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THE SLOPEMASTS¹

TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF FISHING ON THE WEST COAST OF SCOTLAND AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE LOCHFYNE SKIFF

An MPhil dissertation

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¹ The term used by some East coast fishermen to describe the Lochfyne skiffs due, wholly, to the characteristic sloping mast.



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DECLARATIONS

- (i) I, Mike Smylie, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 40,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

date.....30/9/03.....signature of candidate...

- (ii) I was admitted as a research student in September 2000 and as a candidate for the degree of MPhil in September 2001; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between 2001 and 2002.

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- (iii) I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of MPhil in the University of St. Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

date.....30/9/03... signature of supervisor..

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Any piece of work is only as reliable as its sources, both primary and secondary, and its proof-readers. Both are invaluable to the author. In the case of this dissertation, the original impetus for researching the Lochfyne skiffs came from the purchase of the 1912-built skiff *Perseverance*, so I am indebted to her previous owners for opting to sell her to me. Once I had the vessel in my grasp I sailed her to Scotland where I came across numerous fishermen and others who had known her during her working life in Campbeltown up to 1946. Without this initial input from these persons, and from my then partner, Maria, and son, Christoffer, who travelled with me, my researches would still be at a very early stage.

Once the research became academic, several people have been overwhelmingly influential. Robert Prescott had enough faith in me to make this paper possible and has supervised me throughout. His work as Director of the Scottish Institute of Maritime Studies, foremost in the world in combining maritime studies with maritime archaeology, has been priceless. That such an institute continues to exist is of paramount importance to our field. Angus Martin has, as always, helped by way of his expert advice, proof-reading and encouragement. Mike Stammers has allowed me access to his researches in wherry-type craft, as has Frances Wilkins in her field of Irish Sea smuggling. The staff at St Andrews University Library have been extremely helpful and patient with my desire for iconography and endless photocopying. The Scottish Fisheries Museum has allowed me access to its records, as has the staff at the Scottish Record Office in Edinburgh and the British Library in London. Thanks also to.... Jenny Bennett and Pete Greenfield for publishing my earliest article on ring-net craft, which gave me a first shot at writing; Robert Simper and Colin Allen for refereeing my application to St Andrews University; Paula Martin for her reading suggestions; and all those authors, dead or alive, whose work I could not have done without. I am eternally grateful to all these and the many other nameless people who supplied snippets of information.

This paper is dedicated to all those oak and larch trees that made the building of the boats possible. And the fishermen who sailed in them to the fields of herring.

ABSTRACT

In E.W. White's historical survey entitled 'British Fishing-boats and Coastal Craft' (HMSO, 1950) he asserts that very little is known about Scottish fishing craft prior to Captain John Washington's report of 1849. Of the West Coast in particular he states that there is even less information than upon the East Coast and even less variety, and the West Coast craft simply simulate those from the east. Furthermore he states that it is impossible to define with any accuracy the vessels in active use before the Caledonian Canal was opened in 1822. This dissertation will cast new, critical light upon all these contentions. It will show that, far from being influenced just by the fishermen from the east, the West Coast fishermen, and especially those from the Clyde area, looked further afield to create a fishing vessel even more effective for their purposes than would be served by adopting vessels from the east.

Three stages of research are clearly worked through: the documentary evidence, the iconographical evidence and comparative typology study. Each shows that it is possible to trace a lineage through a hundred years that culminated in the emergence of the Lochfyne skiff.

From eighteenth-century Irish Sea wherries and Scandinavian-influenced Highland boats, the fishermen of Loch Fyne developed their own fishing boat to suit the new ring-net mode of fishing. In their demands to travel further to fish, and live aboard their vessels, they then produced a larger boat that allowed this. Thus the Lochfyne skiff, in its final shape, was a hybrid of craft from differing vernacular cultures best suited to its job. It was not particularly innovative in comparison to many other types and was short-lived. But it was unique.

MAPS

Scotland in 1785	facing page 16
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INTRODUCTION

Britain has, over many hundreds of years, had a huge diversity of working boats operating around her coasts. These, from the maritime perspective, are generally contained in what is termed the vernacular zone. Each particular area or region has had its own types of vernacular craft that were employed in a variety of maritime occupations such as the coastal trade, fishing, pilotage, salvage, life-saving and many more. Although it is difficult to specify borders between each area because of the cross-flow of influences from area to area, there are definite distinctive types for ethnologists to concentrate their researches upon (see e.g. Mannering, Smylie [1999], White).

However, when researching vessels in the vernacular zone, there are many more problems than there are, for example, when researching naval vessels. Vernacular craft are, by their very nature, usually low-tech products suited for a particular job and often relatively anonymous in their design. They are fashioned usually from the experience of their operators, built by the eye of the builder and worked arduously so that they often have a short working life. Thus surviving designs and drawings are, on the whole, non-existent, as are any archival sources outlining their evolution (see e.g. Hasslof et al., McKee).

Fishing craft probably have the widest diversity of any of these working craft. Fishing is an occupation carried out in every part of the coast, whereas such undertakings as pilotage and salvage very often only occur where major ports or seaways are nearby. The coastal trade, although affecting all parts of the coastline up to the beginning of the twentieth century, usually involved vessels of a similar design that plied routes from one side of the country to another.

Small coastal fishing boats, on the other hand, often never worked outside of their locality, thus remaining largely peculiar to that area. It was only after the 1830s¹ that fishermen began to sail further afield in their quest for fish, and thus doing so, developed their craft into larger boats.

Studies of Scottish fishing craft have mainly concentrated on the East Coast and the Northern Isles. On the West Coast, the variety and history of fishing craft has been generally neglected. What has been written about them has largely tended to relate their designs to those of the East Coast. Yet the West Coast has its own peculiarities that have led to altogether different boats developing through their usage. Amongst these West Coast craft is the Lochfyne skiff that emerged from several generations of innovation and which resulted in one of the prettiest workboats to have graced the British shores.

Although neither extraordinary in design nor pioneering in boat technology, the Lochfyne skiff was the last evolutionary stage in the era of sailing boats in the Clyde area, prior to the advent of motorisation in the first decades of the twentieth century. Furthermore, the design was unique in that it was developed specifically for a different mode of fishing: that was the ring-net that came into use around Tarbert in the late 1830s and which was an aggressive way of fishing that, within a century, became generally accepted by Scottish fishermen. However it must be added that in several parts of the country its use was always regarded with suspicion and indeed with hostility by some (see Martin [1981]).

As a generalisation, a Lochfyne skiff was a half-decked vessel, in excess of 25ft in the keel length, of a relatively light construction, rigged with one standing lugsail and,

¹ McInver, 1906:272. He tells us that 'for some years before 1835' some of the Eyemouth boats were fishing off Sunderland and Wick. Sutherland notes (undated: 28) that 600 boats were assembling in Wick by 1826. Martin (1995:21) suggests 800-900 boats were attracted to the winter fishing in the Firth of Forth in the 1790s. Cranna (1914:253) tells us that, prior to 1830, only Firth of Forth boats went to Fraserburgh, thereafter northern boats worked the season there. Generally it is assumed that the habit of fishing away from home was commonplace after the 1830s instead of being the exception.

usually, a jib set on a bowsprit. The stem was upright, the sternpost was raked considerably – although not acutely as that of the Zulu – and the keel sloped to give a shallow forefoot and deep heel. Such a hull shape gave excellent manoeuvrability in confined waters. Its forward-stepped mast raked considerably.

The proximity of the Loch Fyne herring fishery to the relatively close markets of Glasgow gave the fishery the impetus it needed for growth in the nineteenth century. John Knox had, late in the previous century, observed that the diet of the working people in Glasgow, who earned no more than eight shillings a week, was potatoes and herring.² Although the setting down of railway routes throughout the nineteenth century never contributed to these expanding markets to any extent – the nearest station being at Taret, close to the head of Loch Long – the advent of steam did.³ The fish curers chartered steamers, usually drifters from the East Coast, as did later the Argyll and Bute Fishermen's Association, and these carried the fresh fish, mainly to Glasgow.⁴

The face of Britain changed rapidly in the nineteenth century with the advance of the Industrial Revolution, yet for the fishing fleets change was slow. Some benefits were obvious in that machine-made cotton nets replaced the older hemp nets, capstans aided the hauling of the drift-net on the larger boats and steamers worked off the East Coast. But in the more inaccessible reaches of Scotland these innovations were hardly noticed. Except for the introduction of the ring-net, the use of which hardly constituted a technological advance to begin with, and the transportation of the fish by steamer as mentioned, this was the case in Loch Fyne. Fishing progressed throughout the majority of the century much in the same way it had for generations past.

² Knox, 1787:228.

³ It is true to say that the railway possibly helped the Inveraray fishermen who were able to transport the catch to this station by horse and cart, a distance of 23 miles. This, however, is not documented and probably only accounted for a relatively small amount of herring. It's worth noting anyway that the railway to Oban wasn't completed until 1880, by which time the Inveraray herring fishing was in decline.

⁴ Fraser, 1971:23.

It was against this background that the Lochfyne skiff appeared in the Campbeltown fleet in 1882 for the first time. A vessel with an entirely different capability in that the fishermen could live aboard with some degree of comfort whilst ‘at the fishing’, and one designed specifically for the mode of fishing practised by the majority of the fishermen. Norton, in his *The End of the Voyage*, describes her thus:

The Loch Fyne skiff or nabbie is a graceful bird-like craft as seaworthy and as handy as any vessel of her size. She rarely exceeds 35ft. in length and even the larger boats are virtually open, being built with a deck forward for one-third of their length only, with beneath it a sort of cabin shelter. She has a curved stem, bold sheer, and a very characteristic stern, pointed, with a raked and curving stern post and beautiful buoyant lines, at the quarters. She draws plenty of water aft, and the keel slopes up steeply towards the stem. The whole hull, particularly the stern, have a look strongly reminiscent of Norwegian craft. The influence of Norway may be seen in many boats on the east coasts of the British Isles and we shall meet it again later, but it is curious that this western boat should carry the stamp of her ancestry more clearly than do some of her sisters, the luggers of the eastern shores. Another attractive feature of this hull is that many, instead of being painted, are clear varnished which gives them a very light and clean appearance.⁵

There are two points worthy of a mention here. Firstly there seems to be confusion between a skiff and a nabbie, the latter being the fishing boat of the east side of the Firth of Clyde. Nabbies were slightly different to the skiffs in that they had fuller sterns and a more raking mast, a few setting a mizzen as well.⁶ Nabbies were also described as being ‘of about 25 by 8 feet, entirely open; they have a very broad, round stern, and narrow bow, rigged with one large lug-sail and jib; they are handsome, and work and sail well’.⁷ We shall consider them in more detail later. The great American naval architect Howard Chapelle makes the same mistake. When discussing the various sources of available plans of British fishing boats, he says of the Lochfyne skiff *De Wet*, ‘this is a nabbie, and is an able type of fishing boat’.⁸ A nabbie it certainly was not.

⁵ Norton, 1959:85.

⁶ Experiments with mizzens on Lochfyne skiffs were undertaken but without success, however Norton notes that ‘occasionally there is a small standing lug mizzen’ (1959:87).

⁷ Washington, 1849:356.

⁸ Chapelle, 1933:310

The second point is Norton's reference to a Norwegian ancestry. Other writers such as March and Osler have made similar suggestions.⁹ However, one of the intentions of this dissertation is to critically explore and evaluate the claim that the Lochfyne skiffs evolved primarily from East Coast influence. Different influences from several quarters were brought to bear upon the fishermen and boatbuilders alike that resulted in the unique shape of the skiffs so that there are other possible precursors to these boats. We shall throughout the course of this paper investigate the wide range of factors that potentially contributed to the origins of the Lochfyne skiffs.

One other error has crept into today's archives that should be mentioned and that characterises the previous lack of research into the Lochfyne skiffs. Laird Clowes, when detailing the summer 1936 'Special Exhibition of British Fishing Boats' (that such an exhibition was assembled just shows the high esteem in which fishing was then regarded and one simply cannot imagine any public body repeating the exercise today) labelled one such example as 'a Loch Fyne Scaffie'. His description reads: 'The stem is curved like that of a "scaffie", but she is considerably deeper aft and also the upper part of the stern is flared out so as to produce something very similar to a counter, although this does not project beyond the raking sternpost'.¹⁰ As a counter stern, by its very construction, is a projection outboard of the sternpost and because the Lochfyne skiff clearly has a straight or almost straight sternpost with no projection, one wonders which Lochfyne skiff he was attempting to describe!

To explore the different possible roots of the design of the Lochfyne skiff it will be necessary to research using the methodologies available. Documentary evidence is forthcoming because of the abundance of Government publications concerning fishing

⁹ Edgar March in *Sailing Drifters* labels Campbeltown-registered skiffs as 'Zulu skiffs' (plate 187) while Adrian Osler in his chapter entitled 'Scotland' in *Chatham's Directory of Inshore Craft* (page 17) makes similar assumptions after March, according to the author himself (Pers Comm).

¹⁰ Clowes, 1936:14

such as the Fishing Registers, Fishery Board Reports, and Parliamentary Papers relating to fishing. On top of that there are a wide variety of travellers who published their observations from journeys around Western Scotland from the late eighteenth century onwards. In addition, the statistical accounts for Scotland present thorough pictures of individual parishes in the 1790s and 1840s.

Pictorial evidence comes, in the main, from the William Daniell aquatints although other sources are available that indicate a general picture of vessels in use in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. By studying the available iconography, a thorough picture of these types show how changes in attitudes to fishing, and an increasing knowledge of boat technology, were accompanied by subtle changes in hull-form and rig. This will be particularly useful in attempting to identify the Irish Sea wherries, which in the past have been regarded as misnomers in the maritime field.

The final methodology is one of making a comparative study of the vessels of which we have some knowledge and of investigating the areas outside Loch Fyne and the Clyde from whence influences may have had some contribution on the boat designs developed. We are also able to study several vessels that are contemporary to the Lochfyne skiffs, largely through the work of the Coastal Craft Committee of the Society of Nautical Research after their recording of several relevant working boats in the 1930s.

Together, these disciplines will enable the setting down of a progressive, structured argument showing how boat design evolved in the area under consideration, identifying the craft in use, and which, it is hoped, will lead to a clearer picture of the roots of the Lochfyne skiff.

ONE

**THE SCOTTISH
HERRING FISHERIES:**

SOME BACKGROUND FACTORS

SCOTLAND IN 1785

FROM A MAP BY J. ANDERSON
IN "An account of the present state of
The Hebrides and Western Coasts of Scotland"
drawn by Mike Smylie

↑
TO SHETLAND

0 10 20 30
SCALE OF MILES

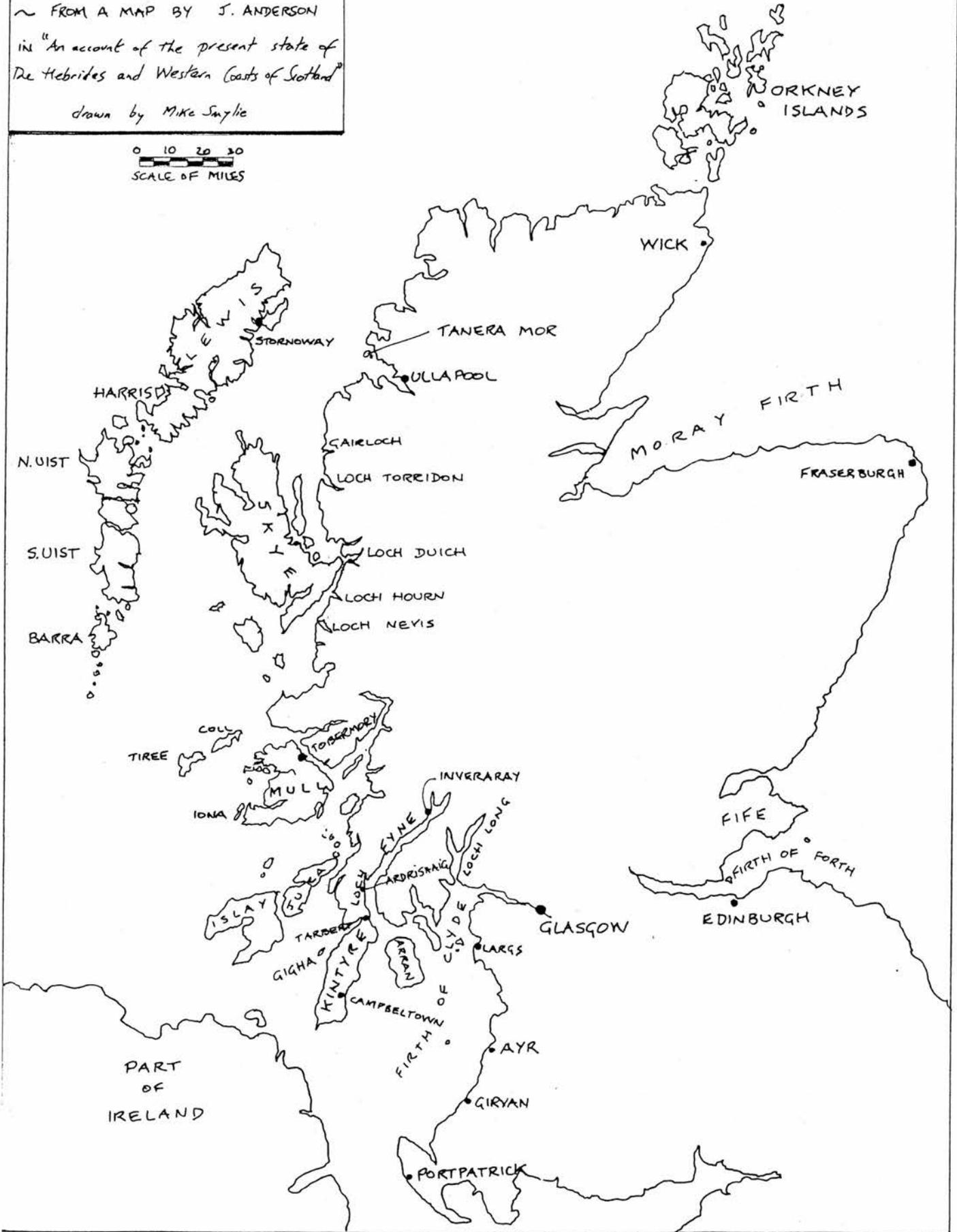


Fig 1 Map of Scotland showing places mentioned in the text

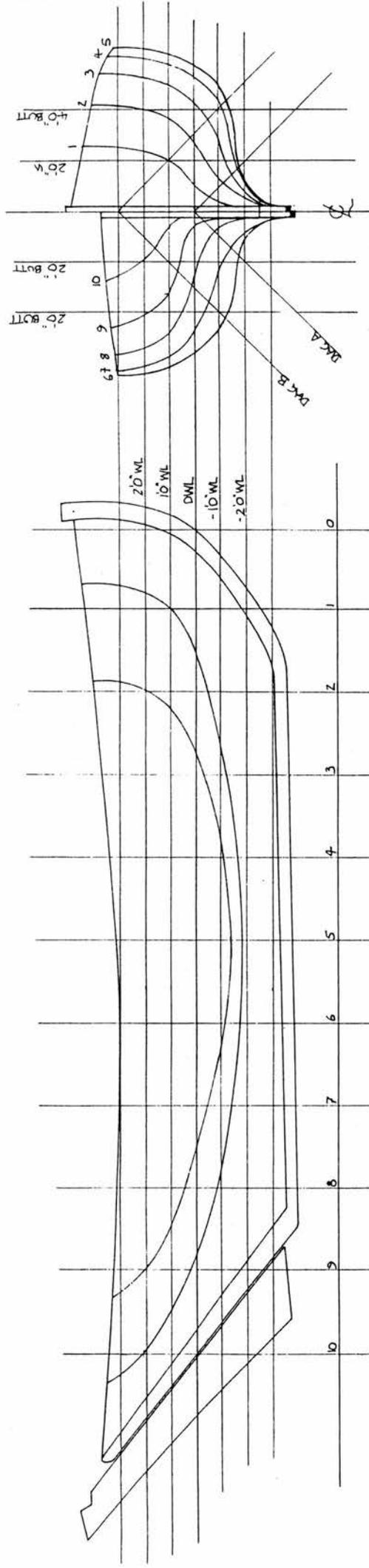
THE EAST COAST AND NORTHERN ISLES

Previous research has certainly been attentive to the fishing boats of the East Coast of Scotland and, to a lesser degree, those of the Northern Islands (See e.g. Anson, Halcrow, March, Sandison). Yet, on the West Coast, the opposite is the case. Various specific types – such as the Ness Sgoth and Lochfyne skiff – have been included in gazetteers of British fishing craft (see e.g. Finch, Mannering, Smylie [1999]). Yet it seems that the former vessel from the island of Lewis is the only western craft to receive more than passing attention, largely due to the construction of a replica vessel in the early 1990s.

This disparity reflects the richness of sailing fishing boat design throughout the East Coast. The story of the development of the ‘Zulu’ has been well documented and needs no repetition save the fact that its shape was the combination of the two other well documented vessels of the east coast – the ‘scaffie’ from the north and the ‘fifie’ from the southern part of the coast.¹¹ These basic three shapes gave rise to a number of variants – zulu skiffs, bauldies and Fraserburgh yoles being three.

However, the origins of these three basic East Coast vessels have hitherto not been well researched. Smylie asserts that the first of the ‘documented inshore boats along this coast seem to be the ‘Great boats’ of the seventeenth century’.¹² These, he claims, were 40ft two-masted vessels with square sails and were Scandinavian influenced. Although they were Orcadian vessels that traded with Norway, they sailed south to fish. Thus arose the early ‘scaith’, otherwise known as the Moray Firth or Buckie boat.

¹¹ Finch, 1976:90; March, 1952:253; Newland, 1999:87-89; Smylie, 1998:66-70; Tanner, 1996:15 and Wilson, 1965:26, amongst others, all record how William Campbell decided on combining the stern of the scaffie with the stem of the fifie to produce the zulu, but concrete evidence of this is sparse. Various suggestions are made, but the *Nonesuch*, INS2118, was registered in 1878 as a clinker-built sailing drifter and it wasn’t until the *Zulu*, BF662, was registered in 1882 that the term ‘Zulu’ became widely adopted to describe the type.



