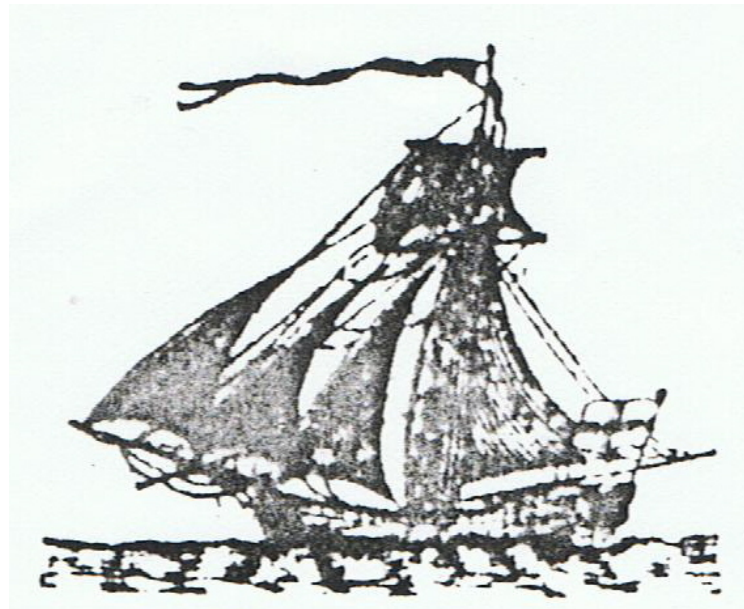
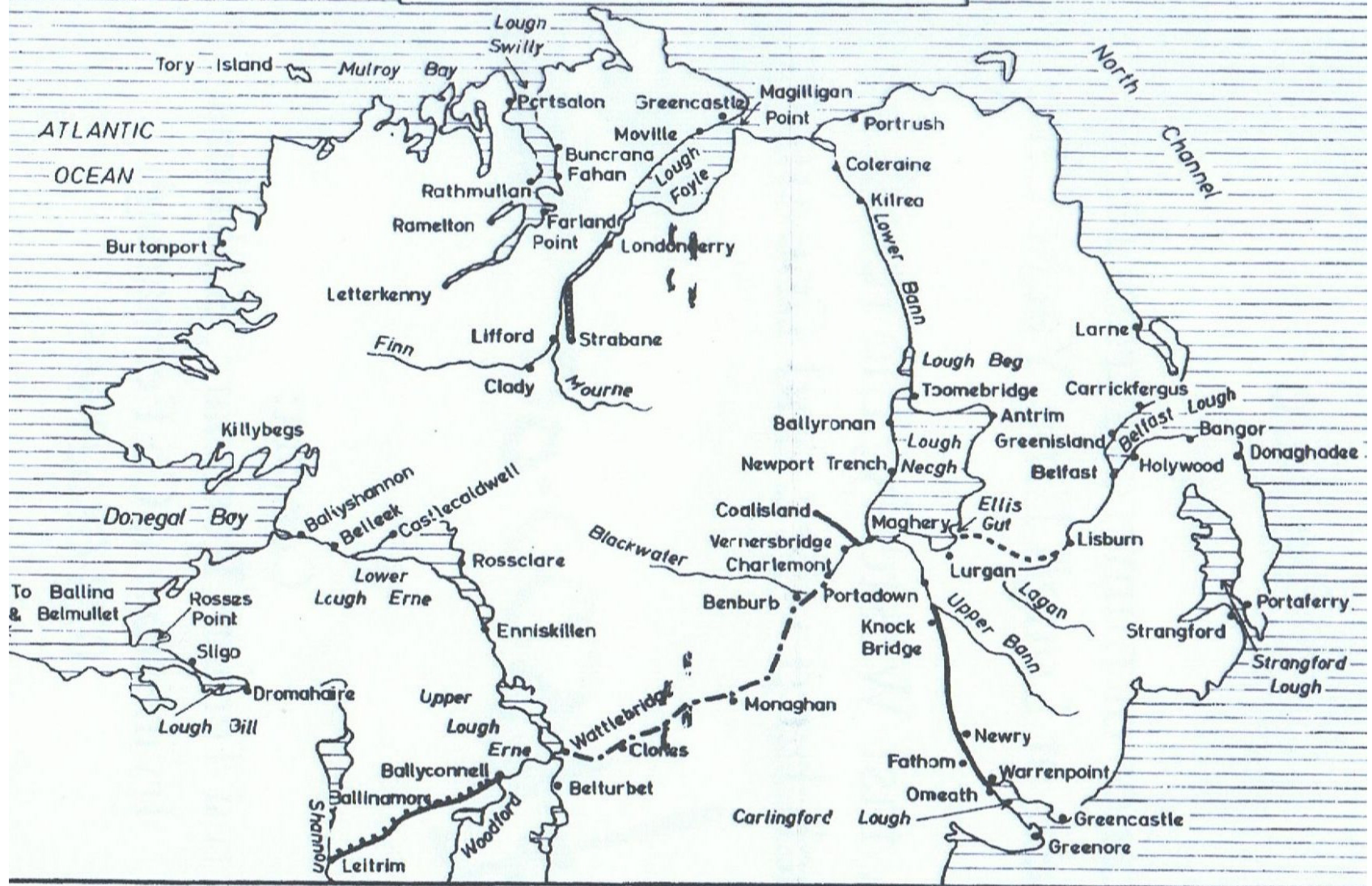


