclár, atá in ann innill thransaim níos cumhachtaí a thógáil. Níl ach cúpla fear ann anois a iomraíonn amach go dtí na limistéir iascaireachta sa lá atá inniu ann. Tá an punta leagtha amach le haghaidh duine amháin a bheith ag iomramh agus úsáideann na hiascairí áitiúla iad, go luath san earrach den chuid is mó, agus iad ag seoráil breac. Cé go bhfuil an chuma air go bhfuil sé caol agus baoh, is bád an-sábháilte é nuair is iascaire áitiúil eolach atá ina fheighil. Níor bádh aon duine as ceann acu i gcuimhne na ndaoine.

Rinne Semple<sup>34</sup> cur síos ar na hárthaí beaga faoi leith sin.... “the local builders designed these unique craft to deal with the many squalls and gales encountered on the lake and the very short waves that characterize lower Lough Corrib. Up to three lines could be fished from the punt attached to home-made hazel rods and a bell attached to the top of the hazel rods signalled a fish strike. So these men were always referred to as ‘the bell-fishermen’ ... ”.

Ar an lámh eile, beirt a bhíodh ag iomramh sa bhád 18 nó 19 troigh, le dhá mhaide rámha an duine agus tugtar báid ‘dhá mhaide rámha’ orthu sin fós. Is iad sin na báid is mó a fheictear ar an loch anois, le móitair thransaim orthu agus déanta as GRP den chuid is mó.

Baineann dhá ghrúpa iascairí úsáid as na lochanna sa lá atá inniu ann, na hiascairí ‘áitiúla’ agus na cuairteoirí séasúracha. Glactar leis i measc na n-iascairí áitiúla gurb é an bád locha traidisiúnta adhmaid, gan amhras, an bád is éifeachtúla, is éadroime, is