LINES PLAN
SCOTTISH SCAFFIE
 c1880
 LOA - 38' 0"
 L. KEEL - 22' 6"
 BEAM - 13' 0"
 MADE SKETCH BY PH4

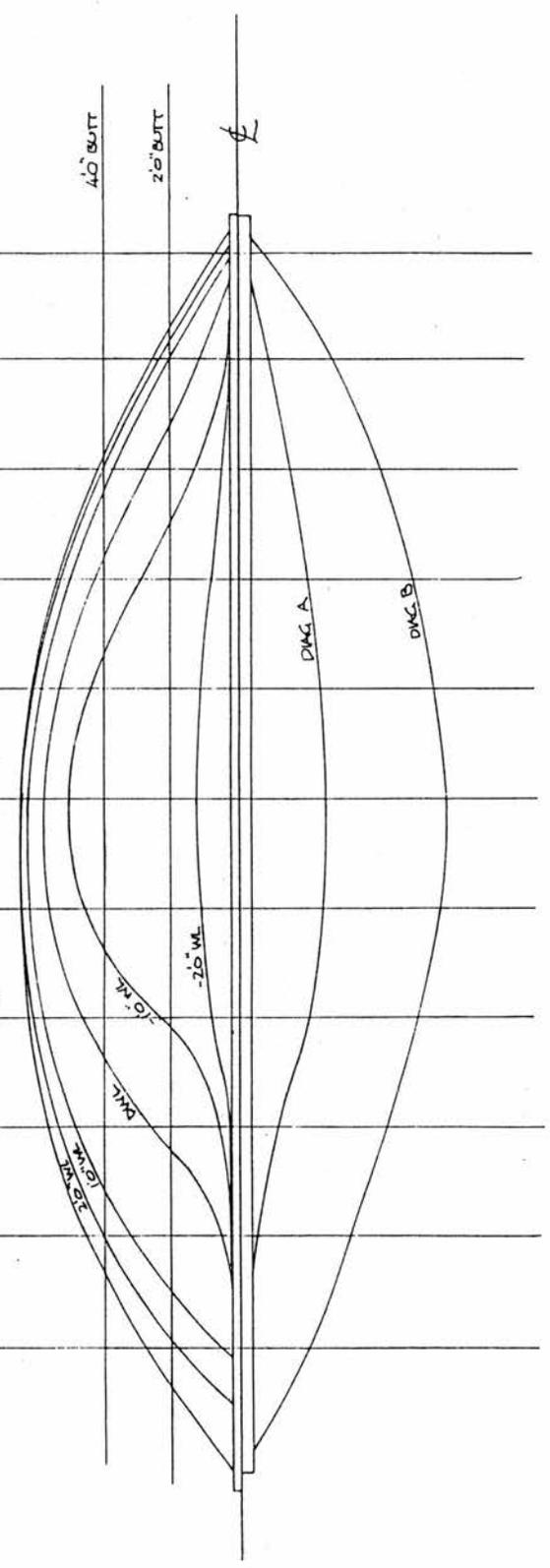
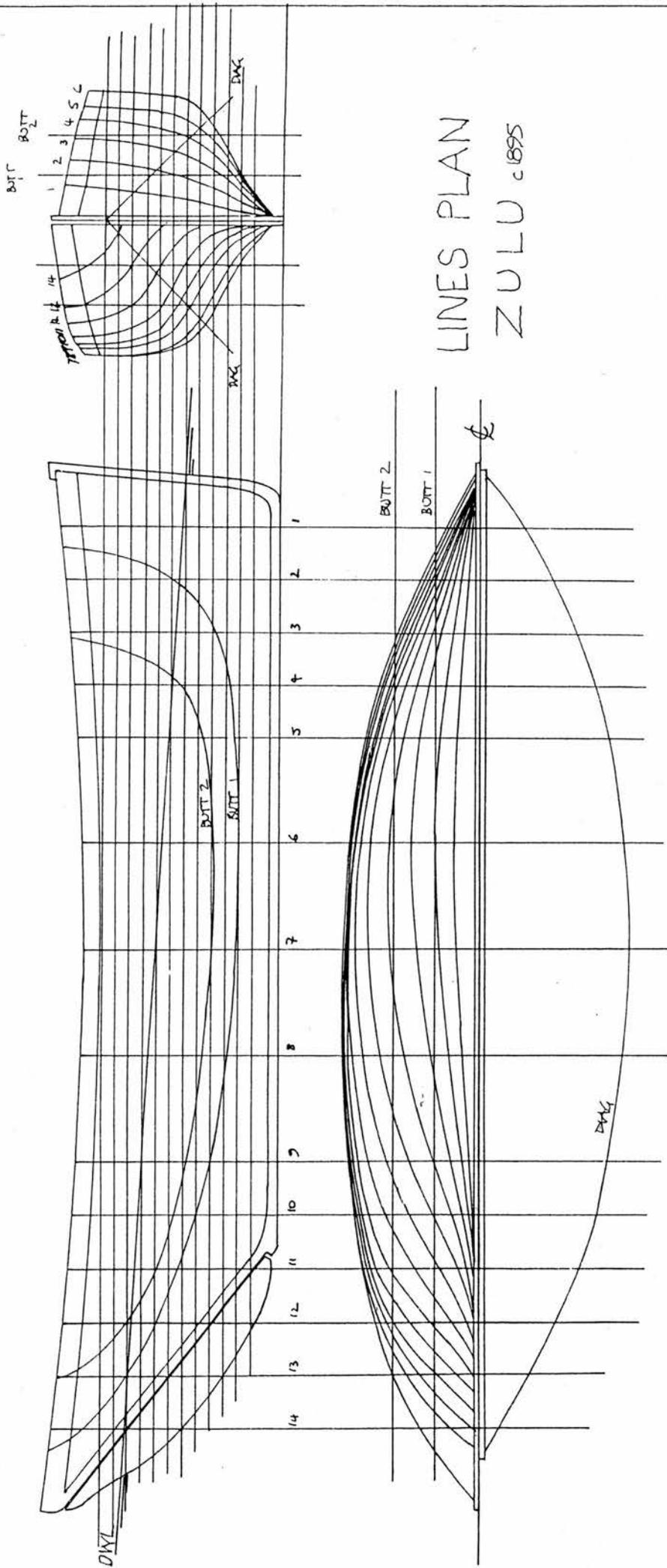
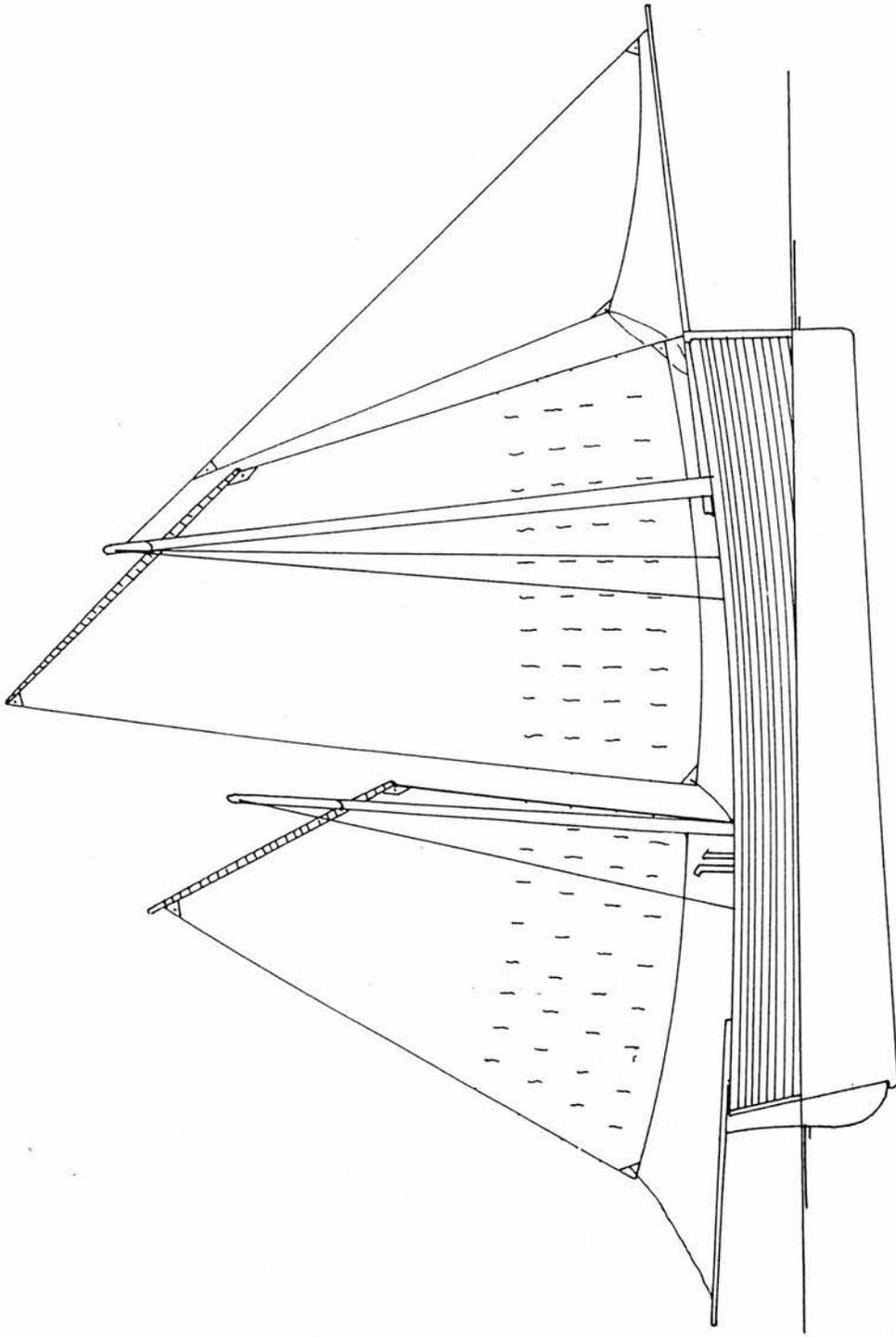


Fig 2 Lines plan of Scottish East Coast scaffie c.1880 by Mike Smylie for Modeler's Magazine



LINES PLAN
ZULU c.1895

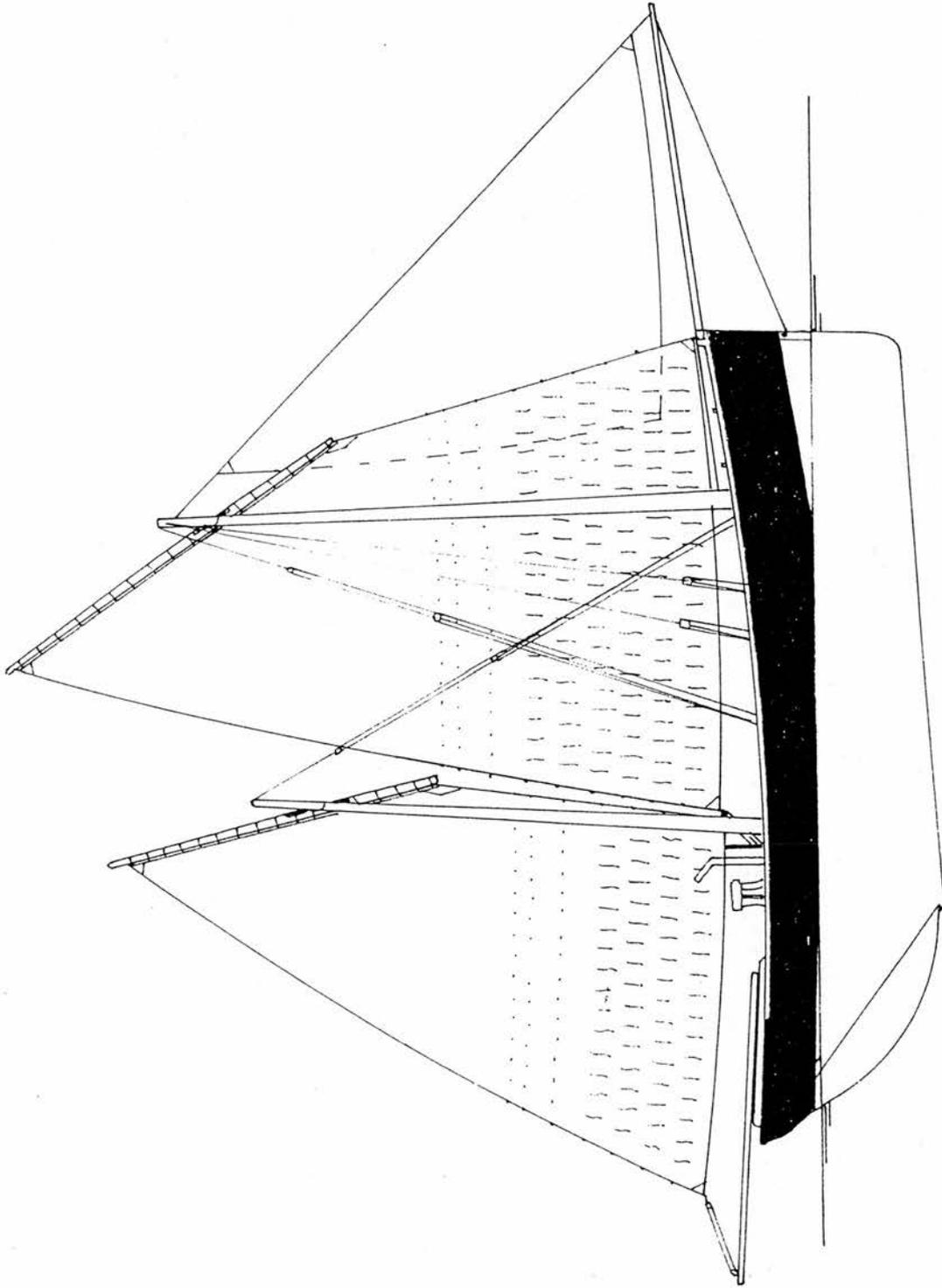
Fig 3 Lines plan of Scottish Zulu c.1895 by Mike Smylie after Edgar March



0 5 10ft

FIFIE c.1875

Fig 4 Sail plan of Scottish East Coast fife c.1875 by Mike Smylie after Edgar March



0 5 10ft

ZULU c. 1895

Fig 5 Sail plan of Scottish East Coast Zulu c. 1895 by Mike Smylie after Edgar March

One particular source of documentary evidence for fishing boats types in use in the middle of the nineteenth century comes from the Report on the Loss of Life and Damage to Fishing Boats on the East Coast of Scotland by Captain John Washington (hereafter called the 'Washington Report'). This 1849 report was commissioned by the House of Commons after a gale in October 1848 resulted in the loss of 100 lives and the wrecking to damage to 126 fishing boats, primarily around the Wick area. So serious did the Government view this disaster that Washington was instructed to travel north and undertake a full investigation. He spent several weeks interviewing those witnesses to the events and submitted a thorough report with details, in one section, of fishing boats all around Britain.

Washington described these Moray Firth or Buckie boats:

[Open.-Length, 41 feet; breadth, 13 feet; depth, 4¾ feet.] - The vertical sections of these boats may be said to show a form having a flat floor, with a deep keel; they are thence preferable to the other Scottish boats. The great rake given in the stern and stem posts is objectionable, as rendering the boats unsteady when sailing before the wind.¹³

As vessels then became decked over in the slow response to Washington's Report (one of his contentions was the lack of decks on the small boats) and the realisation that decking over didn't affect their fishing capability, what is now known as the 'scaffie' appeared. The fife, on the other hand, is said to have evolved through Dutch influences. The Kingdom of Fife has had associations with the Low Countries ever since the seventeenth century when the Dutch commanded the North Sea herring fishery with their busses. In 1718, during the reign of George I, an act encouraging the Scots to emulate the Dutch fishers was passed.¹⁴

¹² Smylie, 1999:28.

¹³ Washington, 1849:288. See Appendix 6.

¹⁴ March, 1952:223.

Smylie further asserts that the men of Fife were the first Scots to take up fishing on a grand scale.¹⁵ Some even moved with their families over to Holland after the Scottish Parliament devised schemes of raising tax revenue from the herring fishing.

Washington, again, describes the Newhaven, or Firth of Forth, boat thus:

[Open.-Length, 35¾ feet; breadth, 13¾ feet; depth 4¼ feet.] - This boat, from having a rise of floor and no length of midship body, can only be considered as a slight improvement on the Wick boat, already described; the improvement arising from the level lines being rather less rounding, and thence in a degree better calculated to prevent leeway. The character of the Firth of Forth boats are said to bear, of being fine sea-boats, must be attributed more to the skill of the crews than to the form of the boats.¹⁶

Washington employed the naval architect James Peake to draw up two proposed fishing boats that had upright stems and sterns. Working on their experience from their earlier craft, the fishermen of the southern part of the Scottish coast began to accept the need to adopt such craft. Thus the fife as we know it evolved.¹⁷

In the Northern Isles the picture is one of dominant Scandinavian influence until the fishers from the south arrived and the Shetlanders built their own smack-rigged fifies, and smaller half-zulus. They considered the smack rig to be more manageable and handier in the confined and tidal waters of Shetland. Up to this point their double-enders displayed true Scandinavian characteristics, These, again, have been well documented (see e.g. Goodlad, Halcrow, March, Osler and Sandison). Before about 1830, these boats were imported direct from Norway, either complete or later in kit form. After that time the islands' boatbuilders constructed their own, using imported timber, there being little timber on these rocky islands. The best known of the Northern Isles boats – though least representative in many respects - are perhaps the sixareens, the long-line boats used to

¹⁵ Smylie, 1996:64.

¹⁶ Washington, 1849:288. See Appendix 6.

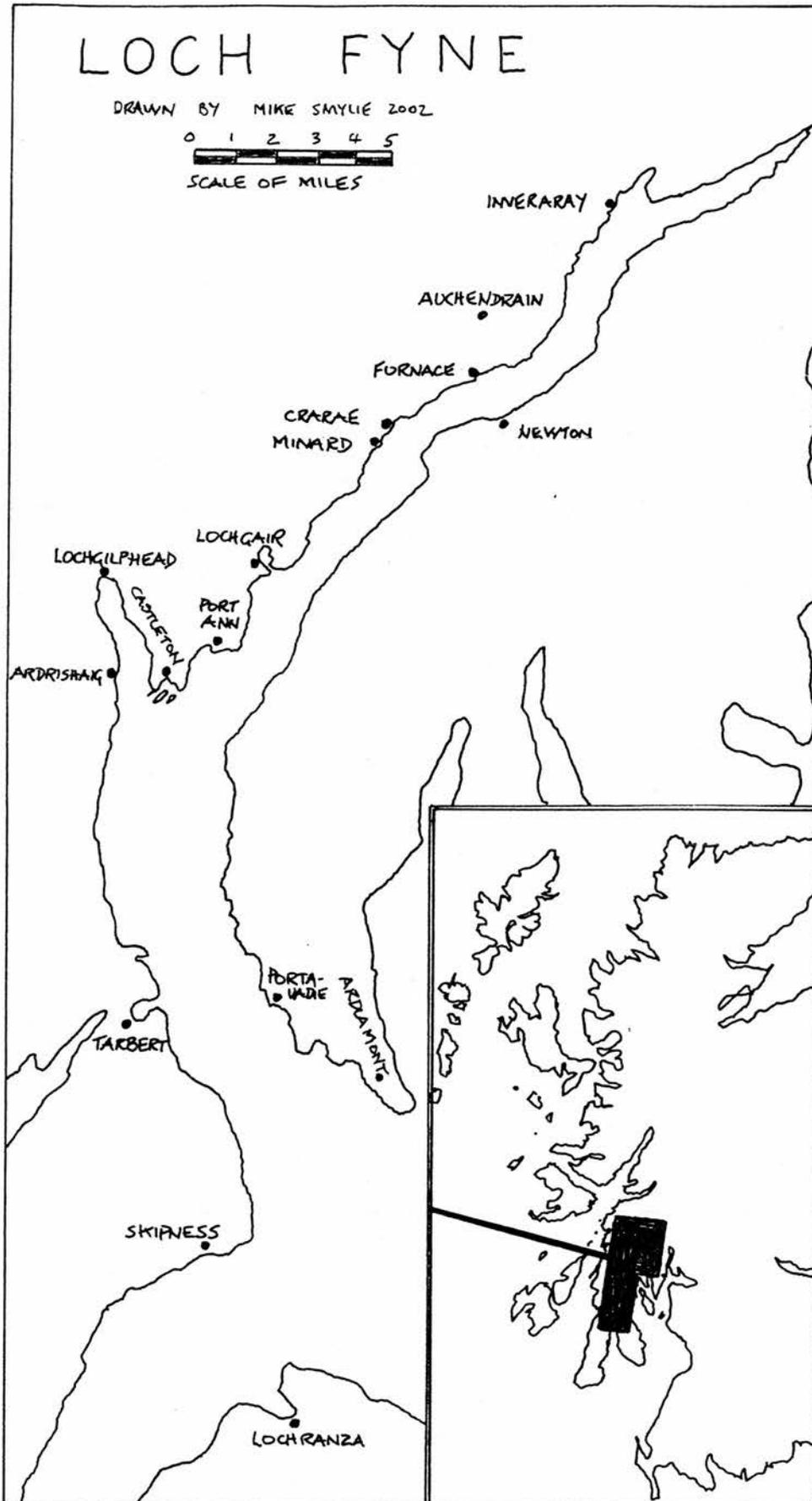
¹⁷ Washington asserted that raked stems and sterns gave little grip on the water, a point that Peake obviously agreed with. Whether Peake's design was influenced from his English experiences is unclear, but similarities with East Coast of England vessels must be drawn. Yorkshire yawls and three-masted luggers from the South and Cornish coasts all display a degree of likeness to the fifies. Given the later approximations between the Cornish luggers and the fifies, one wonders whether this is pure convergence from designs evolving through necessity or whether Peake was indeed influenced by them.

voyage up to 40 miles offshore for several days at a time. Others include the fourereens, Ness yoles, Fair Isle skiffs and Orkney yoles.