**The Subscribers to the
Boat Races on Lough
Erne,
for the encouragement of
fast Sailing Boats, and
for the improvement of
the Navigation of the Lake**



**Michael Clarke, Historian, Lough Erne Yacht Club
For the Association of Yachting Historians, April 2010**

INLAND NAVIGATION IN ULSTER



History – Lough Erne Sailing 1580

Gaelic Poet – Tim Higgins 1580

Maguire's Lakeside Castle on Enniskillen island

Forest of boat masts on the castle strand

Artificers working on boats, spars and oars

Young people sporting afloat

Erne waterway defined Maguire territory

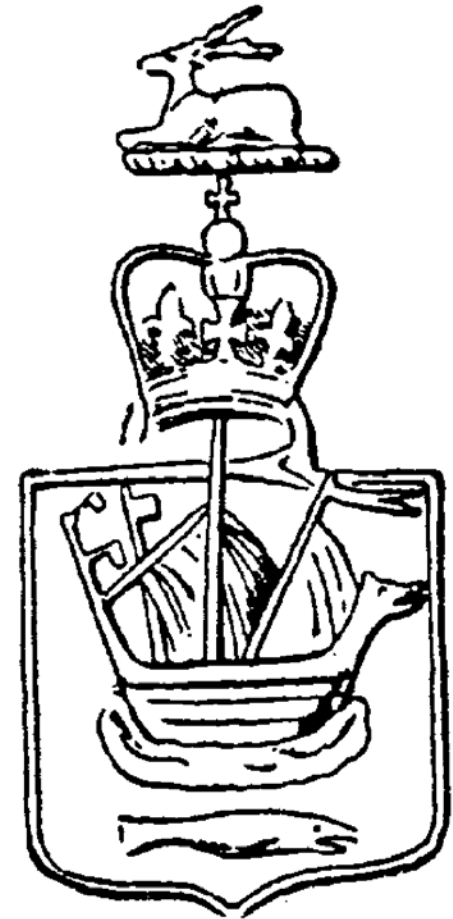
Boat Building and Sailing in Gaelic Culture

Grace O'Malley, Clare Island, Mayo

O'Driscoll Clan of West Cork

Scotland's Lords of the Isles

Drake's Pool, Cork Harbour



The Maguire Arms

1700s Yachts Horses Cutters

- 1710** **Rev. Henry's travel guide to the Erne**
Pretty Yachts in Belturbet channel
Lakeside Big House Yachts
Bingham's Rock – Drowning Tragedy
By water best way to travel Fermanagh
- 1720** **Cork Water Club**
- 1750** **Jockey Club Founded, made Racing Rules**
Field (Fleet ?) of Horses racing round a Course
Committee Officers Stewarts (and Judges)
Start and finish lines marked by posts
Horses line up. Start gun and flag
- 1790** **Naval & Revenue Cutter Rig – Best for Sailing Sport**