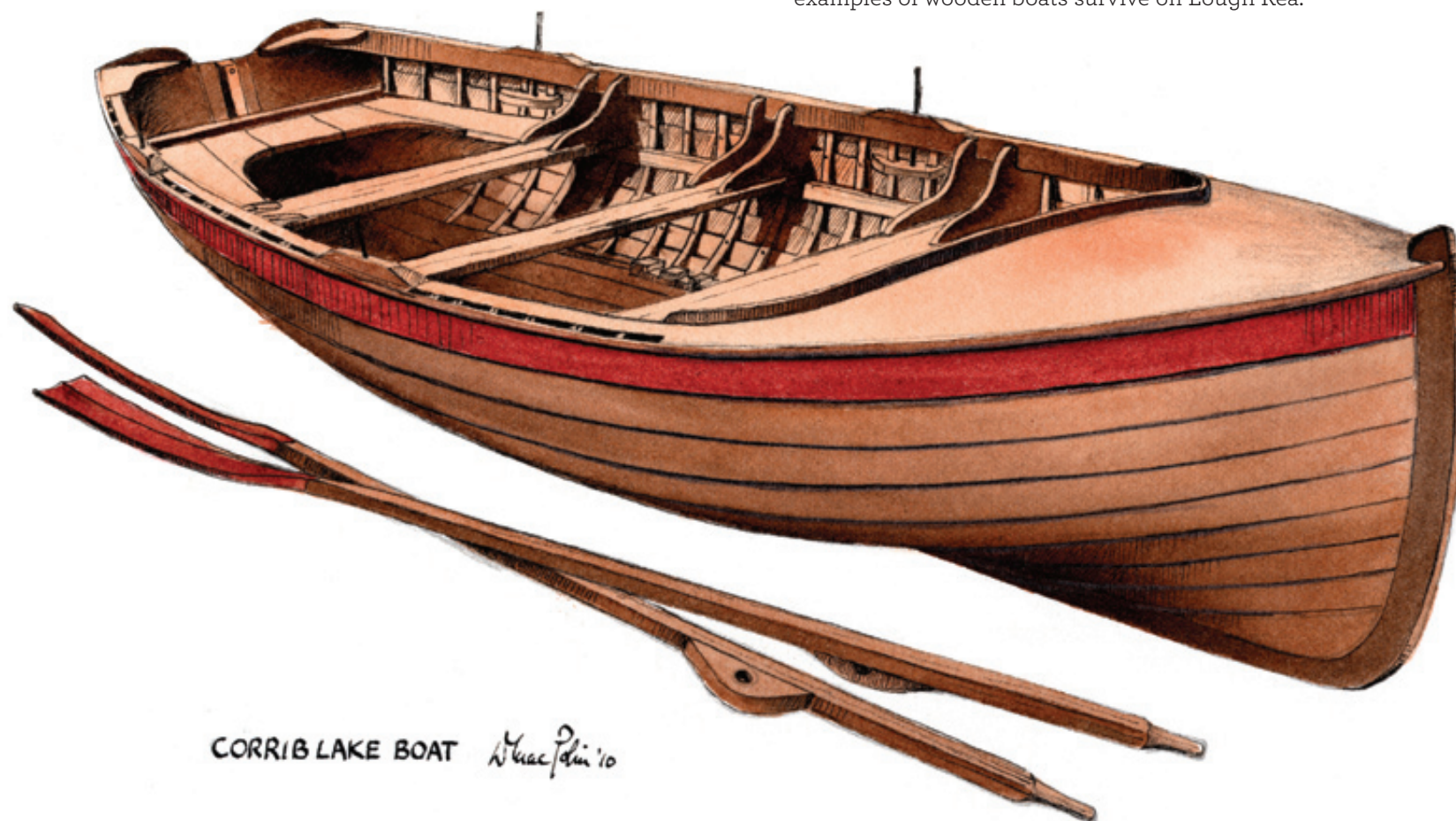
<sup>34</sup> Féach Tagairt 14

Two facts stand out about these builders: firstly, without the advantages of grant-aid or publicity these craftsmen have worked quietly for generations producing boats of the highest quality, which deserve heritage status; secondly, none of these men currently have either male family or apprentices to carry on their craft.

Unless this problem is addressed their tradition and skills will die with them. This should not be allowed to happen.

### Lough Rea angling boats

The angling boats of Lough Rea are more closely related to the Lough Corrib clinker-built boats (see above) than to the angling boats of the Shannon. The 18 - 19 ft. two-oar boat, so called, whether GRP or wooden, is the model generally found although very few examples of wooden boats survive on Lough Rea.







Lough Rea angling boats

Báid slatiascaireachta i Loch Riach

sábháilte agus is fearr atá leagtha amach don iascaireacht. Mura ndéantar ach beagán glantacháin agus cothabhála ar an mbád agus má stóráiltear i gceart é, beifear in ann úsáid a bhaint as ar feadh blianta fada. Bhí roinnt de na báid a chonacthas le linn an tsuirbhé os cionn 50 bliain d'aois.

Tá traidisiún faoi leith na mbád locha seo fós linn inniu mar thoradh ar scileanna agus ar cheardaíocht na saor báid sin, agus tá tóir fós ag slatiascairí géarchúiseacha ar a mbáid bhreátha. I ngach áit feadh na Coiribe, tá an-mheas go deo ag iascairí na Gaillimhe, na hiascairí sin a bhfuil na cáilíochtaí lenar féidir idirdhealú a dhéanamh idir bád adhmaid agus bád GRP ar eolas acu, ar na báid a rinne muintir Kinneavy, Mons, Mallon, Philbin agus Chaomhanaigh.

Baineann dhá fhíric shuntasacha leis na saoir sin: ar an gcéad dul síos tá obair déanta ag na ceardaithe sin le blianta fada, go ciúin agus gan leas deontais ná poiblíocht, agus báid ar an gcaighdeán is airde á ndéanamh acu a bhfuil stádas oidhreachta tuillte acu; sa dara háit, níl aon duine de chlann na saor sin ná aon phrintíseach acu atá sásta leanúint lena gceird.

Mura dtabharfar aghaidh ar an bhfadhb sin, imeoidh a dtraidisiún agus a scileanna nuair a imeoidh siad féin. Níor chóir go ligfí dó sin tarlú.

### Báid slatiascaireachta Loch Riach

Tá gaol níos gaire ag báid slatiascaireachta Loch Riach le báid locha chlinse Loch Coirib (feach thuas) ná mar atá le Báid Chlinse na Sionainne. Is í an bád 18 – 19 troigh dhá mhaide rámha, mar a thugtar uirthi, GRP nó adhmaid, an cineál a fheictear de ghnáth. Is beag sampla de na báid adhmaid a mhaireann ar Loch Riach.

## Shannon – Suck

[Areas 10,11 & 12]

### North Galway/Tuam & The Upper Suck

#### Log Boats



Arrival of the Lurgan Log Boat at the National Museum Dublin in 1902

Bád Lomáin an Lorgain ag geataí an Ard-Mhúsaem, Baile Átha Cliath, 1902

This is ‘the empty quarter’ of County Galway, as far as boats are concerned; no heritage boats were found in present-day use. The slow-running Clare River which drains into Lough Corrib, and the Upper Suck would undoubtedly have been used by boats in the past and there are numerous small lakes. The Headford Turf Cot is an example of the type of boat that would have been used.

The Lurgan Log Boat, housed in the National Museum, Kildare St., Dublin, is the oldest intact Irish vessel, dating from around 2500 BC. It is a huge vessel – over 15 m. long by 1 m. wide – hollowed out from the trunk of an oak tree. It was discovered in Addergoole Bog, Lurgan, near Milltown, Tuam, Co. Galway, in 1902. In 1996 the stern section of a comparable vessel was raised in Carrownden, less than 20 km north of the site of the Lurgan boat. A smaller example, the Summerville Log Boat, 15½ft. long by 15½ins. wide – discovered 40 years ago at Moylough Lake, in the catchment of the River Suck – is displayed in the Mountbellew Forge Museum. It illustrates the remarkable persistence of this type into historic times, having been dated, by dendrochronology, to 1001 AD.

Four log boats were discovered in the Corrib above Menlo Castle in 1983 and a newspaper report in the spring of 2010 reported another close to where one had been discovered by the same person ten years previously. The Barna Dugout – 4,800 years old – discovered by Brian Ó Carra in 2002, is displayed in the Galway Atlantaquaria, Salthill.