This rich diversity of craft on the East Coast and Northern Isles simply illustrates the fishermen's ability to develop vessels best suited to their particular fishery. This, in the main, is the determining factor in design technology, although the other influences to bear are the type of beach or harbour worked off, the availability of materials, the overall cost and the sense of innovation. Too often fishermen are classed as being resistant to change, and whilst this maybe a reasonable broad generalisation, to counter it the British fisheries have seen certain groups and individuals who have been responsible for pronounced change in boat shape. William Campbell, of the Zulu fame, is undoubtedly one of these, but many others will remain nameless, their work lost in the anonymous realms of the vernacular zone.

There was also a dramatic change in boat shape that occurred on the West Coast in response to an equally dramatic change in fishing technique. Whereas extensive research has greatly increased the knowledge and understanding of this switch from the drift- to ring-net, details about the changes to the vessels used by these fishermen are scarce (see Martin, 1981). Nowhere was this change more apparent than in the boats used by the fishermen of Loch Fyne.

Fig 6 Map of Loch Fyne showing places mentioned in the text



LOCH FYNE

Loch Fyne is the longest of the Scottish lochs and stretches from a line between Skipness Point on the peninsula of Kintyre and Ardlamont Point at the southern tip of Cowal to Clachan at its head, a distance of some 37 miles. The upper part of the loch starts at Otter Spit and throughout its length it is no more than two miles wide at the most. Below Otter Spit it is between two and four miles wide, the broadest stretch being at its junction with the short Loch Gilp. The loch is deep with a depth in the lower part of no more than 75 fathoms at its deepest and 50 fathoms in the upper loch.

According to Graham & Gordon there are a number of landing places and harbours on the west side of the loch. These are located at Skipness, Tarbert, Ardrishaig, Lochgilphead and Inveraray.¹⁸ Other fishing hamlets include Furnace, Crarae, Minard, Lochgair, Port Ann and Castleton. Fraser adds to the list Auchendrain, Lower Goatfield, Sandhole, Drynlia, Cumlodden, Inverae, Auchgoyl, Shirdream and Newton, the latter being on the east side of the loch.¹⁹

The harbour of Inveraray was once called 'Slochk Ichopper' - literally 'the gullet where vessels bought or bartered fish'. The importance attached to the herring fishing is reflected in the town coat of arms that depicts a net with a herring and the motto:

"Semper tibi pendeat halec" ("May there always be herring in your net").²⁰ Probably because of the nearby ancestral home of the Dukes of Argyll, it was a popular stopping

¹⁸ Graham & Gordon (1987:338-345) identify four landing places at Skipness. These are in the bay itself, at Brann a' Phuirt, Port a' Chruidh and Skipness Old Pier. However, these are in actual fact outside of the extremes of Loch Fyne, although mentioned here to avoid confusion. The harbour at Tarbert dates from 1812 although the available shelter at East Loch Tarbert has been in use for much longer. Ardrishaig's development was ensured with the opening of the canal in 1801. Lochgilphead, although not best suited as a harbour because of its exposure, had a quay built in 1813. Inveraray, on the other hand, has had a quay since before 1709, when the ruinous pier was the subject of a petition to the Duke of Argyll.

¹⁹ Fraser, 1971:13-15. These he quotes from the ledger of Munro's Stores, Furnace and adds that the list is not exhaustive.

²⁰ OSA vol V: 291-292. This bartering seems to have taken place on a point of land three miles south of Inveraray, still called Frenchman's Point. They were brought here for curing and selling.

off call for numerous travellers during their itineraries around Scotland during the latter part of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth. Their descriptions of the town, and especially the fisheries, have enabled a picture to be drawn up of the boats in use. The vast majority of these travellers include mention of the state and quality of the herring in Loch Fyne.

Knox must have recognised this in the early 1780s when he wrote ‘this place having the ocean on the west side, and Lochfyne on the east, enjoys every possible advantage for the fishermen...situated amongst the shoals of herring...’ He suggested that the inhabitants would immediately, in sighting the shoals, be out in their boats in whatever weather to ‘sink their nets’.²¹

Newte, during his tour of 1785, notes that ‘this arm of the sea produces herrings in great abundance....five hundred boats are employed in the proper season for the fishing’. These take ‘a considerable amount of herrings; part of which are salted for the use of the neighbouring country, and part sent to Glasgow’.²²

Bowman, travelling in 1825, recognised that the herring fishery was the only trade in the town ‘for which Loch Fyne is so celebrated; the fish are said to be superior [sic] in quality to any found in the Western Seas’.²³ Another writer noted large vessels and an abundance of herring which yielded a considerable revenue to the country, a recognition, possibly, that they were being exported.²⁴ The quality of the fish is echoed by the minister for Saddell and Skipness who describes the Loch Fyne herring as being ‘of a richer and more delicate taste than those caught in the Western Isles, or the Coast of

²¹ Knox, 1784:66

²² Newte, 1788:114-115.

²³ Bowman, 1986:55.

²⁴ This was B. Faujas de St Fond in 1784 (1907:237), who described Inveraray as the capital of Argyllshire but not as a town. He suggested it would be termed a village in France, but that it was ‘pleasantly situated upon the side of beautiful Loch Fyne’.

Ireland'.²⁵ Furthermore Rev Paul Fraser of Inveraray states that the loch 'has been from time immemorial noted for its herrings'.²⁶ Garnett, travelling about the same time, echoes this, writing that Inveraray possesses herring as a source of richness. He also echoes others' words in stating that the loch 'has been from time immemorial noted for its herring, which are superior in quality to any found in the western seas'.²⁷ William Daniel during his voyaging around Britain in the early nineteenth century also echoes these same words!²⁸ Anson notes the same, adding that most of the catch was sold to France and Spain. 900 boats were sometimes employed.²⁹ Buckland tells us that Loch Fyne herring 'are superior in quality to any other Scotch herrings, and command a market of their own as 'Loch Fyne herrings''.³⁰

Although one has to wonder at the similarity of these words, the herring of Loch Fyne were noted in 1527 by Hector Boece, who reported that there 'is mair plente of herring than is in any seas of Albion'.³¹ In 1555 the Scots Parliament found that the fishermen from the western side of the Clyde had 'resortit to the fisching of Loch Fune and uthers Lochis in the North Ilis for making of hering and uthers fischeis'.³² Twenty years later Bishop Leslie writes: 'In the Westir Seyes...the hail haruest and behinning of Winter is a gret schule of herring, bot in na place sa fatt and of sa pleisand a taste as in that loch mair Westir lie, quhilke afor we expremed vnder the name of [Loch] Fine'.³³ In 1603 Sir Walter Raleigh spoke of the Dutch selling herrings valued at £1½ million, employing 20,000 Scots and all the herring coming from the Scottish west coast, most notably Loch Fyne. Years before this, though, in 836, the Netherlanders supposedly came

²⁵ OSA vol XII: 481.

²⁶ OSA vol V: 291.

²⁷ Garnett, 1811:93.

²⁸ Daniell, 1818, vol III: 28.

²⁹ Anson, 1950:3.

³⁰ Buckland, 1880:114. He adds that most are sold fresh and their quality is due to their size and flavour.

³¹ Mitchell, 1908:82.

³² Smylie, 1999:52.

³³ Mitchell, 1908:82.

to purchase salted herring, although the accuracy of this observation is somewhat doubtful.³⁴ The suggestion is that it was the Loch Fyners who taught the Netherlanders to cure herring and hence were responsible for the later Dutch dominance.³⁵ This seems tenuous and has to be regarded with suspicion.

Stoddart notes that the herring of the West Coast are much bigger than those of the East, and of a finer flavour.³⁶ Daniel Defoe, too, notes the presence of a fishery in 1725. Of the West Coast he states that there are no harbours nor ships 'except fishing-barks and boats, which are in the season employ'd for catching herrings, of which the shoals that are found on this coast in the season are incredible, especially in the Clyde, in Loch-Finn, and about the Isle of Arran, which lies in the mouth of the Clyde'.³⁷ Pennant probably gives the best description of the herring. Of it he says:

Lochfyne is noted for the vast shoals of herrings that appear here in July and continue till January. The highest is from September to Christmas, when near six hundred boats with four men in each are employed. A chain of nets is used (for several are united) of a hundred fathoms in length. As the herrings swim at very uncertain depths, so the nets are sunk to the depth the shoal is found to take; the success therefore depends much on the judgment or good fortune of the fishers in taking their due depths, for it often happens that one boat will take multitudes while the next does not catch a single fish, which makes the boatmen perpetually enquire of each other about the depth of their nets. These are kept up by buoys... Sometimes the fish swim in twenty fathoms of water, sometimes in forty, sometimes in fifty, and often even at the bottom. It is computed that each boat gets about £40 in the season... The present price is £1 4s. per barrel, but there is a drawback of the duty on salt for those that are exported... The herring of Lochfyne are as uncertain in their migration as they are on the coast of Wales. They had for numbers of years quitted that water, but appeared again here within these dozen years. Such is the case with the lochs on all the western coast...³⁸

Chalmers estimates that the value of the catch in 1794 and 1795 was £40,000 each year, but notes that 'such great captures are very uncommon'.³⁹

³⁴ Pennant, 1998:320. Pennant quotes James Anderson in *Dict. Commerce I*, 41 as his source for this fact.

³⁵ Mitchell, 1908:82-3. Mitchell quotes the author of 'Glencreggan'.

³⁶ Stoddart vol 1, 1801:258. He travelled around in 1799 and 1800 and noted that herrings constitute part of the diet of both the gentry and the poor alike. The former eat them at breakfast, while the poor live almost exclusively upon them, served with potatoes. He also notes that boats come from other parts and are capable of returning a profit of £40-50, and sometimes as much as £100.

³⁷ Defoe, vol II, 1927:840.

³⁸ Pennant, 1774:219-221. Pennant was from NE Wales, hence his reference to the Welsh herring, which he had written about in his *Tours of Wales*.

³⁹ Chalmers, 1887:156 – vol VII.

However a final word from the poet Robert Southey, who toured in 1819. For, although he says that the herring of Loch Fyne are reputedly the best on the west coast, he does warn that ‘every loch claims the superiority for its own; and all the Westerns insist that the herrings of the East coast are so poor they are fit for nothing but the West India market’.⁴⁰ He even substantiates this by claiming that, from personal opinion, the herring from Cullen were the best whatsoever!

Tarbert, regarded as the birthplace of the ring-net, had a small harbour in 1794 when Mr Marshall arrived. He noted that ‘the inhabitants live principally by the herring fishing, in which they have been successful this season’.⁴¹ Fifty years on and the 700 or 800 inhabitants were still dependent on the herring fishery.⁴²

The eastern side of Loch Fyne has far fewer people living by its shore. The one fishing station of any consequence was Portavadie, where, according to the Old Statistical Account, the herring fishery was the main employer amongst the young and married men of the Parish during the season. Their popular hunting grounds were to the east of Kintyre and in Loch Fyne and the parish had 21 open boats thus employed.⁴³ In 1890 there were still few boats – 13 second-class and 5 third-class from Dunderaw to Newton and 18 second-class and 7 third-class between Otter and Ardlamont, which divisions make up the east side.⁴⁴ In truth there never was much of an organised fishery along the east side of the loch compared to the west and not much changed in a hundred years. The impact of the ring-net was slight.

⁴⁰ Southey, 1972:242.

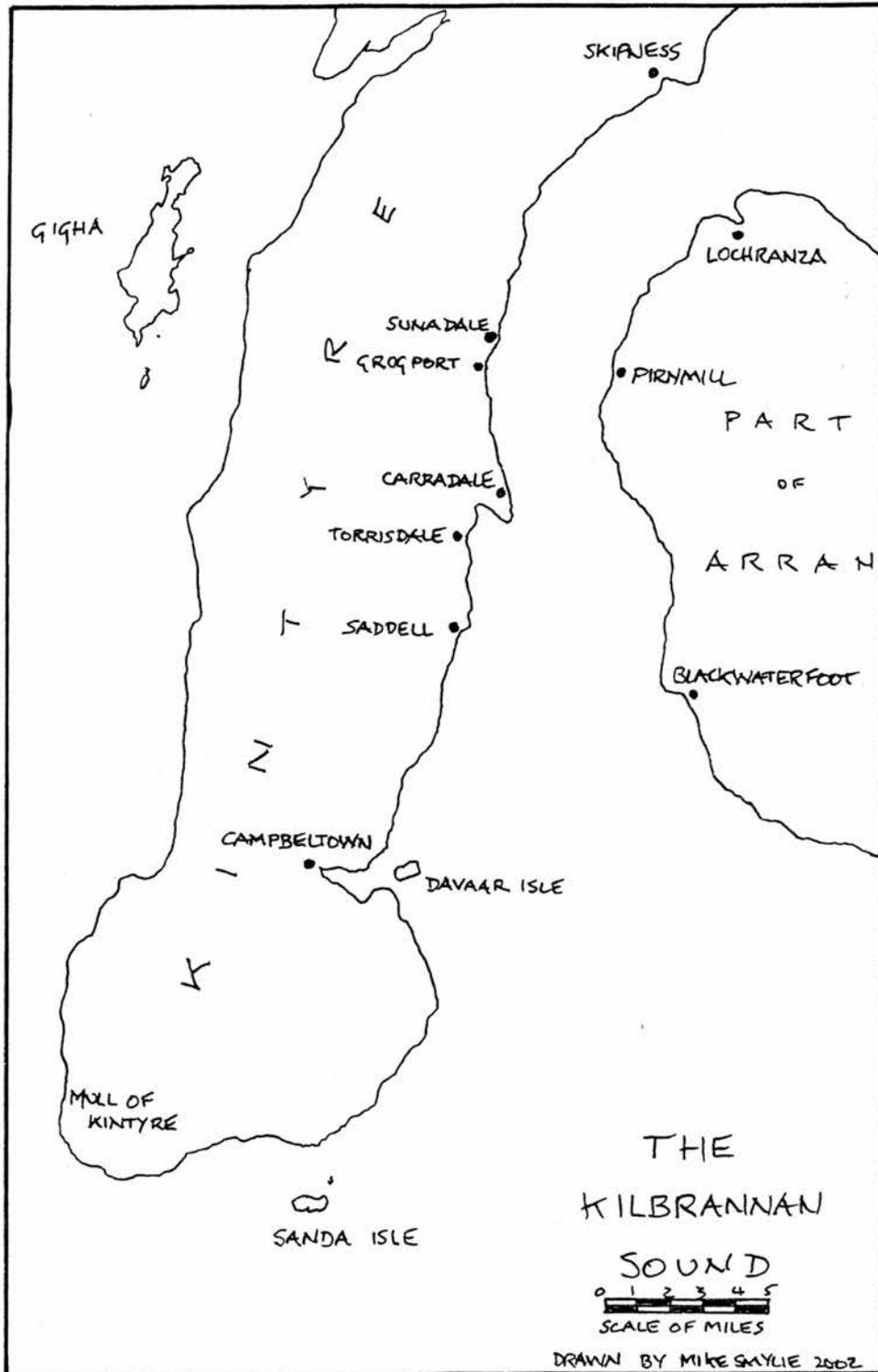
⁴¹ Marshall, 1794:30. Fraser, in *Lochfyneside* notes that 1784 and 1786 were good years for the herring fishing and again in 1803 when there were some 500 large boats in the loch.

⁴² NSA vol VII Argyleshire: 411.

⁴³ OSA vol XIV: 245-6.

⁴⁴ F.B.R. 1890:67. 90 fishermen were employed within the two areas, compared to 691 collectively in Tarbert, Ardrishaig and Lochgilphead.

Fig 7 map of the Kilbrannan Sound showing places mentioned in the text



THE FISHERY IN THE CLYDE

Polinus reported that the people of the Western Isles lived on fish and milk in 240AD. In 1630, a manuscript stated that some 120 vessels were catching codling at the mouth of the Clyde and two years later Charles I decreed that only native fishermen should fish in the waters enclosed by a line between the Mulls of Kintyre and Galloway.⁴⁵

The town of Rothesay was furnished with about 80 large boats which were used for herring fishing in about 1695.⁴⁶ According to Thomson, this number had decreased to 30 by 1763.⁴⁷ It appears that these vessels were busses as he refers to the 'unfortunate stop to the regular payment of the bounties' that took place. He also gives the net profit of these vessels between the years 1749 and 1757, in which the maximum number of boats fishing occurs in 1752 when there were 149.

Martin Martin notes the presence of a harbour close to a castle at the head of Loch-Kenistil on the island of Arran which was used by 'barks and boats'.⁴⁸ Presumably this is Lochranza. The castle there was regarded as one of the Royal Castles in 1380, although the present structure dates from the latter half of the sixteenth century.⁴⁹ In 1845 there were 200-300 boats seen lying at anchor in Loch Ranza, drying their nets.⁵⁰ Two years later it was reported that there were almost 100 wherries working the Arran herring fishery, of which 12 were from Lochranza. Pirnmill and Blackwaterfoot were other fishing stations.⁵¹ On the East Coast, Martin also states that 'the only good harbour in this

⁴⁵ This information comes from a souvenir booklet entitled *Campbeltown 1770-1950*, published by the 'Campbeltown Week' Publications sub-committee in connection with the 250th anniversary in June 1950 of the granting to the town of a Royal Charter – page 24.

⁴⁶ Martin, 1994:252.

⁴⁷ Thomson, 1849:36. He identifies small herring boats of about five tons burthen and larger boats that attended these from ten to twenty tons, buying and transporting the fish to market. It is perhaps unclear to which Martin Martin was referring in his description of the Western Isles.

⁴⁸ Martin, 1994:258-9.

⁴⁹ Hall, 1993:27.

⁵⁰ NSA vol V, Bute:42.

⁵¹ Hall, 1993:28.

isle is Lamlash...there is a great fishing of cod and whiting in and about the bay'.⁵²

McCulloch observes that it abounds with white fish of all kinds and is well situated 'for the herring fishery of the Clyde and of Loch Fyne, with the best and most frequented harbour on the West of Scotland'.⁵³ According to the Old Statistical Account 'the inhabitants bestowe the most unwearied application to the [herring] fishing' which is worth £1000 a year to the island.⁵⁴

John McCulloch gives us a fine description of the herring fishing at Loch Ranza, of which he says:

The whole bay formed a beautiful sight when I saw it last, on a fine evening in August, when it happened to be the rendezvous of the herring fleet. The busses that were purchasing fish, were at anchor in the loch, each with its flag flying, and surrounded by boats in groups delivering their cargoes, while some were running alongside, and others hoisting their sails to stand out again to sea. The dark festoons of the nets hanging over the sides, the white topsails above displayed to dry and the bright yellow hulls of the herring boats, with all their variety of brown and yellow and white sails, and with the smooth green sea below, reflecting every tint, formed combinations of colouring even more exquisite than those produced by the elegant forms of these boats, with their tall masts and pyramidal sails, dispersed and contrasted and grouped in every possible manner. Far away towards the Argyllshire coast, the sea was covered with a swarm of boats of all sizes and kinds, with sails of all shapes and colours, standing away towards Loch Fyne on every possible tack, and gradually diminishing to the sight till they vanished under the distant land. The shore was another scene of life which served to complete the picture. Other boats drawn up on the beach, or ranged along the margin of the water, were delivering cargoes to the country people and to the coopers; the whole green beneath the castle being strewn with fish, and nets, and casks, while horses, and carts, and groups of people in motion, with the hum of their voices, and the hollow sound from the coopering of the casks re-echoing from hill to hill, added to the smokes of numerous fires employed in the cookery or in boiling the oil, rendered the whole scene of confusion, activity and bustle, contrasting strangely with the wild solitude of the mountains around, and the calm repose of the setting sun.⁵⁵

The Kilbrannan Sound that separates Arran from Kintyre is deep, like Loch Fyne, and has been rich in herring. Thus fishing boats operated from Skipness, already described, Grogport, Carradale, Torrisdale, Saddell and Campbeltown. The OSA suggests 'that the herrings caught here, and in Loch Fine, Long etc are of a richer and more delicate taste than those caught either in the Western isles or the Coast of Ireland'. It also

⁵² Martin, 1994:257.

⁵³ McCulloch, 1824:26.

⁵⁴ OSA vol VIII: 579.

recognises that harbours are needed – Carradale, Skipness and Sunadale (by Grogport) were suggested – and that they could accommodate vessels upwards of 15-30 tons to take herrings to the ‘red herring houses in Liverpool’. 200 to 300 boats were frequently seen in an evening fishing.⁵⁶

McCulloch had a conversation with a group of herring fishers at the head of Loch Long.⁵⁷ John Leyden arrived in 1800 just as the season was getting underway.⁵⁸ Garnett notes that ‘shoals of herring frequent this loch, and afford occupation to a number of fishermen: at present there were very few boats, and these were preparing to set out for Loch Fyne, where the herring fishery was just beginning’.⁵⁹ The OSA suggests that, while the fishing in Loch Fyne was non-existent, the last two seasons in both Long Loch and Loch Goil were excellent and that 120 boats were fishing.⁶⁰ The New Statistical Account suggests that both Loch Long and Loch Goil, although inferior to Loch Fyne, had substantial herring fisheries.⁶¹ The upper lochs of the Clyde, and indeed the river itself, had intermittent spates of fishing. At Dunoon ‘herrings frequent the loch at times’.⁶² By 1845 there were eight boats earning precarious profits.⁶³ In Greenock, during the reign of Charles II, the society of ‘Herring Fishers’ had particular privileges and they

⁵⁵ McCulloch vol II: 38-39. This was in 1823 and must surely be one of the best descriptions of the buss fishery, certainly on the west coast.

⁵⁶ OSA vol XII: 481.

⁵⁷ McCulloch, 1824:251.

⁵⁸ Leyden, 1903:21.

⁵⁹ Garnett, 1811:68-9. The OSA vol III: p434 tells us that at Arroquhar (Loch Long) ‘few bother with the fishing other than the herring, which are sometimes in abundance’. Each fisherman is said to have earned £8 a piece over the last two seasons.

⁶⁰ OSA vol III: 172-173. The fishery lasted four months and was quickly taken to Greenock or Glasgow by sea. That from upper Loch Fyne had to be carried overland to the head of Loch Goil, a distance of 8 or 10 miles and the fish was damaged by the frequent handling, especially in the warm weather.