Cutter Rig and Sailing as Sport

Fore and Aft. Easy Tacking

**Developed for naval use and
Revenue chasing smugglers**

**The key sport in a racing fleet
is on the windward beats**

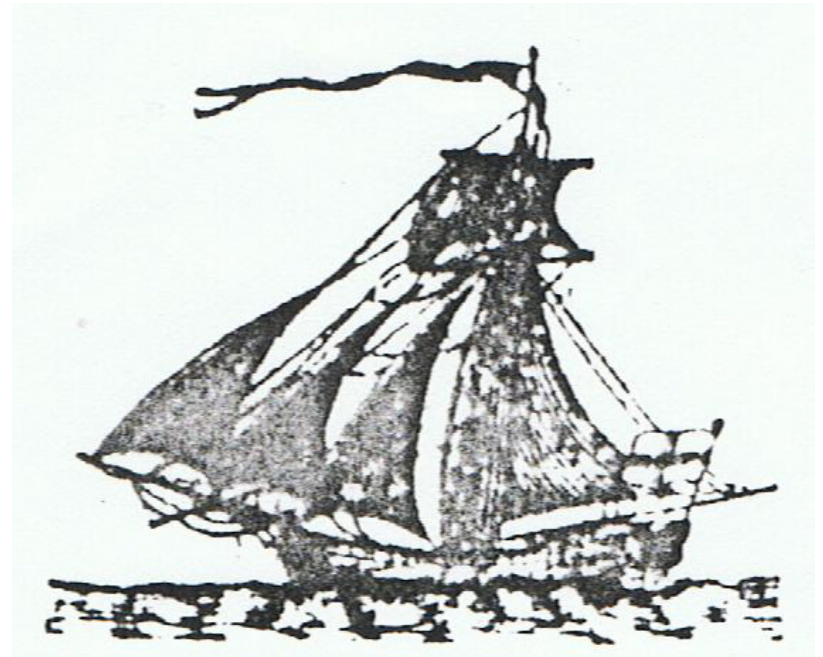
Cutters cut to windward best

This woodcut 'logo' headed many newspaper items

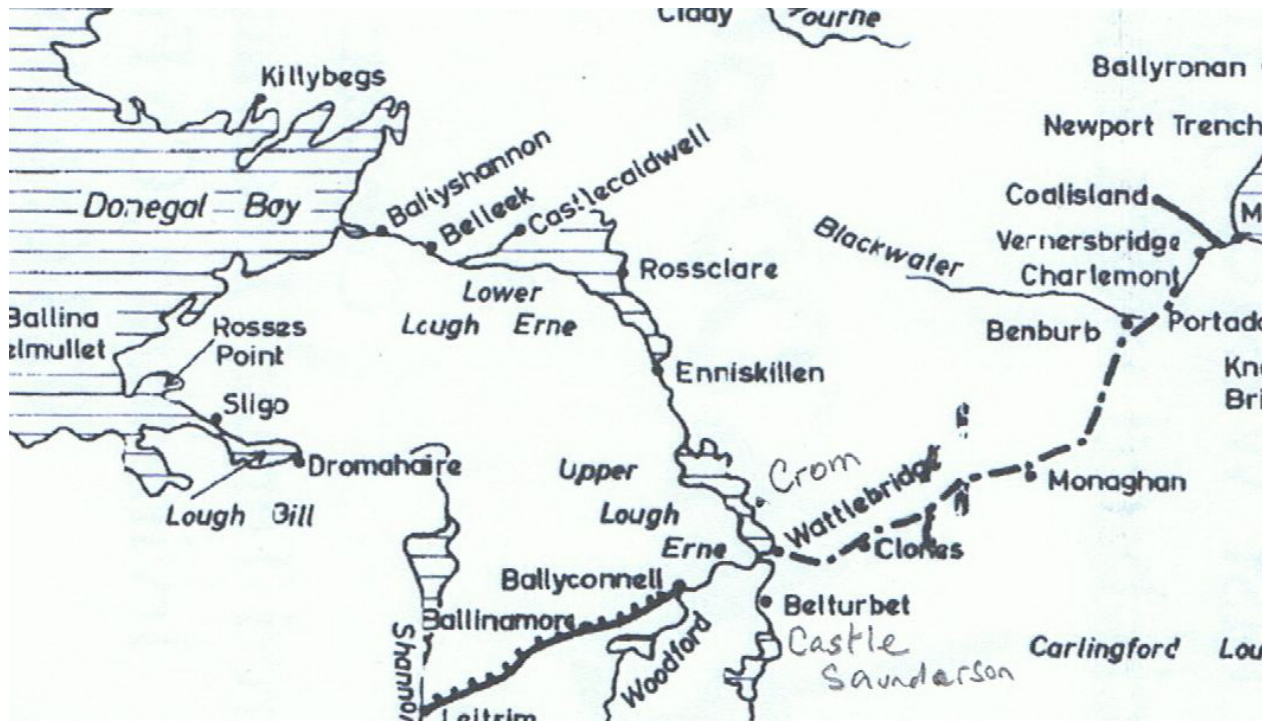
Cutter rig was top technology and well understood in 1820