⁶¹ NSA, vol VII Argyleshire: 716. It is also noted that the fishing had recently failed in the upper part of Loch Fyne as well as Loch Long and Loch Goil. ‘*The necessary outlay for the fishing is so great, that when it is unsuccessful, the fisherman is soon reduced to poverty*’. However there must have been a change of fortune, or a contradiction, because it continues by saying a boat and equipment costs £70, yet a fisherman can earn £150, although the average is £60-70.

⁶² OSA vol II:386.

⁶³ NSA vol VII Argyleshire: 617. It was also noted that the herring fishing affected the morals of the fishermen unless they had Christian principles ‘*to restrain them from the dissipation and excesses too lamentably common among those following that pursuit*’. The general belief seems to be that there is a

cured herring in an enclosed area called the Royal Close.⁶⁴ To Defoe, Greenock was the chief herring port of the whole of the West Coast and he observed that the Glasgow merchants employed Greenock ships to catch the fish and transport them to market, hence leading to their overall control of the whole fishery. The town's wealth he put down to it being the main port for the city of Glasgow.⁶⁵ The herring visited Port Glasgow in 1718, 1753 and 1786.⁶⁶

Some fishermen from the Moray Firth kept their craft on the Clyde and travelled over from the East Coast each summer to participate in the annual herring fishery. They landed their catches at Glasgow, Paisley and Greenock. Such is the money they made they returned east with 'pocket fulls of money' and built themselves fine houses on the Firth.⁶⁷

Houses were obviously a popular means of showing wealth for, for when the fishermen of Campbeltown made money with the commencement of the bounty system, they had expensive houses of stone, lime and slate built. These fell in value when the system was abolished.

Although rents of barrels of herring were paid by Campbeltown householders in the seventeenth century, it wasn't until the next century that the town became the most important fishing port in Scotland. This was probably encouraged by having one of the finest natural harbours in Scotland – perhaps even better than Lamlash. The Rev Dr. John Smith describes it as one of the finest in the world.⁶⁸ Campbeltown was the only place on the West Coast where vessels intending to prosecute the bounty fishing were able to assemble at the commencement of the fishing season. Up to 260 busses assembled in the

universal connection between the herring fishing and whisky-drinking, and therefore the fishery is regarded more as a curse than a boon, according to Sir John Orde, Bart (NSA vol VII Argyleshire: 689).

⁶⁴ OSA vol V:579.

⁶⁵ Defoe, vol II, 1927:741

⁶⁶ OSA vol X:547.

⁶⁷ Knox, 1787:cxxii.

bay, many being owned by local merchants. With the loss of the West Indian market after the abolition of slavery after 1807, it is said that the Campbeltown merchants began distilling whisky, a trade remaining still continued by two distilleries, although neither is owned by 'merchants'.⁶⁹ In 1825, however, there were still 21 busses entered as outwards on the fishing register (only 18 returned). At the same time there were 145 decked and undecked (unspecified) employing 435 men and boys working the inshore fisheries.⁷⁰

On the eastern side of the Clyde, fishing stations were well established at Ayr, Girvan, Ballantrae, Stranraer and Portpatrick, although the fishing at Girvan was noted as having 'never been prosecuted with much energy'.⁷¹ Ayr was once regarded as the chief fishing port on the coast from where the fishermen carried their catch to Greenock and Glasgow in their wherries. Yet in the early 1840s it must have been in decline as there were only seven boats seemingly only supplying the home market with 'cod, ling, haddocks, whittings, turbot, skate, flounders, mackerel, and herrings'.⁷²

Stranraer was once the centre of a flourishing herring fishery but this declined in the late eighteenth century. However quantities of 'deals, plank, large timber, and iron' were imported', largely from Norway, Gothenborg and the Baltic⁷³, presumably for boatbuilding because Pococke, in his third tour in 1760, noted that the inhabitants 'live chiefly by the Hering fishery, and use boats built of deal, which last five or six years'.⁷⁴ Daniel, in 1817, suggested that the bay had 'good roads for ships and full of fish, but still no genius for trade, or for sea affairs of any kind', whereas outside the town 'The people of Galloway do not starve; though they do not fish, build ships, trade abroad...'. By

⁶⁸ OSA vol VIII:552.

⁶⁹ Campbeltown Weekly: 27 It should be noted that, although slavery was actually abolished in 1833, the date here probably refers to the fact that the decline in fish exports to the West Indies was affected by Napoleon's Berlin Decrees of 1806 (the Continental System) prohibiting all trade between France and its dependencies and Great Britain.

⁷⁰ F.B.R. 1825:5,6 &18.

⁷¹ NSA vol V Girvan:402.

⁷² NSA vol V Ayrshire:52.

⁷³ OSA vol I:360.

Portpatrick he was even less impressed: 'Portpatrick has nothing in it to invite our stay, it's a mean dirty homely place'.⁷⁵ However, soon afterwards, the fishing must have developed as between 1813 and 1821 there were 20 boats employing 100 men, with 120 boats being in the harbour during the herring season. Out of the herring season they caught cod for which they became renowned.⁷⁶

OUTSIDE THE CLYDE

It is worth considering briefly the fisheries outside the Clyde. To the north, herring were taken in Loch Craignish and Loch Crinan, with some £500 worth being caught there by 20-30 boats over a 4-5 week period in 1785.⁷⁷

The same was said for Loch Melfort where herring visitations were frequent. The Sound of Mull was noted for its fishery of most kinds – 'shell-fish, lobsters, crabs, oysters, spout-fish, hose-fish, cockles, and muscles [sic]'.⁷⁸

In Tobermory, where the herring busses anchored on route for the fishing grounds in the north, they took on local men for the season. Others went out in their open boats and caught herring for their families, the surplus being sold to neighbours.⁷⁹ However, the lack of salt due to the Salt Laws in Tobermory, Oban and Fort William in 1790 prevented the herring found in abundance in Loch Sunart from being cured. This was deemed a considerable disadvantage to the local parishes.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Pococke, 1887:11.

⁷⁵ Daniell, vol II, 1813:326. See also Defoe, vol II, 1927:737 for a similar report. Defoe refers to the people's 'stupidity' for not realising the potential of the markets.

⁷⁶ The OSA (vol III: 319) tells us that there are no safe harbours on the west coast of the peninsular but that there are huge amounts of fish, particularly cod. This is caught for home consumption and is never exported.

⁷⁷ OSA vol VIII: 92.

⁷⁸ OSA vol X: 317.

⁷⁹ OSA vol XIV: 153.

⁸⁰ OSA vol X: 268.

Further north, herring were caught annually in Loch Duich and Glenelg, the latter being visited by busses from the Firth of Clyde.⁸¹ Nearby Loch Hourn became renowned for its buss fishery with curing huts being set up on the north shore.

On Loch Carron, after a remarkable herring fishery in 1791, the children of the parish went and collected 'lapfuls of herring' which their families ate. However they were taken ill and

their blood was vitiated. When they were let blood in the fever, it had the appearance, when it congealed, of the blood of a boiled pudding, or of an ugly kind of jelly. Their breath smelled strong of fish. In proportion as they fed, soberly or voraciously, on the herring, the fever was more or less severe. Such as lived mostly on fish, and other strong food, suffered dreadful agony. The poor people, that mostly lived upon water-gruel, suffered very little.⁸²

To the south, shoals of herring visited the Solway Firth at times. In the parish of Sorbie, which includes the Isle of Whithorn, according to a Kirksession dated 1st September 1700, there was so much herring in Wigtown Bay that the fishermen fished on the Lord's Day. However, by 1790, there were hardly any fishing boats left.⁸³ In next-door Luce Bay, the fishery was held back by both the lack and price of salt which was so high as to prevent its use. Whereas the herring sold at 1/- a stone, salt was 1/6d a stone. Fish was, it seems, only caught for home consumption in the short term.⁸⁴

Research into fishing boats on the West Coast of Scotland has not been anywhere near as extensive as it has been on the East and North Coasts. The herring fishery has undoubtedly been an important source of income for the West Coast fishermen, especially in and around the Clyde, where they worked a variety of boats over the course of two hundred years. The East Coast has received a lot more attention that has enabled scholars to grasp a fuller picture of the fishing craft in use. Yet these East Coast fishers

⁸¹ OSA vol VIII (Glenshiel): 127 & vol XVI (Glenelg): 269.

⁸² OSA vol XIII: 553-4.

⁸³ OSA vol I: 246

were not pioneers of fishing methods, unlike the Loch Fyne fishermen who introduced the ring-net. It therefore follows that the West Coast fishermen were just as capable of producing fine craft to suit their local conditions.

To fully investigate the fisheries, and thus begin to form a picture of the vessels in use, it is necessary to study three methodologies – the available documentary evidence, which is in abundance, the substantial and varied iconography, and the comparative study of other vessels contemporary to the period under discussion.

⁸⁴ OSA vol XVII: 560-1.

TWO

**DOCUMENTARY
EVIDENCE**

The West Coast of Scotland attracted a number of travellers and acclaimed writers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Most were probably motivated by its wild rugged beauty, inaccessibility and cultural differences from the populated areas to which they were accustomed. Their contribution in our case has been a number of journals containing their observations of these coastal regions and their inhabitants. Furthermore, as the Government in Westminster began to wake up to the possibilities the herring fishing could present, they, too, sent individuals into the Highlands to prepare reports in the late eighteenth century. These led to the formation of the British Fisheries Society and, later, the Fishery Board for Scotland, which produced annual reports from 1808. In addition, the reports of the various Special Committees set up to look into the fisheries provide a rich source of documentary evidence. On top of these, two Statistical Accounts in Scotland added observations by each parish minister to, amongst other details, the fisheries¹. This wealth of documentary material contains much information about fisheries, fisher communities and their boats and is a fundamental foundation for any study such as that reported in this dissertation.

CRAFT IN USE UP TO 1848

By the time bounties were introduced to encourage the further growth of the fisheries in 1750, fishing for herring was being undertaken in small open boats, some 16 feet in length and crewed by four or five men.² The intention behind the policy of bounty

¹ The First Statistical Account (OSA) was conducted in the 1790s and the Second Statistical Account (NSA) in the 1840s.

² Dunlop, 1978:8. Dunlop suggests that the choice for the fishermen was either to fish for herring from open boats or busses in the Dutch way, but that a 50-ton buss cost £723 to build in 1785. Bounties were introduced in 1750 giving owners of decked vessels of 20 to 80 tons burthen a bounty of 30 shillings a year for fitting out for the fishery.

payments was to duplicate the successful Dutch method of carrying small boats on the buss, which acted as the mother ship. Judging by McCulloch's description of the fishery at Loch Ranza in 1823, however, it appears that the busses were simply acting as buyer vessels for dozens of smaller boats.³

According to Elder, the fishing on the western side of Scotland began about the 1st July and was carried on until 25th October. 800 'sleying boats of between five and six tons each' were fishing. As the season progressed, 1500 might appear and '200 Cowper boats about 12 Tun apiece, qch buyes the herring and transportes them from the places where they are taken to the burghs where they are sold for the use of the country'. 6000 fishermen in total were employed in the West Coast fishery.⁴

Knox, in 1785, assumed that, from early times, the fishermen had been using 'little open wherries or boats, such as the Highlanders generally use at the present day'.⁵ He estimated that there were 1600 of these 'Highland wherries in the Firth of Clyde, carrying four men'.⁶ The following year he observed that the highland boats had four oars and six or seven crew and that the west coast fishermen were 'navigating the main ocean with boats not much longer than a London sculler, and many of them, called Norway skiffs, about that size...the highland boats are nearly of one size, slender built and but indifferently equipped'.⁷

Knox was presumably referring to the vessels used in the Hebrides, with which he wasn't impressed. 'To go up the Sound of Mull, even in the most favourable season, was

³ See page 22.

⁴ Elder, 1912: 27. He quotes from MSS, about 1630, 32.1.16, Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, entitled "Memorandum concerning the fishing along the coast of England, Cornwall, etc."

⁵ Knox, 1786:17.

⁶ Ibid. 105. He also notes that 2000 wherries were operating on the West Highlands and Hebrides and that the busses purchase the herrings direct from these boats, by virtue of a new law allowing this, but only at the end of their three month voyage.

a dangerous experiment for a small open boat, such as Oban afforded'.⁸ However, to begin with, we shall consider the evidence for the vessels in use on Loch Fyne.

Ardrishaig is located in Glassary parish and here there were '30 boats annually employed by the small tenantry living upon Lochfine side in the herring-fishing; each boat requires 4 hands.... there are 3 boat-carpenters..'⁹ It appears that the village grew, in a short time, from having only a few fishing boats, to a thriving place with 'regularly laid out streets, in which one house seems to march forward, while its neighbour makes a retrograde courtsey – its cheerful harbour, filled with the wealth of fishermen, the herring boats – the stillness prevails, alone broken by the splash of oars, or the harsh guttural Gaelic of the rowers...'¹⁰ Much of the wealth of the place came from the Crinan Canal and the frequent steamer connection to Glasgow.

Inveraray often had 500 boats fishing in the season, which lasted from July up to January.¹¹ Further confirmation of this figure of 500 boats comes from the local minister, Rev Paul Fraser, who also noted that each boat had four men on average. Most of these must have come from outside the town for there were only eight fishermen living there.¹² Garnett's estimates are between 500 and 600 and 'the groups of these little fishing vessels, with their circling nets, make a beautiful moving picture'.¹³ He goes on to say that 'each boat is covered with a kind of sail-cloth, to form a covering for the four men

⁷ Knox, 1787:91-92 & 257.

⁸ Ibid. 51.

⁹ OSA vol XIII: 657. We shall discover later that Ardrishaig was, along with Tarbert, renowned for its boatbuilding with at least five distinguished builders.

¹⁰ Stewart, 1848:44-5

¹¹ Newte, 1788:115.

¹² OSA vol V: 292

¹³ Garnett, 1811:94. His reference to 'circling net' is of particular note. Drift-nets are characteristically set in a straight line so that they drift with the tide, the boat anchored to the upstream end of the net. Circling nets suggests some form of seining which is exactly what a ring-net is. However Garnet was travelling 40 years before the introduction of the ring-net and almost a century before the drift-netters of the upper loch accepted its universal use.

who compose the crew'.¹⁴ He observed the same tradition on Loch Long, where there were only a few herring boats, which, he said, Mr. Watts was able to draw.¹⁵ The pole protruding from the stern with what appear to be fish hanging from its end could well be another mast or a spar or pole. Interpretation is further confused by the fact that it is difficult to ascertain whether this is one or two poles.

Evidence of the use of a sail to protect the forward end of a vessel is not common. Levis recounts its use in the lobster boats of the Southern Coast of Ireland in the latter part of the nineteenth century while, in contemporary times, the Northumberland coble fishermen are still renowned for their 'dodgers' over the bow.¹⁶

According to Garnett, Loch Fyne was, in his time, one part water and two parts fish. The fishing boats formed a line at night almost across the loch. During the day they gutted the herring, slept and sang 'Celtic tales to the sound of the bag-pipe'.¹⁷ Pennant described the 'cheerfull noise of bagpipe and dance [that] echoes on board' the 'some hundreds of boats in a manner [that] covered the surface of Loch Fyne'.¹⁸ William Daniel also noted that they amused themselves by playing Celtic ballads on the bagpipe.¹⁹ This is mentioned purely to note the duplicating of observations and to raise the question whether this is pure coincidence or plagiarism. The fish was packed into barrels and, he said, sent all over the world. Some was sent to Stirling, Glasgow and other parts of the

¹⁴ Ibid. 94.

¹⁵ Ibid. 68. Although the drawing doesn't appear technically accurate – the boat in the background looks to have a very high boom – the assumption from the sailcloth being set as an awning over the main boom must lead to one conclusion that the boats' rig had a boom in the first place. However, another possibility is that it could be another spar or pole. See also 'Iconographical Evidence', picture no. TG/S/01

¹⁶ Levis, 2002: 23-28.

¹⁷ Garnett, 1811:115.

¹⁸ Pennant, 1774:219.

¹⁹ Daniell, 1818, Vol III: 28-9. Daniell's description does seem to echo that of Pennant that leads to the suspicion that he has read more than actually observed on the ground.

country. 'In the middle of the season, two or three hundred horses and a great many carts are brought every day to the banks of Loch Fyne for fresh herring'.²⁰

So Garnett, then, has presented some form of picture of the vessel in use at Inveraray. Watts's vessel is low in the water, has hardly any sheer and is relatively shapeless.

Stoddart describes the boats thus: 'During the day, the little flotilla lies moored to the shore: the boats are of a singular form; at one end is a sail-cloth covering and at the other, according to the lively sketch of an old poet [P. Fletcher, *Purple Island* c.l. stanza

xiii]:
The thin net upon the long oars twin'd,
With wanton strife, catches the sun and wind,
Which still do slip away, and still remain behind.²¹

Bowman also noted, in 1825, that each vessel has a shelter for the crew by the forming of a roof with a sail cloth. As, though, he describes the loch as containing 'one part water and two parts fish', and mentions that five or six hundred boats are catching, in a good season, 20,000 barrels, there seems to be an awful lot of repetition.²² Whether this leads to the belief that subsequent writers have been guilty of plagiarism, or that each digested the situation as it existed in the same way, is unclear. But an amount of doubt certainly lingers.

²⁰ Ibid. 94-5. He seems to contradict himself here. Firstly he says that 20,000 barrels have been caught and cured yet this amount would scarcely supply the markets at Glasgow and Stirling, not to mention the rest of the country and the other parts of the world they are sent to. Then he says most of the catch is cured; yet up to 300 horses come to take away cart-loads of fresh herring. The mathematics doesn't add up.

²¹ Stoddart, vol 1, 1801:259. He refers to the flotilla as being little yet, earlier, he refers to 'a large fleet of boats'. He also notes the 'natural appearances' that lead the fishermen to the shoals – '*In the evening, they stretch in a line across the lake and sweep it with their nets. Much of their success depends on the proper depth, to which the nets are sunk: the herring sometimes passing over them and sometimes near the bottom. It is a beautiful sight to behold the surface of the water silvered, as it sometimes is by the glancing play of immense shoals, which crowd up to the very head of the Loch: they are pursued by flights of sea-fowl, hovering over them, with ceaseless screams; and it is by these signs that the experienced fisherman discovers the particular haunt which they have chosen; for in this respect they often seem to be guided by habit, but more frequently by accident, or caprice*'. The knowledge of these appearances will, as we shall see, play an important part in the subsequent design of the craft.

In the parish of Saddell and Skipness, in the 1790s, the minister noted that there were 30 small wherries, 6-10 tons with two crew, for carrying the herring to market and 60 rowboats, four men to a boat, and that 'both are sometimes promiscuously employed' for fishing. 200 to 300 boats were seen in an evening.²³ Harbours thereabout were inaccessible to vessels 15-30 tons and small fishing boats were of a greater consequence and thus, he says, should be encouraged. At Kilfinan, on the east side of the loch, there were 21 open boats each manned with four hands and constantly employed in the catching of herring in Loch Fyne, East Kintyre, Arran, Clyde, Loch Long and further. The farmers who prosecuted the fishing relied upon the herring to pay their rents. In the southern part of the parish Rev Alexander McFarlane wrote of their 'drinking proving to their having carried on a ruinous contraband trade with the Isle of Man'. Thus smuggling and fishing are mentioned as joint occupations.²⁴

However, Gray asserts that 'in the 1820s half-decked boats were introduced and by the 1840s the bulk of the Clyde fishermen were using such craft'. He also notes that the fishermen were farmers but that they gained more income from the seasonal herring fishery than from the land. The boats they used were partly owned by themselves and partly by the curers or merchants.²⁵ In the south of the loch, in 1830, a typical Tarbert skiff was 23 feet in the keel, cost £19 and the men used tents to sleep ashore.²⁶

By the time of the Second Statistical Account of 1845 we have more detail of the type of boat in general use. Throughout the western side of Loch Fyne and the

²² Bowman, 1986:55-6.

²³ OSA vol XII: 480.

²⁴ OSA vol XIV: 235-246

²⁵ Gray, 1978:119-120. It's worth noting that Peter Anson tells us that the first half-decked and decked boats didn't appear in Wick until 1865 – *Fishing Boats and Fisher Folk on the East Coast of Scotland* by Peter Anson, London, 1930.

²⁶ Mitchell, 1908:88.

Kilbrannan Sound both the number and size of boat has increased. In Saddell and Skipness we find that 'a great improvement has of late years taken place both in the size of the vessels and the quality of the materials employed in it'. There were 65 boats each crewed by three men.²⁷

In South Knapdale – the area north between Tarbert and Ardrishaig – there were 40 to 50 boats working the herring fishery in 1845 and each boat had three crew aboard. Some of the newer boats were partially decked and these cost £120 before they were equipped with masts, sails, anchors, nets and cordage. The smaller boats were valued, with equipment, at £60-70.²⁸

However, the most far-reaching change at this time was the introduction of the lug rig. Of Glassary parish it was said that:

their boats are becoming larger and better; and the Ayrshire fishermen have brought in a good style of skiff, with a single lug-sail. A few years ago they were all wherry or schooner-rigged. They change the colour of the paint frequently, the men of one place generally painting alike....the number of boats employed in this parish in the herring fishing, and in the cod and ling fishing, is 108, manned by 326 men and boys.²⁹

This is echoed by Hamilton who tells us that the Ayrshire fishermen first came to collect bait for their lines and subsequently settled in Ardrishaig.³⁰ The suggestion, therefore, is that the Ayrshire fishermen introduced both a new hull shape in 'the skiff' and the lug rig.

²⁷ NSA vol VII, Argyleshire:450-1

²⁸ Ibid.264-5

²⁹ NSA vol VII, Argyleshire:691-2. There is a note saying that Mr. Sutherland, the Fishery Officer at Ardrishaig has furnished this information, so it can be taken as being accurate. On average, then, there must have been three crew to a boat.

³⁰ Hamilton, 1986:7.

At Kilfinan, the number of boats had risen to 111 by 1845, again crewed by three men. 'The original cost of each boat or wherry is about L.40 or L.50, and the full quantity of nets costs nearly as much'.³¹

In Inveraray, however, we have for the first time the physical dimensions of the boats in use. They 'vary in size, being from 18 feet keel, and 8 feet beam, to half deckers 22 feet long by 9 broad. The former cost about L.20, the latter L.40.' There were 55 of these vessels fishing for herring.³²

So we must consider the factors that encouraged the fishermen to furnish themselves with larger, more seaworthy craft. We've already seen how a bounty of 30 shillings per ton was introduced to invigorate the fisheries, and this was increased to 50 shillings in 1757. The Rev James Hall suggested that the buss fishermen were more concerned with fishing for bounties than for the herrings and that the boats were imperfectly equipped and that there was not much effort made for fishing.³³

Much of the responsibility for awakening the government in London to respond to the needs of the people on the west coast of Scotland, indeed, the whole fishing community in the country, lies at the door of retired Edinburgh bookseller, the already mentioned John Knox. He had already published his discourse entitled *A View of the British Empire, more especially Scotland, with some Proposals for the Improvement of that country, the Extension of the Fisheries and the Relief of the Poor* when he was invited to make an official tour for the government. In this first book he argued for the setting up of fishing villages in the Highlands, and after this tour in 1786 he presented

³¹ NSA vol VII, Argleshire:368. The average earning of each boat is £50-60 divided equally amongst the three crew.

³² Ibid.32-3. The Fishery Officer in Lochgilphead estimates that one third of the catch is not cured.

³³ Hall, 1807:93.

them with a plan for the creation of 40 villages, each with 36 houses, around the northern coasts from Arran to Dornoch, each acting as a nucleus for a budding fishing industry'.³⁴ However, the government had already acted by modifying support for the buss fishery. In 1786, the bounty per ton for this fishery was reduced to 20 shillings and another bounty of four shillings per barrel of cured herring landed was introduced. This was intended to encourage fishermen to fish more aggressively in their smaller craft.

He wasn't alone in pressing for government intervention in this way. Anderson, in 1785, suggested supplying poor settlers with 'a stout new boat...carrying on fishing in those seas with oars and other furniture compleat; together with as much dried hemp as shall be sufficient to make a set of nets and fishing lines for the boat; as also a number of fishing-hooks sufficient for mounting these lines completely'.³⁵

Anderson had, in his own words, made the study of agriculture and rural affairs his principal concern since 'his earliest infancy', and appears to have sincerely believed in the viable advantages of using government money to set up such fishing communities to create what he terms the 'Northern Fisheries'. According to him there wasn't a hamlet bigger than a few souls between Stornoway in the north and Bowmore on Islay, and that the development of these settlements would both bring badly needed employment to the Highlands and make a substantial contribution to the nation's wealth and larder. His 1785 report runs to over 600 pages, including the introduction, and his own contribution to the overall debate must surely match that of Knox.³⁶ George Low made similar arguments on

³⁴ Miller, 1999:68. This was Knox's *Observations on the Northern Fisheries* in which he suggested that those associated with the industry would be able to rent or buy a house and that each village would cost £2000.

³⁵ Anderson, Edinburgh, 1785. He adds that the boats would be 'gratis' and that the fishermen would be bound to only fish and that they must not be used for smuggling purposes!

³⁶ See Anderson, J. *An Account of the Present State of the Hebrides and Western Coasts of Scotland*, 1785.

the Shetland fishery when he visited in 1774, attacking at the same time the fact that thousands of barrels were caught by the Dutch.³⁷

Newte had an altogether different suggestion for creating a centralised fishery. After touring the country in 1785 he recognised the benefits of encouraging the fishing, especially to the thousands of natives who had very little other employment. Yet his plan, he reckoned, was both feasible and the least expensive alternative. The idea was for the government to sell off old 50-gun ships or, indeed, other suitable vessels such as old East Indiamen, which would then be moored in different locations with aboard 'some intelligent masters of men of war, or other officers to command them with ten or fifteen seamen, accustomed to fishing, in each of them'. The crew would learn seamanship by operating under a jury rig and each vessel would have a certain number of smaller boats each with 'four skilful fishermen, and four boys'. The boys would in fact be apprentices, bound to stay for a fixed period, and bounties would be paid on the catch. There is no evidence to suggest any notice was taken of this grand idea of an English gentleman, as he described himself.³⁸ Ultimately it was the British Fisheries Society that emerged in 1786 and they subsequently built settlements at Tobermory, Ullapool, Lochbay and, later, Pulteneytown at Wick, as has been well documented.³⁹

However, the Salt Tax was the one outstanding factor that impeded the advance of the fisheries. Many of the travellers aforementioned noted the stifling of the fisheries due to this tax. Stoddart remarks '..Excise laws upon salt have, in many instances, operated very fatally to prevent the curing of them, when taken in great quantities: this evil was

³⁷ Low, 1879:191.

³⁸ Newte, 1788:115-8.

³⁹ The most comprehensive work on this is *The British Fisheries Society 1786-1893* by Jean Dunlop, Edinburgh, 1978.

much felt during my stay in Scotland.’⁴⁰ In Barra, in the Outer Hebrides, where herring sometimes appeared in great abundance, there was no salt to be had thus ‘the want of [it] has sometimes prevented the inhabitants from deriving any considerable advantage from it’. The salt laws, it was said, hindered the poor.⁴¹ The same was noted in North Uist, where the salt laws ‘are a great bar in the way of fishing’.⁴²

Newte estimated that 12,000 tons of salt were needed for the Scotch fisheries, three-quarters of which was imported from Portugal. Scottish seawater only produced three tons of salt from 100 tons of water, making it impractical to evaporate, given the tax on coal. The importation of rocksalt from England, without tax, would contribute to the overall development of the fisheries.⁴³ However, although a Parliamentary Committee considered the matter of the Salt Tax in 1801, it wasn’t until 1825 that the repressive legislation was actually repealed.

Up until now we have exclusively considered the vessels used in the herring fishery, by far the most important fishing in Britain since the Middle Ages. Knox says this is due to the size of the shoals and the fine quality of the fish, but it must also, surely, be partly due to the ease with which the nutritious fish can be captured, and so close to the shore.⁴⁴ However, the Clyde was rich in other fish and, as well as drifting for herring, long-lining was championed, especially on the east side along the Ayrshire and Wigtownshire coasts. Some boats, when searching for cod and ling, sailed as far as the Outer Hebrides, where a vibrant fishery off the east side of Barra occurred yearly.⁴⁵ 20-30

⁴⁰ Stoddart, 1801:258.

⁴¹ OSA, vol XIII: 335-6.

⁴² Ibid. 314

⁴³ Newte, 1791:106-113.

⁴⁴ Knox, 1784:30.

⁴⁵ NSA vol V Ayrshire:200.

boats with 5 men fished between March and the end of June, and the catch was carried to Glasgow across the Minch in fishing boats.⁴⁶

Ayr, as mentioned previously, was the centre for the Clyde fishery in the eighteenth century. Each line boat worked 12 to 14 lines, 'each line having 1800 hooks suspended from it, at the distance of an ell from each other'. The favoured bait was mussel or lugworm, although herring were used to catch large fish. However by 1845 the harbour was obviously in decline. For 'since the introduction of navigation, so many facilities have presented themselves for the conveyance of fish to the great markets, from the Argyleshire coast, that many fishers have removed thither from this place'. Only half the number of boats were fishing as had 20 years earlier. The fishers who carried the fish to Greenock and Glasgow in wherries had gone. Only seven boats remained, each crewed by four men, catching cod, haddocks, whittings, turbot, skate, flounders, mackerel and herrings, for home consumption'.⁴⁷ This movement of fishers to Argyllshire, then, supports the evidence of the lugsail being introduced into Loch Fyne by Ayrshire fishermen. The NSA for Newton-upon-Ayr has a suitable description of these fishers:

[They] are the most particular class of inhabitants...descendants of a colony from Pitsligo...sixty years ago...they live, as might be supposed, to a considerable extent on fish; and it is alleged are not so attentive as could be wished to cleanliness in their habits. Beer was formerly a favourite beverage and was taken by the fishermen in their boats in preference to whisky. But the number of brewers has of late years declined...ardent spirits are proportionately in greater request...It is pleasing to have to state, that poaching is almost unknown. The same may be said of smuggling – and there is not a pawn-broking establishment in the town...Instead of fishing as they formerly did through the whole extent of the Frith, and even up Loch Fyne, numbers of the Newton fishermen have settled permanently at the various stations which they were wont only occasionally to visit.⁴⁸

Ballantrae had nearby banks where the herring spawned and a 'great many herring are also caught some seasons'. This refers to the salmon and white fishery – mainly cod

⁴⁶ NSA vol XIII: 336.

⁴⁷ NSA vol V Ayrshire:52

and turbot – that was worked with success. In 1845 we have some information about the boats in use. A typical boat would last 12 or 15 years and cost about £10 and sails £2. The nets lasted no more than two years and cost £1, from 8-20 nets being used. Each boat had four crew. These boats were, presumably, fishing for herring.⁴⁹

So just how big are these vessels? In Largs, where they were fishing for mackerel, whiting, haddocks and cod, a single boat with four or five hands landed, in 1793, on average 18 stone every day for one month, the maximum landing being 20 stone.⁵⁰ This probably equates to a boat 20-25 feet in length.

⁴⁸ Ibid.95-7.

⁴⁹ Ibid.420.

⁵⁰ OSA Vol II: 362.

WASHINGTON'S REPORT OF 1849

To form a picture of the Clyde craft in detail from the Washington report, we must consider the replies from John Wood of Port Glasgow and A Sutherland, Fishery Officer in Ardrishaig, in answer to Washington's request for information regarding the boats from around the coast.

To begin with John Wood tells us this:⁵¹

...we have no fishing boats here, but in Gourock or Largs there are some good specimens of the boats used in Loch Fyne, &c. They are by no means handsome, but are very stiff under sail, and weatherly; their form is spoiled, I think, in order to get them with a short keel for working in narrow water, as well as for saving the cost of building, the price being reckoned by the length of keel. They are all open, and in these sheltered lochs this is, perhaps, attended with no inconvenience, though in the open sea in a gale of wind boats above ten feet broad might very well carry a half-deck, with gangways, which would render them more safe than when quite open; the weight of the deck is perhaps the most serious objection; it would, no doubt, be also inconvenient in a crowded boat.

Class 1 of these boats, 27 feet over-all, and 11 feet breadth, is getting numerous, and is, I think, a decided improvement as compared with the old boats; the stern is upright, the bow narrow, resembling a yacht, and they sail fast by the wind. These boats, I am told, are for the most part built at Rothesay, Fairlie, and Ardrishaig; many are also built in Greenock, Gourock, Campbeltown, and other places. Until of late years they were built entirely open, and rigged with two heavy gaff sails and jib; in fishing, they used to unship the mainmast, and work entirely with the foresail; by degrees the smack-rig has come almost wholly into use, as well as the half-deck. These boats make long voyages, with only two men; in fishing they have more. On the Ayrshire coast there is a numerous class of boats, about 25 by 8 feet, entirely open; they have a very broad, round stern, and narrow bow rigged with one large lug-sail and jib; they are handsome, and work and sail well.

No. 1 of the drawings I send is made from measurements taken from a new boat built at Rothesay, and comes very near the usual form of the Loch Fyne boats; they are, however, a good deal varied, principally in the midship section, some having much more of a hollow in the floor than others; they are all pinched for length of keel, because the price is constantly made at so much per foot keel.

No. 2 is an improved bow, introduced by Mr. Fyfe, of Fairlie, and I have no doubt it will get into general use, as being better adapted to the cutter rig than the full bow, as the jib lifts the bow, while the after leech of the mainsail depresses the stern, whereas the schooner (or wherry rig as it was called,) required a full harping and narrow stern, to keep the bow up under the weight of the foresail, the foremost being close forward, and upright.

⁵¹ Washington, 1849:355-6. The first paragraph is dated 24th September, the second 9th October and the third paragraph 15th October.

Mr. Sutherland from Ardrishaig gives us the following facts in his letter dated 2 October 1849:⁵²

1. About one-fifth of the boats used in the fishery are open boats.
2. They are chiefly built at Fairlie, Rothesay, Tarbert, and Ardrishaig.
3. Northwards from Loch Crinan they are generally open; and southwards to the Mull of Galloway about one-fifth open. They average about four and a half tons burthen.
4. The half-deck is not considered any inconvenience; and the introduction of the deck in boats has been within the last 25 years.
5. The fishermen live on board the boats while engaged in the fishery; the half-deck affords them protection from the weather, a sleeping and cooking apartment.
6. They prefer lying afloat when the harbours will admit of it, particularly so on account of drying their nets aboard; and the Loch Fyne boats do not take the ground easily, being sharply built.
7. They generally last from 15 to 20 years,
8. There are four classes of herring fishing boats in Loch Fyne. 1st Class- Length of keel 21 feet; half-decked. Rig-mainsail, jib and foresail; one mast. Cost of hull, sails, mast, and oars, &c., 60*l*. Complement of herring nets, fully mounted with buoys, buoy ropes, &c. 40*l*.; total cost, 100*l*.
2nd Class. Length of keel 19 feet; half-decked. Rig-mainsail, jib and foresail; one mast. Cost of hull, sails, mast and oars, &c., 50*l*. Complement of nets, mounted as above, 35*l*.; total cost, 85*l*.
3rd Class. Length of keel 18 feet; one half of this class half-decked. Rig-mainsail and jib; one mast. Cost of hull, sails, mast and oars, &c. 39*l*. Complement of nets, mounted as above, 30*l*.; total cost, 69*l*.
4th Class. Length of keel 17 feet; all open. Rig-lug sail; one mast. Cost of hull, sail, mast and oars, &c., 20*l*. Complement of nets, mounted as above, 25*l*.; total cost, 45*l*.

P.S. – The boats employed in Loch Fyne and its vicinity in 1848 were, at Inverary and Lochgilphead, 1,283; at Campbeltown and Islay, 546; at Rothesay, 219; at Greenock and Ayr, &c., 478; making a total of 2,526 boats, manned by 7,933 fishermen and boys.

From this information it is clear that the introduction of the smack for herring drifting had occurred in the 1820s, which agrees with Gray's assertion that half-deckers had arrived in Loch Fyne about that time, as previously mentioned. A typical clinker-built smack of the period, built by Black of Rothesay, with a keel length of 27 feet, half-decked, hull weighing 3.4 tons with another 3 tons of ballast, cost £35 ready for sea. Fyfe at Fairlie could build a similar vessel with a keel length of 25 feet (overall length 28 feet),

⁵² Washington, 1849:356. The report also has a fine collection of lines plans although all copies seem to omit those of the Loch Fyne boats that are mentioned. See Appendix 6 for plans.

hull weighing 4.2 tons with 3 tons of ballast extra for the same price.⁵³ These, it would appear, replaced the earlier wherry-rigged craft. We shall consider the evidence for the existence of wherries later.

One possible reason for this seemingly abrupt adoption of the half-decker coincided both with the repeal of the Salt Laws and a change in attitude by the government. The Commissioners for the Herring Fishery advised the allotting of sums towards the building of piers and for the repairing of boats belonging to the poor fishermen in 1824.⁵⁴ Two years later the sum of £3000 was set aside by government for this purpose and numerous applications were received from those with wrecked boats or boats badly damaged by the weather.⁵⁵ Grants not exceeding half the cost were paid to those who could prove hardship, and that they had families to keep. By 1827 we find that grants had been paid – the maximum being £7 – and Inveraray fishermen received £21 5s while at Rothesay the figure was £59.⁵⁶ By 1829 we find grants of £300 in total being paid out throughout Scotland in a year that the fishing was poor owing to adverse weather. The annual report, though, states that ‘the boats, with few exceptions, were small in size, ill provided with fishing materials, seldom cleaned or furnished with floorboards or pumps, and the fishermen rarely ventured in them above two or three miles’.⁵⁷

There are, distinctly, three types of vessels in use in Loch Fyne – the wherry, the lugger and the smack. The supposition is that the wherry was in constant use until the smack was introduced in the 1820s and the small double-ended, single-lug sailed boat

⁵³ March, vol 2, 1970:297. Presumably these costs relate to the period in question, although it must be added that March doesn't give dates.

⁵⁴ F.B.R. 1824:2.

⁵⁵ F.B.R. 1826:1

⁵⁶ F.B.R. 1827:21-23.

⁵⁷ F.B.R. 1829:3 & 26. The building of harbours is obviously well underway by this time, mostly on the east coast.

was introduced by the Ayrshire fishers around the same time, perhaps even earlier. However, before we can make firm assertions, we must consider the wherry in detail, as, to many, this type of vessel is a misnomer, and refers to a general class – or indeed classes - of boat with a schooner rig. To understand the lug-rigged boat, we must also consider the introduction of ring-netting that had such a huge impact on the fishing fleets of the Clyde.

THE WHERRY ON THE SMUGGLING COAST

Smuggling was, and still is in some quarters, regarded as a legitimate trade in goods, simply avoiding unfair duties imposed by the state. In the Irish Sea, in the eighteenth century, it was the Isle of Man that became the storehouse for goods that were to be smuggled into Britain that would otherwise attract dues if imported in the state-recognised way.⁵⁸ The Island was perfectly situated in the centre of the Irish Sea and, under the jurisdiction of its proprietor the Duke of Atholl and not the British Government, it could charge whatever import duty it wished.⁵⁹ Thus items such as tea, coffee, tobacco, wine and spirits were brought from Europe by various Manx merchants to be forwarded by boat into Wales, Western England or Scotland. Salt was sometimes brought in from Ireland. The slave-traders brought goods such as coffee and rum back from the West Indies.

The favoured craft used to transport the goods from the Isle of Man across to the mainland was termed the wherry. Evidence is strong of the existence of such a class of vessel, but there appears to be much confusion as to what exactly constitutes a 'wherry'.

A wherry has been described as a light boat with two masts, with a fore and aft rig and in use in the Isle of Man until the 1830s when the dandy rig was introduced.⁶⁰

However, the problem with the term 'wherry' is that in the past it has been used with a customary lack of precision. Often such vernacular terms require a fine critique to clarify their definition. What exactly does the above definition refer to? Is it the hull-

⁵⁸ Wilkins, 2000:4.

⁵⁹ Wilkins, 1992:41.

⁶⁰ This information comes from Megaw, 1941:99. William Cashen's *Manx Folk-lore*, first published in 1916 also substantiates this information, according to an answer from F. Huntley in *The Mariner's Mirror*, vol 80, No. 4 (Nov. 1994): page 480.

form, or a rig, or 'just' a boat? That wherries exist is clear from the documented evidence but more investigation is required to properly define such a vessel.

When John Walker set sail from Greenock to Campbeltown during his tour around the Scottish West Coast in 1764, it was aboard the 'custom house wherry'.⁶¹ Presumably, this wherry, belonging to the Customs and Excise Service, was larger than a simple open boat. In 1766 a 'large wherry from France discharged 650 ankers of brandy at the Troon...' which again suggests a large decked vessel.⁶²

Philip Higgins was employed to list every vessel entering Douglas Harbour in the 1750s/1760s and in his thorough compilation he names hundreds of boats.⁶³ Amongst these are a fair proportion coming from Rush in Ireland, the home of the Skerries wherries – we shall discuss this type of vessel later – and in general two sizes appear in use. The smaller wherries are classed as being 6 tons and the larger ones 18 tons. Out of a sample of 150 wherries, only nine carried cargoes, rather than arriving in ballast. The cargoes of these nine were individually: a horse (2), a bullock, a cow, two cows (3), ballast & beef, beef tallow. One vessel, the *Happy Return*, coming from Drogheda, had a tonnage of 35 tons. The wherry *Mary and Ann* arrived in Saltcoats from Barbrigan in November 1766 with only ballast aboard and took on eight cartloads of coal and proceeded to Ballycastle.⁶⁴ The Higgins list includes a *Mary Ann* as being 18 tons and over a six-month period she called in at Douglas on at least four occasions. From other sources we have the Whitehaven wherry *Mary* that was registered as 24 tons in 1812

⁶¹ Walker, 1980:7.

⁶² Ayr Customs House Letter Books, CE/76:1/14.

⁶³ Castle Rushen Papers 9782III – harbour accounts Douglas Harbour.

⁶⁴ Ayr Customs House Letter Books, CE/5, 14th November 1766 & 28th July 1767.

whereas the smaller *Peggy* was 6.58 tons.⁶⁵ In comparison, the sloop *Peggy of Ladyburn* was 29 feet long and 10 feet 6 inches in beam and was regarded as a small sloop.⁶⁶

Moore notes the particulars of one large wherry as being 16 or 17 tons burden carrying 10 or 12 men. This vessel, it seems, was from 'near Ribble and Wyrewater' and was 'constantly employed in carrying prohibited goods from the Isle of Man to those parts'.⁶⁷

That wherries were used for smuggling is undisputed: in 1765 there was seen 'a wherry at anchor and a great many horses and casks upon the shore...the casks carried back to the wherry in yoals...the wherry weighed anchor and went to sea'.⁶⁸ Their use in smuggling was due to their speed. In a letter to the Board of London, the Collector of Customs at Liverpool wrote of a captured one: 'She is a fair boat about 16 or 17 tons loaden and sails comparatively well and carries 10 or 12 men always armed'.⁶⁹ This echoes the dimensions above.

Cullen notes that Rush was considered the centre for the smuggling trade in the northern Irish Sea and that fifty such vessels were from there.⁷⁰ Indeed, the Irish Revenue Commissioners informed their British counterparts that Rush-built wherries were responsible for the entire contraband trade.⁷¹

Evidence for the smaller wherries is more forthcoming and the dimensions of one are given. Of boats condemned in 1778, after being arrested for smuggling, there were

⁶⁵ Liverpool Shipping Register 86/1788 quoted in *Maritime Wales*, No. 13 (1990):page 81.

⁶⁶ Ayr Customs House Letter Books, CE/76, Girvan, 3rd June 1771

⁶⁷ Collector, Liverpool, to Board, 22 February 1740, quoted by Moore, 1900:260.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 1/4:16th March 1765.

⁶⁹ Liverpool Customs Letterbooks, Collector, Liverpool Board, 19th August 1826, quoted in *The Mariner's Mirror*, vol 81, No. 3 (August 1995) by M.K. Stammers. He gives the dimensions of the *Betty*, a wherry built in Liverpool in 1775 as 30.5 x 10.8 x 4.0ft.