Square sail forbidden after tragedy on Lough Gill

Galway Bay Hooker another Irish example of cutter rig



Lough Erne Locality



Rossclare (centre) - Lough Erne Boat Races 1820s

Left bottom corner - Lough Gill Boat Races 1820s

Duffy's Chart and Newspaper

- **Map of Erne Navigation (published 1821)**
- **Edward Duffy set up a local newspaper**
- **1817-18 he advertised for Map 'Subscribers'**
- **Keen sailing writer and publisher**
- **Used 'sailors language'. Readers Understood**
- **Praised the 'science' of fast sailing boat design**
- **Comparable to Dixon Kemp late 1800s**
- **My hero – I write sailing news in today's paper**
- **Impartial Reporter, Ireland's oldest sailing journal.**

Boat Squadron 1819

Diving-Belle (won 1822 race)
Moir, Braganza and Swallow
from Castle Sanderson

Edward Duffy reported

More than once seen
these boating parties

Improvement of both the
navigation and the boats

Fitting out boats

Sketch of New Map

RN Officers surveying

Also wrote eulogy of Lord
Belmore's Mediterranean
Voyage in Osprey.

NAVIGATION OF LOUGH ERNE

A Squadron of Boats consisting of the Moira Diving-bell, Braganza, and Swallow, sailed from Castle-Saunderson on Saturday week, and returned here after a week's cruise on the Upper and Lower Lakes. Our Boatmen speak with great admiration of the manner in which these boats were navigated through the narrow passes of the Upper Lake, and in the rough water of the Lower, against violent and contrary winds, while from the imperfect construction of our barges they were detained in port, delaying their cargoes and losing their wages.

We have more than once noticed the progress of these boating parties from our neighbouring county, because we know that the improvement of the navigation of the Lakes is always an object with the gentlemen who undertake them; and we see with great pleasure the gentlemen in this neighbourhood fitting out boats on the Lower Lake, by which we foresee a more active and general interest will spring up for the improvement of both the Navigation and of the Boats, in which our native town is so deeply concerned.

The Marquis of Ely has just built the finest barge ever launched on these waters, and we understand his Lordship is determined to have her rigged in the best manner.

Messrs. Saunderson, Mr. Story, & the other gentlemen of the party, acknowledged themselves much indebted to the new Map of the Lake, from the information they had obtained from a rough sketch of it. We understand that Captains. Meara and Saunderson of the Royal Navy assisted the Gentlemen in taking Landmarks of the Shoals and Rocks, similar to those inserted on the Map preparing for publication.

LADIES CUP 1821

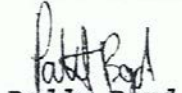
"The Oldest Sailing Trophy in Ireland"

Thank you for your most interesting correspondence on the above subject.

I am not aware of any sailing trophy that matches the age of "The Ladies Cup". I certainly would not wish to dispute the matter with either Michael Clarke and Hal Sisk, the foremost sailing historians in Ireland.

I wish you good luck with your claim.

Yours sincerely



Paddy Boyd
Secretary General

Donated 1821 for the **encouragement of fast sailing boats** on Lough Gill by ladies of Sligo

Duffy's newspaper reported these races



THE LADIES CUP 1821

Note his similar wording – Subscribers to the Boat Races on Lough Erne, for the **encouragement of Fast Sailing Boats** and for the Improvement of the Navigation of the Lake.

Notice of Race

July 1822

A General Meeting report


Not inaugural meeting of the **Subscribers**

A **second** cup added for boats not exceeding **24 feet** from Stern to Stern

Races **this year** between Devenish and Eagle Island – i.e. all of Lower Lough Erne

On 15 August and two days following

Prizes also for Cot races



Lough Erne Boat Races.

AT a general meeting of the Subscribers to the Boat Races on Lough Erne, for the encouragement of Fast Sailing Boats, and for the Improvement of the Navigation of the Lake, held at Enniskillen, July 27th 1822. CHARLES MADDEN, Esq. High Sheriff, in the Chair. The Hon. Colonel CRAIGTON proposed the following Resolutions, which were adopted:—

That the Boat Races commence on the 15th of August, and continue the two following days, to take place this year between ~~Devenish~~ and the Eagle Island.

That there are TWO SILVER CUPS for two classes of Boats.—The first class, all Lough Erne Boats. The second class, all Lough Erne Boats not exceeding 24 feet from outside of Stern to outside of Stern Ports aloft.

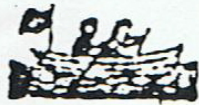
Boats to be the property of Subscribers.

Prizes will also be given for Cot Races.

The regulations to appear in full in the ~~Erne~~ Packet next week, and in Handbills.

There will be a Ball at the White Hart, on the 16th of August, at which the Committee for directing the Boat Races will act as Stewards.