⁷⁰ Cullen, 1989:87.

⁷¹ Cullen,1992:18.

'small boats that none were decked....boat number 11 measuring 19 feet 12 in and 8 feet 2 inches in breadth is computed in the said certificate at seven and one fourth tonnes though by his computation it should only be seven tonnes'. In contrast the wherry *Heads of Ayr* is 52 tons.⁷² In 1777, 15 wherries were said to measure 82 tons, calculating to 5½ tons.⁷³

The Isle of Man wherries were fish carriers but there appears to be no evidence on the island to support the theory that they fished.

Another type of boat seen in Manx waters in the eighteenth century was the two masted 'wherry', used by fresh buyers who would meet the fishermen at sea and buy herring for a quick passage to ports in England and Ireland.

In addition to the fishermen's smacks there were schooner-rigged wherries, used as fast sailing vessels by the 'fresh buyers' who accompanied the fishing fleet, buying the fresh herring at sea and carrying them back to ports in the island, or to Dublin or Liverpool.⁷⁴

There is, however, evidence that wherries fished in Scottish waters. In Saltcoats there were six or eight vessels that went to the North Highland herring fishery and 'besides these larger vessels, a considerable number of wherries go from Saltcoats to the herring fishery in Loch Fyne, the Sound of Kilbrandon etc. At times the herrings visit our own neighbourhood; it is a beautiful sight to see a larger fleet of wherries assembled in our fine bay. The herring fishery has fallen greatly off since the bounty was withheld'.⁷⁵

Wherries, according to one report in 1785, were employed in the fishery during the greatest part of the year. Another, the same report states, was built for the fishery.⁷⁶

⁷² Ayr Customs House Letter Books, CE/76: 13th January 1778.

⁷³ Ibid. CE/76 1/4: 5th December 1777.

⁷⁴ These two excerpts come from the Manx Foundation Heritage Pack: 'Manx Sea Fishing 1600-1990s', the first in Manx Sea Fishing 1: 'Early Manx Herring Boats' and the other in the Resource Book, page 14-15.

⁷⁵ NSA vol V Ayr: 462.

⁷⁶ First Report from the Committee appointed to enquire into the State of the British Fisheries, 1785. BL: x 206.a. & x 264.b.

Fishing wherries operated from Lamlash and Campbeltown in the period 1742-1847.⁷⁷ The same source tells us that Irish wherries travelled to Shetland to fish in 1756. These fishers came in the summer to, amongst other islands, Deerness, where they traded for gloves and stockings.⁷⁸ Another source tells us that Irish wherries went to fish the Shetland grounds in the period 1750-1780, and a wherry *Starling*, referred to also as a cutter, went ashore at Busta Voe in November 1783 and was badly damaged.⁷⁹ In Loch Broom, where the herring were judged to be the very best, people were 'instantly afloat with every species of craft' when the shoals arrived, and amongst these 'sloops, schooners, wherries and boats of all sizes, are seen constantly flying on the wings of the wind'.⁸⁰ These, in 1798, were said by John Mackenzie to number 40-50, be about 2 tons and to never fish outside the loch. When asked what sort of boats he thought were best, he replied that stouter boats of about 5 tons burthen, decked if possible and able to turn the headlands – i.e. sail outside the loch.⁸¹ Arran had its own unique type of wherry if the description below is correct. This was the yachtsman Robert Buchanan, in 1883, while sailing off the east side of Lewis:

The Arran wherry, now nearly extinct, is a wretched-looking thing without a bowsprit, but with two strong masts. Across the foremast is a bulkhead, and there is a small locker room for blankets and bread. In the open space between bulkhead and locker birch-tops are thickly strewn for a bed, and for covering there is a huge woollen waterproof blanket ready to be stretched out. Close to the mast lies a huge stone and thereon a stove...rude and ill-found as these boats are, they face weather before which any ordinary yachtsman would quail.⁸²

⁷⁷ H.M. Customs accounts, Edinburgh 1742-1847, quoted in *The Mariner's Mirror*, vol 28 No. 2 (April 1942):page 166.

⁷⁸ Fenton, 1978:458. Also see Pococke, (1760), 1887:139 and Low (1774) 1879:51.

⁷⁹ *The Mariner's Mirror*, vol 20:233

⁸⁰ NSA vol XVII, Ross and Cromarty: 77.

⁸¹ 2nd Report from the Committee appointed to enquire into the State of the British Fisheries, 27 June 1785:page 89.

⁸² Buchanan, 1883:173.

He also noted the presence of West Country smacks fishing, as well as three-masted east coast boats from Lochleven, two-masted lug-rigged Newhaven boats, Isle of Man jiggers as well as other smacks, open boats, skiffs and wherries.

Boswell, on route with Johnson from Muck to Tobermory, wrote: 'We kept near five herring vessels for some time; but afterwards four of them got before us, and one little wherry fell behind us'.⁸³

When Sir Donald Campbell bought the castle *Elein an stalcaire*, a tiny square tower built on a rock between Lismore Island and Appin, from the Stewarts of Appin, it was 'for a small wherry'.⁸⁴ In Tobermory, the wherry *Greyhound of Dunoon* arrived on the 2nd November 1811 with 108 cran of herring aboard.

On the east side of Loch Fyne, in the parish of Kilfinan, 'there were 111 fishing – boats belonging to the parish, each of them requiring 3 men to manage it. The original cost of each boat or wherry is about L.40 or L.50..'⁸⁵ The Arrochar fishermen went seasonally to Loch Fyne when the fishing in Loch Long failed and thence to Campbeltown. There were, according to the minister, 'usually three hands in an ordinary sized wherry'.⁸⁶

Wherries were also used to fish off the English coast. A portrait on a porcelain bowl, painted in underglaze blue, depicts the fishing vessel *Isabella* fishing with a net hanging over the stern, and is dated 1779.⁸⁷ Three more schooner-rigged vessels are shown in J.T. Serres' views of the Mersey and in 1796 the ferries from Liverpool to the

⁸³ Johnson & Boswell, 1996:373 (1773). The inference is surely that the wherry was a herring fishing vessel. The master of the vessel upon which Johnson and Boswell were was obviously concerned for the wherry's safe-being for he contacted its skipper who begged for a light to be put out when they arrived in Coll.

⁸⁴ NSA vol VII, Argyleshire:240.

⁸⁵ Ibid.368.

⁸⁶ NSA vol VIII, Dumbartonshire:98.

Wirral were two-masted open boats.⁸⁸ At North Meols, a similar type of vessel was used for fishing. The *Betty* was a two-masted schooner, built at Hoole Marsh in 1817 and measured 32.3 feet x 10.9 feet x 14.70 tons. She was sold to Whitehaven in 1840.⁸⁹ Stammers, in *Mersey Sailing Ferries*, gives iconographical evidence for these vessels.⁹⁰

However, we must guard against the confusing or erratic use of terminology. Mackenzie refers to ‘the straight-stemmed Wick wherry’ in contrast to the Buckie boat, as being one of the East Coast boat types, when presumably he was referring to the *scaffie*.⁹¹ In Hampshire and around the Isle of Wight wherries were two-masted craft, often with transom sterns that set either sprit or lug sails. They were often used for smuggling in the nineteenth century and a painting by George Chambers, now in the National Maritime Museum, shows one such sprit-rigged vessel that has a hull-shape with a strong resemblance to these Irish Sea wherries. Whether there is a common link, or this is mere coincidence is unclear. To explore this is outside the remit of this paper.⁹²

Further evidence that the wherry-type hull survived into the twentieth century can be seen in the beach boats of Wales. On the north and east coasts of Anglesey the fishermen used small transom-sterned clinker-built boats that display similarities to the images of William Daniel (see Iconographical evidence). These boats, according to Smylie, were 16 feet long although Roberts describes them as being up to 22 feet.⁹³ Most were two-masted with a main dipping lug and either a standing lug or triangular mizzen, although Roberts suggests some were cutter-rigged.

⁸⁷ This is in the possession of the Merseyside Maritime Museum (accession No. M2561).

⁸⁸ W. Moss's *Guide to Liverpool*, as quoted in *Maritime Wales*, No. 13 (1990), page 81.

⁸⁹ Liverpool Shipping Register, quoted in *Maritime Wales*, No. 13 (1990), page 82.

⁹⁰ *A Second Merseyside Maritime History*, Transactions and Research of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society (undated), pages 38-42.

⁹¹ Mackenzie, 1919:81.

⁹² Leather, 1979:170-74.

In Aberystwyth three-masted clinker-built beach boats had a not dissimilar hull shape, although they were 24 feet long. The unusual rig, two spritsails and an after lug, could well have been a development of the wherry rig.⁹⁴ However, although such a rig is rare, just across the Irish Sea the larger Wexford herring cots have an almost identical three-masted rig. These 30 feet boats were entirely flat-bottomed with the exception of a small portion of keel at either end, what Holdsworth describes as a 'bilge-piece' running along the edge between the floor and planking. They were 30 feet long and 7½ to 8 feet in beam.⁹⁵ The relationship between the Wexford cots, the Aberystwyth beach boats and the wherries needs further investigation.

In Swansea, pilot boats worked with an unusual rig, described as distinctive by Coates. Some evidence suggests they were originally lug-rigged, but later boats set two gaff sails on steeply raking masts, with very short gaffs. The shortness of these was attributed to reducing weight aloft whilst coming alongside a ship to put the pilot aboard. However, earlier hull shapes, bluff-bowed, clinker-built craft show certain resemblances to wherries. Coates suggests that the first pilot boats evolved from crab boats.⁹⁶ Where the rig first came from remains an item of debate, but it cannot go unnoticed that it has many similarities to the Skerries wherries.

In conclusion, there does seem to be some evidence that the term wherry referred to the hull as well as the rig, although the general consensus is that a wherry is a two-masted vessel of any description. This is supported by evidence from Bangor where the

⁹³ Smylie, 2000:44; Roberts in 'Wales', chapter in Mannering, *Inshore Craft*, p201.

⁹⁴ These have been described in full by R.J.H. Lloyd in 'Aberystwyth Fishing Boats' in *Mariners Mirror*, vol 41, no. 2, (1955) pp149-161.

⁹⁵ Holdsworth, 1874:364. He shows a picture of one heeled over out of the water, showing the peculiar hull construction.

⁹⁶ Coates, 1943:114.

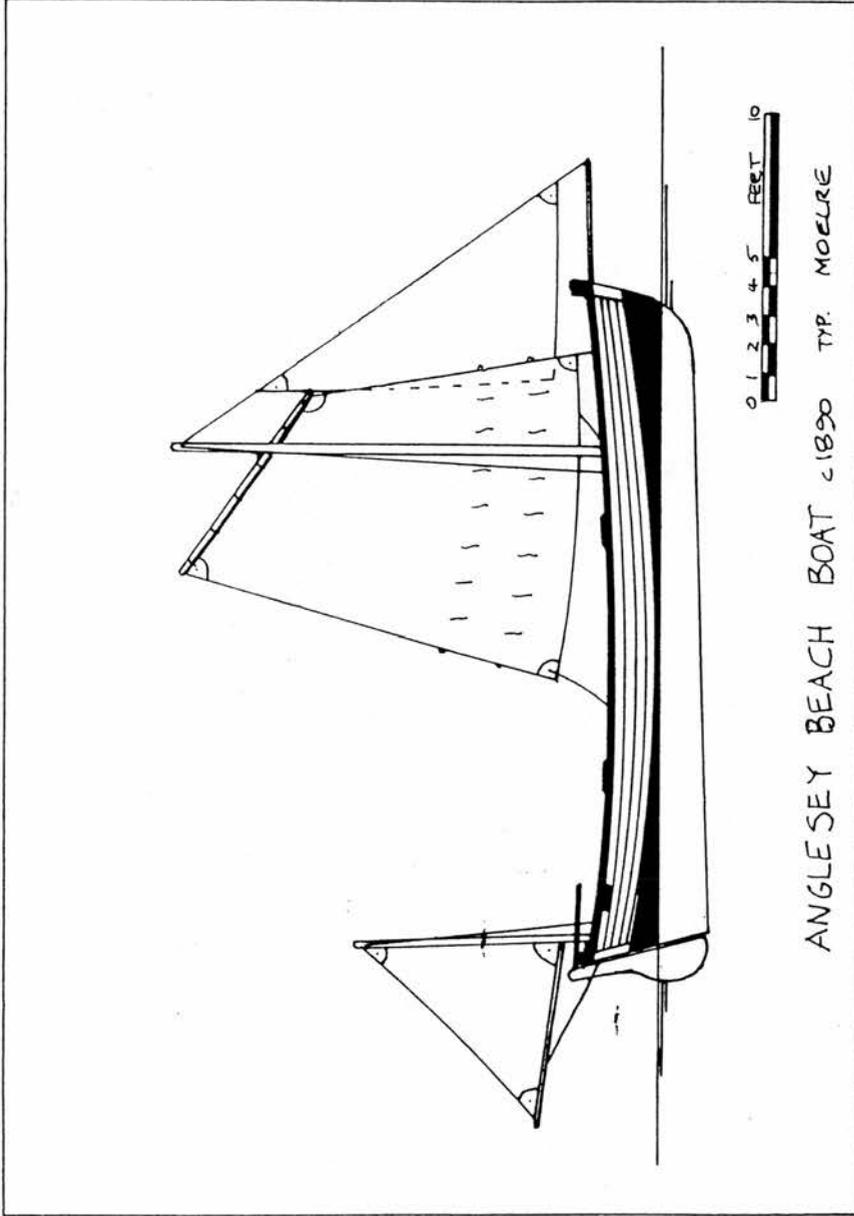
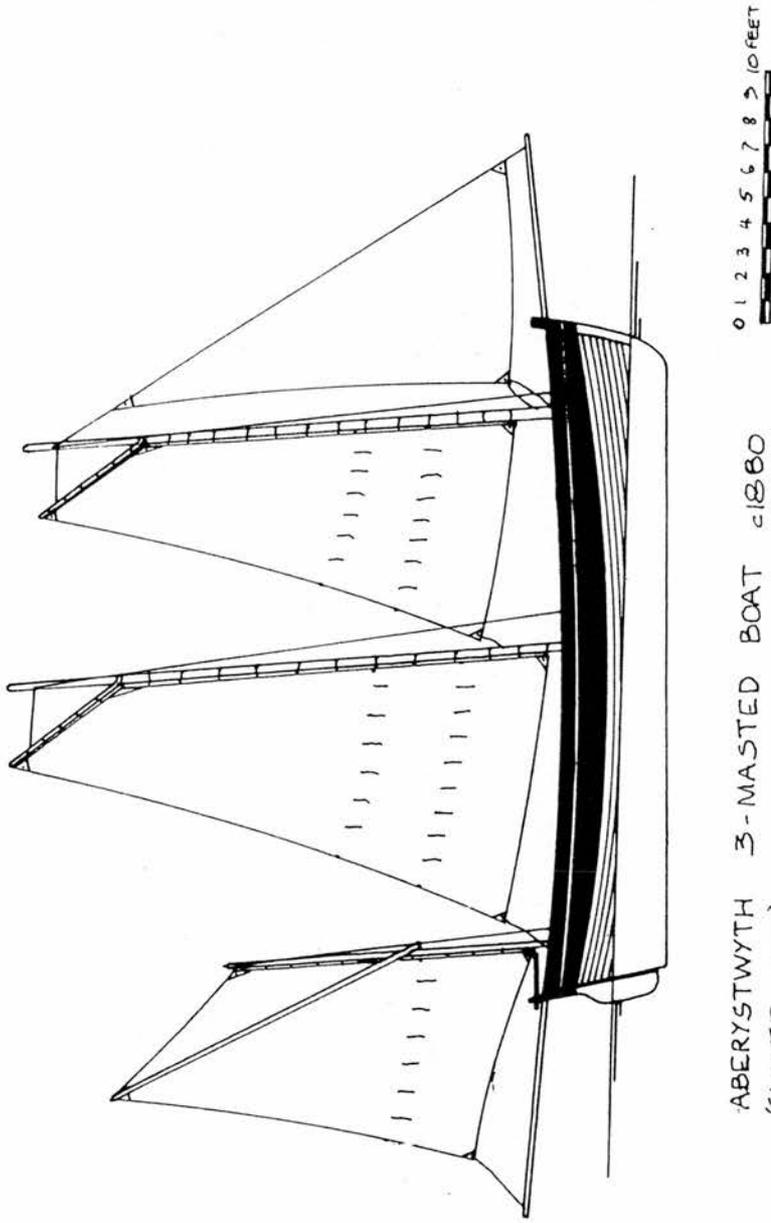


Fig 8 Sail plan of Anglesey beach boat c.1890 by Mike Smylie



ABERYSTWYTH 3-MASTED BOAT c.1860
(CLINKER TYPE)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 FEET

Fig 9 Sail plan of Aberystwyth three-masted lugger c.1880 by Mike Smylie

sloop *Petrel*, built there in 1866, was subsequently lengthened and re-registered as a wherry of 24 tons and sold to Scotland in 1883.⁹⁷

Evidence of the smack-rigged trader (wherry?) working in Manx waters can be seen through the model of the *Athol of Douglas*, dating from 1790-1800. The hull is clinker and has a roomy forecastle which allowed plenty of foredeck for working the headsails. The model is considered a true replica and is suggested to be of a Norwegian or Scottish aspect, although it shows certain resembles to medieval boats on the seals of Dover and Poole. Gretton believes this to point to Norman influences and thus 'the relationship to the Viking ships can be assumed'.⁹⁸

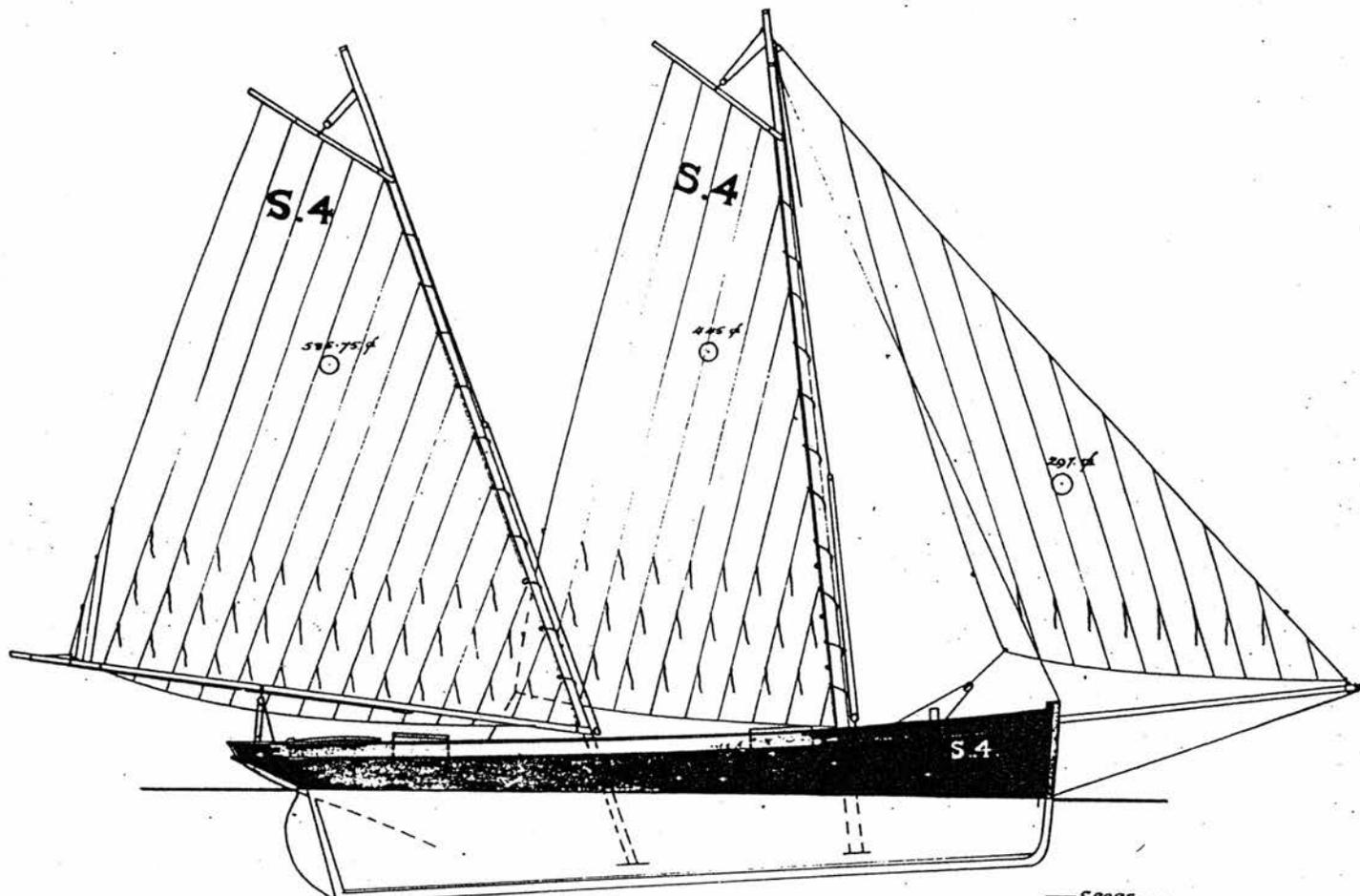
THE SKERRIES WHERRIES

These vessels, already mentioned, have been documented to some degree by Holdsworth who describes them as peculiar and much used in the district to the north of Dublin. He examined one in 1864, in Balbriggan, used for trawling, although he added that few were used by then in the fishing, the majority being employed carrying cargo in the coastal trade. His description was thus: '...a lumbering craft, half-decked or entirely so, and some of them we believe were over 30 tons. These wherries are the only fishing vessels we have seen on any part of our coasts which had the schooner rig; but some were in the course of time converted into smacks, and that is now the usual rig of the larger fishing boats, except those used in the drift-fishery'. Of the smaller fishing boats in use,

⁹⁷ Elis-Williams, 1988:139.

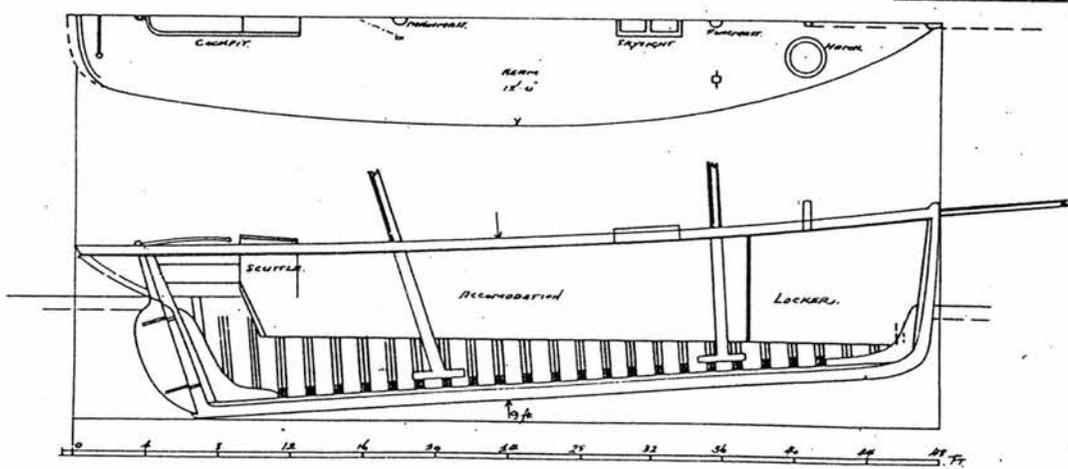
⁹⁸ Gretton, 1957:13-14.

PLAN of
SWANSEA BAY PILOT BOAT.



SAIL PLAN - SWANSEA BAY PILOT BOAT - C. 1870.
FROM SAIL PLAN DRAWN BY A SAILMAKER.

— SPARS —
 BOWSPRIT, L.O.A. 25.0" SURT'D 17.6"
 FOREMAST --- 51.9" GAFF 9.6"
 MAINMAST --- 52.10" GAFF 10.0"
 MAINBOOM --- 34.5"
 — SAIL AREA —
 JIB 297 sq.
 FORESAIL 445.0 sq.
 MAINSAIL 585.75 sq.
 TOTAL SAIL AREA 1327.75 sq.



Scale 1/2" = 1 ft
 P/OKE Plymouth
 Sept 1926

APPROXIMATE SHEER DRAUGHT & DECK PLAN
 of SWANSEA BAY PILOT BOAT C. 1870.
 DETAILS from Alex. G. Moffat Esq.
 Royal Lieut. Comdr. of South Wales, Swansea.
 L.O.A. 50.0 x 12.0 x 9.0. frames 8"0 spacing 12" apart.

he notes their similarity to the Norway yawls and reckoned the Norway trading vessels many years ago introduced them.⁹⁹

The 53-ton wherry *Mary Gold of Skerries* fished, as did many others between 1812 and 1818, out of Tobermory, taking aboard 320 bushels of salt on the 7th February 1814 and returning a week later with the same salt and no fish.¹⁰⁰

Brabazon states that he prefers the wherry rig to the cutter rig as they avoid the huge weight of one mast, and makes them easier to work in heavy rolling weather, and they set a boomless main which aids working aboard.¹⁰¹ The advantage of loose-footed sails was well known by the fishermen around the country, the Thames bawley being one most notable example. Numbers of wherries working the Irish coast in 1802 were: Ringsend 7, Howth 7, Malahide, 3, Rush, 16, Skerries, 36, Balbriggan, 9 and Baldoyle 9 and were noted as being chiefly employed in long-lining, where they could shoot the lines under foresail alone. Some were decked and others only half-decked.¹⁰² In 1820 there were 52 vessels ranging between 20 and 57 tons. Some were smack rigged whilst others were two-masted wherries, both of which were considered the best type of vessel for the western fisheries.¹⁰³

Referring to the fisheries of the West Coast of Scotland, Walker notes their use in Barra, whose native boats – which he termed ‘yauls’ - were too small and insufficient. These were from Rush and he describes them as being the most expert in the cod fishery. They were half-decked and from 6-10 tons and were ‘the proper Vessels to be used upon

⁹⁹ Holdsworth, 1874:360-2.

¹⁰⁰ F.B.R. AF33: Oban. There are numerous references to wherries fishing out of Tobermory, however they all appear to be large vessels over 35 tons.

¹⁰¹ Brabazon, 1848:15. He also noted their use in transporting the mail to Holyhead and that they could put to sea in weather that retained the cutters in harbour.

¹⁰² Clarke, 1974:121-2.

this Barra Fishery'.¹⁰⁴ Anderson makes the following observation regarding the wherry rig: 'All the fishermen agree, that wherry-rigged vessels are the only proper ones for the line-fishery...wherry-rigged vessels would also answer perfectly well for the herring-fishery after the Dutch method'.¹⁰⁵ This was in 1785, so do we infer that he did not come across any wherry-rigged vessels engaged in the herring fishery during his travels? Of Shetland he suggested that 'the only vessels that have hitherto been discovered, that can possibly be employed for these purposes [the long-line] are such as the wherry-rigged; for, with such vessels only, can the sails be worked with the facility that is necessary on these occasions; and with such a rigging alone, can a vessel of any considerable burthen be so worked as to be capable of shooting and hauling a long-line under the easy management of a foresail....' He notes that the fishermen of London, Yarmouth and other parts of the East Coast of Britain, as well as those of Rush and the northwest of Ireland use such a vessel. As an example he quotes Captain Kyd who ascertained that wherry-rigged vessels were more efficient at catching fish than other boats, suggesting that each 'wherry man caught nearly as much fish as four men in boats'.¹⁰⁶ However, in direct contradiction, he states in his addendum that, although fishermen seemed to be unanimously of the opinion that the wherry rig was the optimum rig for vessels bigger than a boat, he had come to the conclusion that this wasn't strictly true. He continued: 'A vessel that is to be employed in fishing for herrings at sea after the Dutch method, requires probably a peculiar-built and possibly a particular rig also, for lying in the

¹⁰³ McCaughan, 1991:134. He quotes from the 1836 Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of the Irish Fisheries.

¹⁰⁴ Walker, 1980:90.

¹⁰⁵ Anderson, 1785:108

¹⁰⁶ Ibid:267-9.

water'. It was important that at least one mast be lowered, he said. However, he admitted, wherries were the simplest and easiest to work of all the vessels he considered.¹⁰⁷

A word here about the schooner rig. It has been assumed in the past that it developed from the cutter rig, but according to E. Keble Chatterton, it existed before the cutter. He says that the original schooners had no headsails and developed in the third decade of the seventeenth century. A painting in the Dordrecht Museum by Adam Willaerts (1629) shows a Spanish influence from lateen sails. The two sails laced to the masts presented a handy rig, he suggested. The vessel in question, judging from the huge rudder, seemed to be Dutch.¹⁰⁸

THE SMACK

The conclusions drawn from the evidence in general, then, are that the wherry term in fact refers to the schooner rig and not the hull shape, although there is a pattern of similarity in hull-form. In Loch Fyne and the Clyde, and around parts of the Northern Irish Sea, the fishermen were using small transom-sterned vessels with two masts and completely open. These were generally referred to as 'wherries'. Then in the second decade of the nineteenth century half-deckers began to be introduced – although the belief is that the transition was indeed very slow to begin with - and these were smack-

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 323-4.

¹⁰⁸ Chatterton, 1927:75.

rigged, a tendency occurring throughout the area, probably being brought in by fishermen from the south. In Campbeltown this occurred about 1840.¹⁰⁹ By 1843, the same half-deckers had been introduced into Inveraray, as we've already seen, and were 22 feet on the keel and 9 feet in beam, and by 1843 most of the Clyde fleets had adopted the half-deck by the end of that decade¹¹⁰. However with the introduction of the lug-rigged vessel from Ayrshire at about the same time, we have to assume that two types had been adopted.¹¹¹ Washington's report echoes this adoption of two types of vessel in Loch Fyne, as we've already seen.

These new smack-rigged vessels cost about £120, an investment twice the cost of the open boats.¹¹² To begin with it seems that the boats were simply their old wherries adapted with a smack rig, these bluff-bowed, narrow-sterned craft being depicted in various iconographical representations of the time. This, then, adds to the confusion of terminology for here we have a wherry-type vessel, smack-rigged, therefore not conforming to our previous definition of a wherry that it refers to the rig of the vessel. These pictures will be discussed separately later. Suffice it to say that they were open, as we've already seen. Gradually, more traditional single-masted smacks – having fine bows and wide transoms – were adopted, probably in response to incoming craft or the fishermen travelling further afield. Similar smacks were drawn by E. Prys Jones in Aberystwyth in 1820.¹¹³ Martin points out that both the Lochfyneside and Campbeltown boats were sailing to the herring fisheries off the Isle of Man and Outer Hebrides, and he

¹⁰⁹ NSA vol VII Argyleshire:463. The success of the fishery was attributed to the introduction of a superior description of vessel and nets, as well as the finding of new markets due to steamers being able to transport the catch.

¹¹⁰ Gray, 1978:119-120.

¹¹¹ Ibid.32. It is therefore safe to assume that the lug-rigged boats were 18 feet in keel length and 8 feet in beam.

¹¹² Martin, 1981:5. This cost, he says, does not include masts, sails, nets or anchors.

suggests that they worked with several smaller boats that supplied the smack with the catch, on board which it was cured.¹¹⁴ By 1866, the smacks were half-decked and about 20 tons. Some were obviously otter-trawling as well as drift-netting.¹¹⁵

Smack-building in Campbeltown and Loch Fyne presumably began sometime after 1845, and at other locations such as Rothesay and Fairlie. The latter was home of the Fyfe boatbuilding dynasty begun by William Fyfe at some point in the last decade of the eighteenth century. It has been suggested that he built smacks to supplement his income from building yachts and that he also produced herring luggers – up to a dozen a year – until 1840. The same source suggests he also built 19ft long open fishing skiffs rigged with one dipping lugsail. What is clear is that three generations of Fyfes designed and built some of the best Victorian yachts to appear on the yachting scene in Britain. Hugh Boag, his one-time foreman and best shipwright, left in the late 1860s to set up business on his own.¹¹⁶

In Ayr, smacks remained on the fishing register into the twentieth century. One such vessel was the *Shamrock*, BA24, listed as being 27.4 feet overall, 23.7 feet in the keel and having a 9.3 feet beam. She, like dozens of other examples, was rigged with a main, foresail, jib and topsails and was built for trawling. In the 1903 register, there were 34 boats all registered within the range BA230-BA264 and all having similar dimensions.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ E.Prys Jones: Collection of drawings at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

¹¹⁴ Martin, 1981:5-6.

¹¹⁵ Sea Fisheries Report 1866, page 762, notes these smacks were 'used for trawling'.

¹¹⁶ Most of the information about the Fyfe family comes from a series of three articles by John Leather in *Classic Boat* – nos. 23-25 (May, June & July 1990).

¹¹⁷ Greenock & Ballantrae Registers of Fishing Boats, found at the bottom of cupboard in the Ayr Fishery Offices by the author in 1993.

Larger Arran smacks worked off exposed beaches in the Clyde into the twentieth century, some being ex-fishing craft, with finer lines and much faster under sail, although it is said that these were less able to discharge onto the beach because of their shape.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Simper, 2002:42.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE TRAWL SKIFF

In the 1830s the fishermen of Tarbert began using drift nets as seine nets from the beach to catch herring. Thus evolved the method of trawling, universally known as the ring-net. The history of the introduction of the method has been extensively researched by Angus Martin, and his resulting work *The Ring-Net Fishermen* is considered as one of the most comprehensive and sympathetic local studies of a regional fishery. It therefore needs no repetition.¹¹⁹

Between the 1830s and the banning of the practice of trawling, a change in boat design had become apparent. In 1848, in a letter criticizing the method, the writer referred to 'a class of boats, not owned by the regular fishers of herrings, [which] have of late years had recourse to trawling for fish.'¹²⁰ These, it is suggested, are the trawl skiffs, lightly-built craft that were propelled by four oarsmen. After legislation enforcing a ban on trawling was introduced in 1851, those fishermen continuing the practice had to work under the cover of dark to avoid detection, especially after the stationing of a gunboat upon the loch to stamp out its prosecution. For this they needed a boat that was both fast and manoeuvrable. Martin notes that a typical trawl skiff in 1852 was between 20 and 25 feet in length and 6 feet in beam, costing from £12. They were completely open and were rigged with a small lugsail, some having a foresail, although it seems the fishermen rowed them as often as not. He suggests that they were unballasted until ring-netting was legalised, when ballast was normally carried.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Osler, 1997:19.

¹²⁰ Nov 1848, Ballimore House, by Strachur, A.F.31/1 as quoted in Martin, 1981:7.

¹²¹ Ibid. 59-60.

OUTSIDE OF THE CLYDE

We've already briefly mentioned the boats of the Sound of Mull and Barra. We will consider them in more detail. In the parish of Glenshiel, the Rev John McRae noted that the boats were 16 feet in keel length, rigged with a single lug and crewed by two to four men. Herring was the staple food of the parish and the season commenced in August and continued until the herring deserted in December. He suggested that the chief obstacles to its success were the small size of the boats, restrained by the fishermen's lack of capital, preventing them from following the shoals along the coast, and the lack of good quality timber at a fair price to build the boats.¹²²

In Applecross, where the herring were numerous at times, 'fishing is a favourite occupation of the people of this parish. They derive much of their sustenance from the sea'. Each principal farmer had his own boat while between two and four of the poor crofters ganged together to make a joint purchase.¹²³

Tiree was said to be one of the best fishing stations in the Western Isles in 1792 with cod and ling the major catch. However herrings frequented the Bay of Gott and were caught by Barra, Irish and East Scottish fishermen. Ten fishing yawls, partly-decked vessels with a carrying capacity of between 3 to 14 tons, successfully fished, while the locals were again unable to due to lack of capital.¹²⁴ Their boats were only 16 feet long. However, there were 94 fishing skiffs by 1845, only ten of which were regularly used. The fishing had, by then, come under the control of Aberdeenshire fishers who brought their powerful boats of 18 tons burden to prosecute the ling fishery. With them they

¹²² NSA vol XIV Ross & Cromarty: 190-206.

¹²³ OSA vol III: 373.

brought a smaller boat, crewed by six men. The native fishing boats, 25 feet boats with two lugsails, are 'but slight cockle-shells compared to these'.¹²⁵ In a disaster in 1892 nine men were lost, a tragedy attributed to their unseaworthy nature. On Coll, on the other hand, although visited by other fishers, the fishery was neglected by the natives.¹²⁶

Tobermory had some half-deckers of 8-9 tons and the same report suggested there were 300-400 lobster boats on the west coast.¹²⁷ In Jura there were no boats larger than five or six tons although the herring was close by¹²⁸ and at Gigha there were 20 boats, each with 800-1000 hooks catching cod.¹²⁹ Portnahaven, on Islay, was also renowned for its cod fishery.¹³⁰ The boats the native fishermen used for this line fishery were called Greencastle skiffs and were imported from Moville in Donegal.¹³¹ These we will discuss in Part Four.

THE 'PEGGY OF CASTLETOWN'

The only surviving example of an eighteenth century Irish Sea vessel such as we've discussed was discovered in a walled-up boathouse in Castletown sometime in the 1930s. This boathouse belonged to the Quayle family and George Quayle (1753 or 1757 – 1835) was the eldest son of John and Margaret Quayle.

¹²⁴ OSA vol X:407-8.

¹²⁵ NSA vol VII, Argyleshire:214-5.

¹²⁶ Daniell, 1818, III: 45.

¹²⁷ Sea Fisheries Report 1866, page729: 6/8/1864. In contrast, the Stornoway boats were open and small 18-20ft for cod and ling and 30-34 for the deep-sea fishery, all lug rigged.

¹²⁸ OSA vol XXII: 323.

¹²⁹ NSA vol VII Argyleshire: 399.

¹³⁰ OSA vol XI:281.

¹³¹ Martin, 1983:64. The Campbeltown fishermen referred to these vessels as 'greenies'.

The building is now part of the Castletown Nautical Museum. Basil Greenhill, several years after her finding, pieced together the history of the boat although, up to that time, there was some confusion because of the existence of two *Peggy*'s in the record and another similar boat called *Neptune*.

Peggy was built in 1791 to a design widely used for working boats at that time. She fished and undertook some general work and possibly a bit of smuggling. She had two masts with a headsail and a running bowsprit, which gave her a schooner rig. She also had ports for six oars.

The boat now in the boathouse was considerably altered around the turn of the nineteenth century. According to Greenhill, prior to that she was a wet boat and not particularly seaworthy, due to her narrowness and low freeboard. Consequently she was increased in height and the oar-ports plugged, making her purely a sailing boat. She was also given a new transom with an ornate frame carrying her name.

She was measured by P.J.Oke in 1935 and copies of his plans are attached. However, there is a degree of inaccuracy, as the positioning of the gooseneck on the main beam, indicated by marks on the mast, would not allow the boom to swing without fouling upon the gunwale. Oke's drawings do not take account of the structural changes made to the vessel.

The interesting point about this boat is her similarity to the iconographical evidence used later in this paper to substantiate the claim that wherries were in fact a type of craft used for fishing in these waters, and those of Loch Fyne and the Clyde, which concerns us more. *Peggy* measures 26 feet 5 inches overall and 7 feet 8 inches on the beam and her tonnage has been calculated at 6.58 tons, measured in the late eighteenth

— SPAR DIMENSIONS —
 FOREMAST. 24' 4" dia. 5" MASTHEAD 4' 0" dia. 3 1/2"
 --- --- --- --- ---
 MAINMAST. 26' 1" dia. 6" --- 4' 6" dia. 4"
 --- --- --- --- ---
 BOOM. 17' 9 1/2" dia. 7 1/2" dia. 2 1/2"
 --- --- --- --- ---
 GAFF. 10' 0" dia. 3" dia. 1 1/2" dia. 1 1/2"

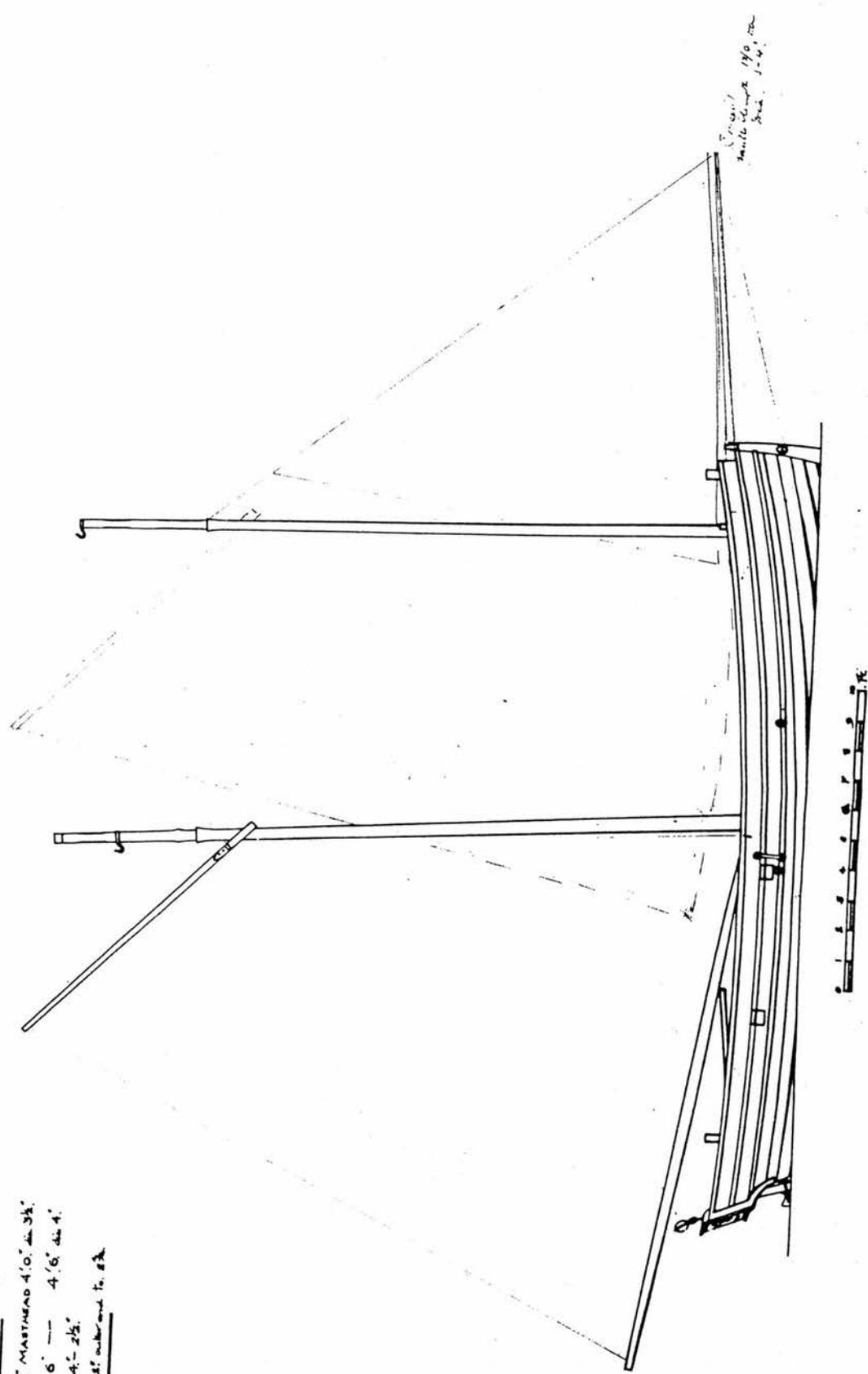


Fig 11 Sail plan of *Peggy of Castletown* drawn by P.J.Oke for the Society for Nautical Research in 1936. (Science Museum)