TO BE LET.



Lough Erne Boat Races.

Every Boat to be entered in the name of the real owner, who must be a Subscriber.

No Boat to use any Sails which shall not *bona fide* belong to her.

No Boat to throw out any Ballast after starting, but may take in Ballast.

Boats on the larboard tack (if necessary,) must give way to those on the starboard.

In going free, the foremost Boat may prevent another from passing her to windward if she can; but must permit her to pass to leeward with crossing her.

No Oars to be used, except in case of running aground, and then only, as Poles.

Should damage arise from Boats falling foul of each other, it is to be paid by such as transgress these rules.

Rusclare, Start, Course, Finish

The boats were anchored in line between Innishdoney and Rusclare shore, and, every thing being ready about one o'clock, they started, at the signal shot, to sail round a boat stationed off Gay Island, making a circuit of about five miles. *The Elizabeth.*

Rossclare Green – hilltop spectator view over whole race area

Start boats anchored in line – copied from horse racing

Stewarts – horse racing term - HQ on Inishdoney island

Finish marked by a POST BOAT - horse racing terminology

Rules written by William D'Arcy Irvine, Necarne Castle, Irvinestown

He also organised horse racing

Earliest surviving full set of published regatta documents?

24ft Fleet 1822

The *Elizabeth*—John Tredennick, Esq.

The *Shamrock*—Major Richardson.

The *Dreadnought*—James Story, Esq.

The *Diving Belle*—Rev. Francis Saunderson.

The *Abel Whackets*—James Saunderson, Esq.

The *True Blue*—General Archdall.

The *Anna Maria*—Marquis of Ely.

The *Georgiana*—Gerard Irvine, Esq.

The race was won by the *Diving Belle*, after a contest, which lost somewhat of its interest by the slackness of the wind.

... and the amusement

Two Notable 24ft Boats 1822

- **Diving Belle – Was in 1819 Squadron**
 - Built at Castle Sanderson
- **Able Whackets – second in 1822**
 - For sale at Crom in 1823, cutter rigged, Oak built, DANTZIC boat
 - “From her great beam is admirably adapted for the lakes”
 - Hal Sisk information on Dantzic boats

Imported and Visiting Boats

- **Lady Erne, John Crichton, 1826 et al**
 - ‘imported from Gravesend’ - Duffy
 - **Griper, Humphries Esq 1826**
 - beat ‘every boat of her size in Dublin Bay’ - Duffy
 - Gripe in seaman’s language is the forefoot, timber at fore end of the keel. Took a grip on the water and helped make to windward
 - **Shamrock, Major Richardson 1822.**
 - Built and raced on Lough Gill by her builder
 - Walsh, Ship Carpenter, Quay Street, Sligo - Duffy
- Ringsend (Dublin) also mentioned in other reports**

Did Dublin Bay have an Edward Duffy?

Alexander Saunderson



Led 1819 Squadron from Castle Saunderson

Sandy's Rock on Map and Admiralty Chart 1830s

Among first Members of Royal St George YC

Member, Royal Dublin Society (Scientific Body)

Westminister M.P. for Cavan

Designed and built sailing boats at Castle Saunderson from c.1818

Bluestocking – Mother & Aunt, White sisters, were Bluestockings

Fairy – 'brought this science to its improved state, 1826' - Duffy

Ideas on low drag hull design from John Scott Russell

Successor Edward Saunderson's Witch in Hunts and Dixon Kemp

Later in the 1820s

- More Rules –boat flags, Ballot for line place
- Northern YC Regatta, Belfast Lough 1825
- A Regatta on Lough Neagh
- A Regatta at Killybegs
- **Must have been similar at Ringsend**
- Cork YC first regatta 1828
- The Subscribers renamed Lough Erne YC
- Erne Boat Races continued until today

Rossclare Today



1906 Fairy Keelboats, viewed and reported from Rossclare Green

2006 Fairy 100th Classic Boat Regatta - Joey & Caroline Kelly

They live on Inishdoney - the house that was 1820's Race HQ

Lough Erne YC is Ireland's oldest yacht racing club

Conclusion - Why Lough Erne?

- Strong culture of oar and sail
- The Erne navigation – population 150,000.
- Culture of competitive sport – with spectators
- Rosslare Green – central viewpoint
- Fermanagh wet hilly land poor for horse racing
- The cutter rig – well suited to racing sport
- One-design or similar for real sport
- William D'Arcy Irvine – rules & race management
- Alexander Saunderson – fast sailing boat builder
- Edward Duffy, writer and campaigner
- Similar settings and writers elsewhere?