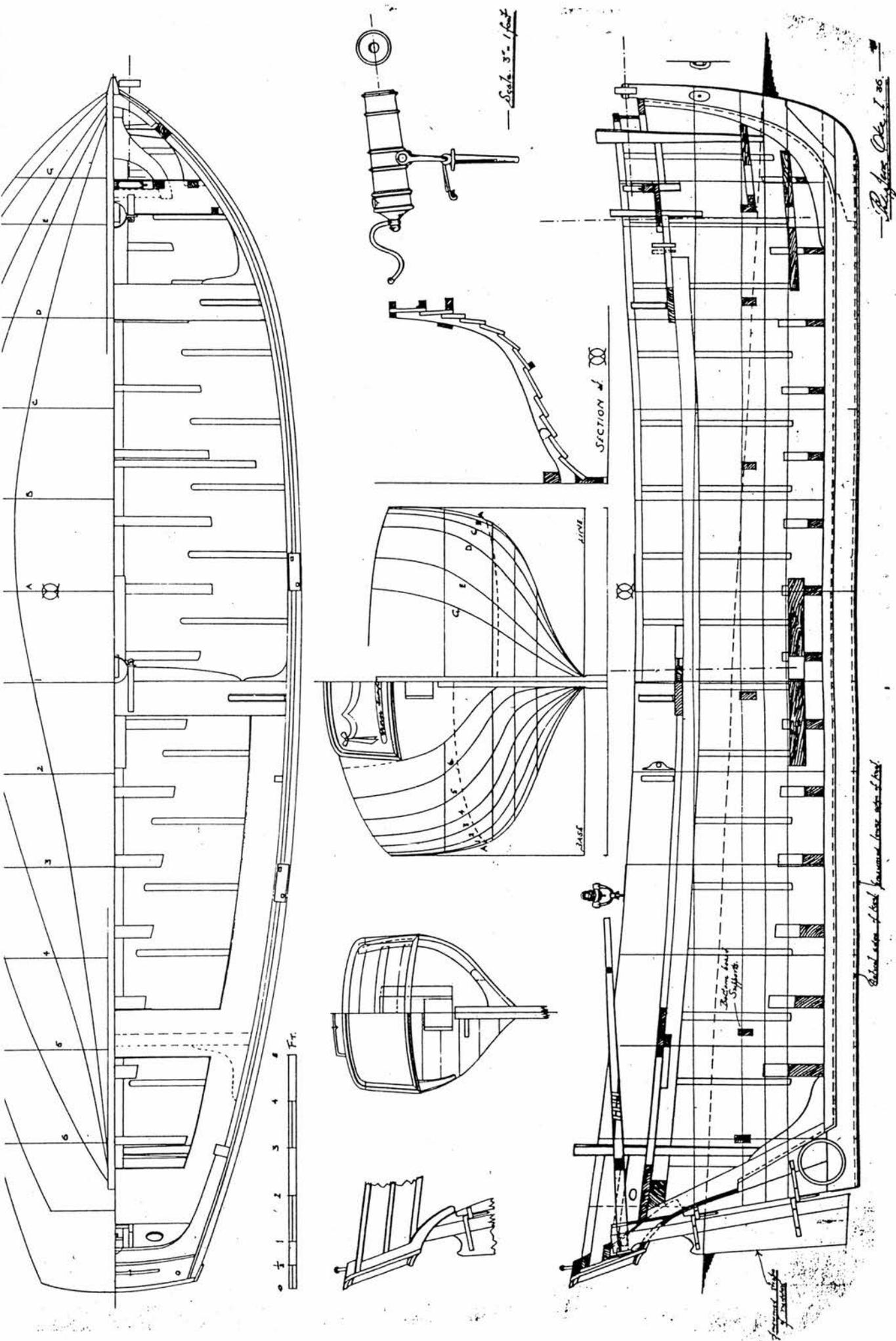


Fig 12 Construction plan of *Peggy of Castletown* drawn by P. J. Oke for the Society for Nautical Research in 1936. (Science Museum)

century way. This size of boat, then, fits in with the available evidence for small wherries in general use at that time. We can assume therefore that the *Peggy* is representative of that type although it must be pointed out that she has been referred to as a schooner and not a wherry.¹³²

THE CANAL BUILDERS

The canal building programme opened the Industrial Revolution in Britain and in Scotland had a substantial effect upon the fisheries. They created physical avenues through which vessels and people could pass that were previously impossible, thus facilitating the passage of influences between coasts.

The first waterway was the Forth and Clyde, opened in 1790 as a 'symbol of joining the eastern and western seas together'.¹³³ Surveyed and laid out by John Smeaton and James Brindley, who did not see eye to eye on this, and other projects, the 35-mile canal construction was completed by Chief Engineer Robert Whitworth.¹³⁴ However, the canal was criticised for the narrowness of the locks which, at 19ft 8in wide, prevented large ships from passing through. From the fisheries point of view, though, the link gave instant access to fishing outside the local seasons.

On the west coast it was the building of the Crinan Canal that allowed the fishermen a greater flexibility in their fishing. The need to build a link across the isthmus

¹³² The bulk of the information given here with regard to the *Peggy* comes from 'The Schooner *Peggy*, Eighteenth-century survival at the Nautical Museum, Castletown' by Basil Greenhill in *The Journal of the Manx Museum*, Vol VII, no. 84, 1968, pp 68-76.

¹³³ Rolt, 1958:

of Kintyre, thus linking the Clyde to the western Highlands and obviating the voyage round the notorious Mull of Kintyre and the 120 mile sea distance, had already been recognised before the opening of the Forth and Clyde Canal. Knox noted that this waterway was paramount to the development of the herring fishery in the Highlands and he states that James Watt had estimated that a ten feet deep canal would cost nearly £48,500. This was 1786 and he added that the herring busses would be the major users of the canal.¹³⁵ When Gannett arrived in 1798 the canal was well under construction and he compares the importance of this cutting to Scotland as ‘a cut through the isthmus of Suez would be to Europe’. The projected expense by now had increased to £80,000.¹³⁶ The completed canal was eventually opened in 1801.

Daniell supplies us with statistics for the years 1809/1810, when, in one year, 600 boats under 12 tons passed through the canal and another 700 of between 12 and 120 tons. 700 vessels were engaged in the herring fishery on the west coast. Furthermore, he reported fishing boats unloading further south, at West Loch Tarbert, and the catch and boats themselves being hauled across the short isthmus to Tarbert village.¹³⁷

Interestingly, there were proposals to build a canal across this short piece of land, according to Stewart in 1848, while Blacks tells us the estimated cost of this ‘Argyll canal’ was £140,000 in 1882.¹³⁸ Obviously the proposal stalled soon after as nothing was ever built. It’s worth noting here that Tarbert comes from the Gaelic *tarruing* (to draw) and *bata* (boat), hence Tarbat, Tarbet and Tarbert (as found in Argyllshire, Gigha, Harris

¹³⁴ Burton, 1981:95. Whitworth had been engineer on the Leeds and Liverpool canal.

¹³⁵ Knox, 1786:151.

¹³⁶ Gannett, 1811:107-9.

¹³⁷ Daniell, 1818, vol III: 23

¹³⁸ Stewart, 1848:53 & Black, 1882:479.

and N. Morar). The Vikings often carried their vessels across from loch to loch to obviate the journey around the Mull.

Similarly, a canal was proposed between the East and West Loch Tarberts in Harris. John Knox suggested the need for it to aid the herring fishers in 1786¹³⁹ while Lord Leverburgh nearly based his fishing harbour there instead of in the south.¹⁴⁰

Thomas Telford surveyed the third Scottish canal, through the Great Glen from Clachnaharry on the Moray Firth to Corpach at the head of Loch Linnhe, in 1801. His original brief was to select sites for fishing stations as well as investigating the possibility of building a canal through the glen. When James Watt had previously surveyed the glen, as had John Rennie before him, his design was considered impractical, although the Treasury remained convinced of the viability of such a project.

Work commenced, after an Act of Parliament was passed in 1804, under Telford and William Jessop, who died unexpectedly in 1814. When it opened in 1822 the cost had more than doubled to £912,375. Further repairs were needed in the 1840s because of faults in the original construction and it was reopened in 1847, thus helping vessels with vital imports secure a safe passage into port during the war with France. In terms of the size of the task, the Caledonian Canal was the most ambitious of all the British canals.¹⁴¹ For the fishing fleet, it was probably more influential than either of the other two Scottish canals.

The term wherry has often been used loosely to describe a small boat (the Norfolk wherry, being a completely different vessel, illustrates how a term can have very different meanings).

¹³⁹ Knox, 1787:170.

¹⁴⁰ Nigel Nicolson in *Lord of the Isles*, as quoted in Lawson, 2002:100.

Nevertheless, it is becoming clear from the documented evidence that there was such a defined vessel as the wherry in use in the Irish Sea and the Clyde over a period from the mid eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth. The documentary evidence suggests there were two quite separate, distinct classes of wherry in the Irish Sea:-

a) Larger wherries that were used in the smuggling and the coastal trade. From the evidence, a few, mainly from Ireland, also fished as far away as Shetland.

b) Smaller wherries, in the form of transom-sterned vessels with a schooner rig sometimes modified.

*In general, it is supposed that the term 'wherry' comes from the rig and that the hull-form was not of a standard type. However, for **smuggling** use, a transom-sterned vessel – along with the wherry rig to give it speed – would be the most effective hull shape with plenty of buoyancy aft. Therefore the term 'wherry' could be used to describe the complete vessel and not just the rig.*

*When **fishing** became their prime activity (and the assumption here is the majority previously taking part in the smuggling operations gradually turned their attentions to fishing after 1765) these wherries were adapted, for it is unlikely that the owners could afford a new vessel. The first change was to the rig. Two masts in the main body of the boat is space-wasting, especially when shooting and hauling drift-nets over the side and so one mast removed and forward mast was fitted with a gaff sail.*

Some time after adapting the smack rig many were able to obtain new boats. For this they drew on the tradition of the double-ender. Scandinavian influences undoubtedly had brought in double-ended hulls, although it is worth adding that vessels to the south

¹⁴¹ Rolt, 1958:

(e.g. Cornwall and France) were also double-ended. The pointed stern lifts easily in a following sea and is less likely to poop, an important factor to consider during fishing operations.

Then one of the most far-reaching changes in the type of boat used by the fishermen of Loch Fyne occurred sometime just prior to the 1840s when the lug rig was introduced into the loch and, perhaps, a hull form to go with it, if the parish minister for Glassary is to be taken at his word. Presumably the use of the wherry-rig did not disappear over night, and in addition, other, larger, smack-rigged vessels fished these waters.

THREE

**ICONOGRAPHICAL
EVIDENCE**

In this chapter we shall contemplate exclusively the available iconographical evidence that enables us to formulate a picture of the vessels actively working around the coasts of the western side of Britain up to the introduction of the half-decked skiffs in Loch Fyne.

The inherent problem of too much reliance upon iconographical evidence is well known. In the case of the maritime field, some painters are known to have produced authentic images whilst others simply add particular vessels to enhance the picture and very often these vessels bear no resemblance to reality. In the first case, the works of the two Willem van de Velde's (the Elder & Younger) are a good example¹. Their depictions of seventeenth century naval vessels are regarded as accurate because their fine detail shows the minutest detail in a ship that can be identified by seamen today. Their work was able to satisfy the most demanding professional clients who required accurate renderings of sea battles.

In the case of the representations of many vernacular craft, though, these are simply added to a picture to enhance the background. Activity around a larger ship, showing a plethora of small craft, is pleasing to the eye, but may be misleading to the scholar. Some appear as sound images and therefore are assumed accurate, but many are suspected of having purely decorative value.

However, even the vernacular zone has its exponents of authenticity, such as E.W. Cooke (19th century) and E. Paget-Tomlinson (20th century). Again, the meticulous detail in their work suggests an accuracy borne out of an understanding of their maritime subject. In other cases, different artists each show a particular feature of a vessel that

¹See Robinson, M.S. *The Paintings of the Willem van de Velde's*, London, 1990.

appears wrong, but the inference is that its existence is therefore a possibility. On the other hand, because a particular feature isn't noted, it isn't the case that it never existed.

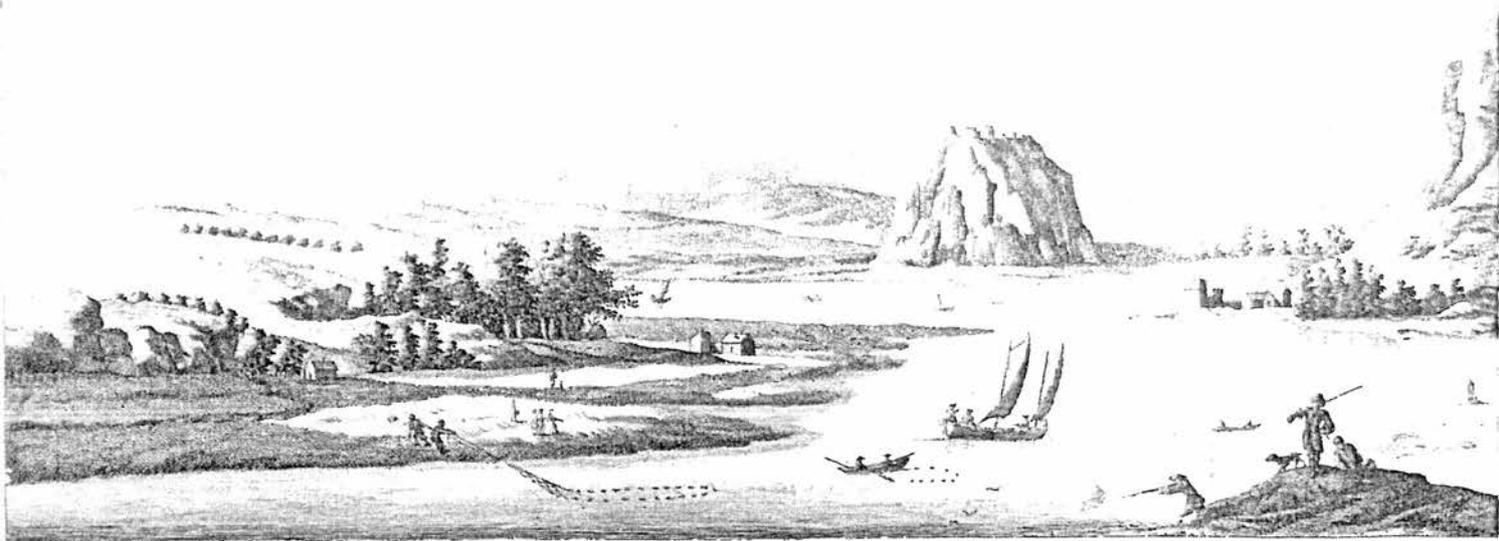
This, then, suggests that, in general, evaluating iconographical evidence involves a thorough grasp of the construction and handling of a boat. Using this type of evidence requires the exercise of a fine judgement backed up by technical expertise. It is important to always bear this in mind.

The earliest relevant iconography comes from Slezer's *Theatrum Scotiae*, the first edition being dated 1718. In the view entitled 'The Prospect of the Town of Air from the East' (JS/S/01) he shows several very rounded and bluff smacks, at least two of which appear to have leeboards fitted. Although perhaps not relevant to the line of evolution of the skiffs, it does suggest some Dutch influence upon the craft in use. On the other hand it is possible that these are Dutch vessels, or the artist could simply have added them from his memory of craft on some other part of the coast. This simply highlights the need for care in the interpretation of illustrations.

Slezer's view of 'The Castle of Dumbritton [Dumbarton] from Kilpatrick' is very interesting. In the 1718 edition of his work (JS/S/02) he depicts a two-masted, transom-sterned wherry-like vessel sailing downriver, past two fishermen obviously working a seine-net from the bank, whilst two others operate a similar net from a small rowboat. However, in the 1814 edition (JS/S/03), whilst everything else in the picture remains the same – the fishermen, the hunters in the foreground, the topographical details and the distant craft – the wherry-like vessel has become a double-ended single-masted square-sailed boat with very high ends and a low freeboard amidships. The canny point, though, is that both types of vessels were probably endemic at that time.

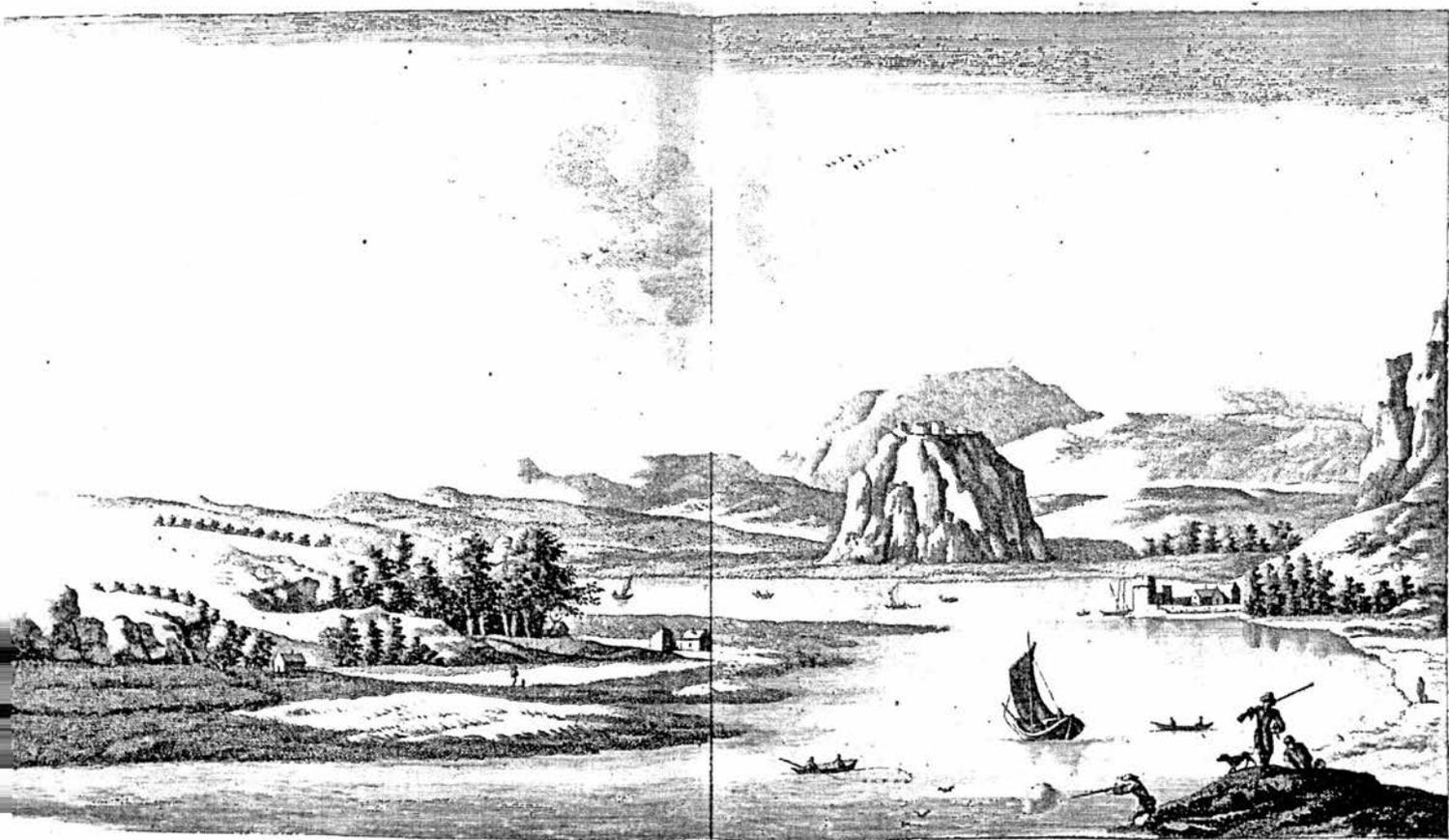


Prospectus Civitatis AER. E. ab Orientale. The Prospect of the Town of AIR from the East.
This Plate is Most Humbly Inscribed to the R. Hon. the Alexander Lord Stewart the Envoy Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary from the King of Great Britain to the King of Denmark & King of Prussia.



*Arx BRITANNODUNENSIS ab Oppido Cella Patricij dicto . The Castle of DUMBRITTON from Kilpatrick .
 This plate is mercerably Engraved to the Hon^{ble} S^r Robert Dalloch Bar^{on} Colonel and Governour of Forth William*

fig 14 JS/S/02 'The Castle of Dumbarton' from Kilpatrick from Slezer's *Theatrum Scotiae*, 1718 edition



*Arx BRITANNODUNENSIS ab Oppido Cella Patricij dicto . The Castle of DUMBRITTON from Kilpatrick .
 This plate is mercerably Engraved to the Hon^{ble} S^r Robert Dalloch Bar^{on} Colonel and Governour of Forth William*

15 JS/S/03 'The Castle of Dumbarton' from Kilpatrick from Slezer's *Theatrum Scotiae*, 1814 edition

WILLIAM DANIELL

William Daniell, accompanied by Richard Ayton, left Lands End in 1813 and travelled until they arrived at Kirkcudbright in southwest Scotland in 1816. Here Ayton left Daniell, who continued the journey on his own, travelling up the western seaboard of Scotland, around the north coast and right down the east coast of Britain, along the English Channel, reaching Lands End again in 1823. His resulting journal, *A Voyage Round Great Britain*, in eight volumes, which has been repeatedly referred to in chapters two and three, also has a wealth of aquatints produced by Daniell himself.

However, even with Daniell we must use caution for, as Addey says, he ‘has used considerable artistic licence and moved the mountainous backdrop, although he has accurately depicted the profile of...’ Addey should know, having undertaken a journey in Daniell’s footsteps and painted hundreds of the scenes Daniell depicted, bringing them up to date over recent years.²

What Daniell does give us is clarity in his work. Having previously worked in India with his uncle, Thomas, and producing 144 coloured aquatints in six volumes, Daniell gained a reputation for his detail, and subsequently exhibited in the Royal Academy and the British Institution. It is believed that his process of using a watercolour background with etchings to depict detail in his subjects is what gives his aquatints the finesse they undoubtedly do possess.³

In Daniell’s view of Maryport, in what is now Cumbria, there’s an exceptional close-up depiction of a two-masted, gaff-rigged vessel of about 18 feet long. The masts

² Addey, 2000:1.

³ Ibid: Introduction.

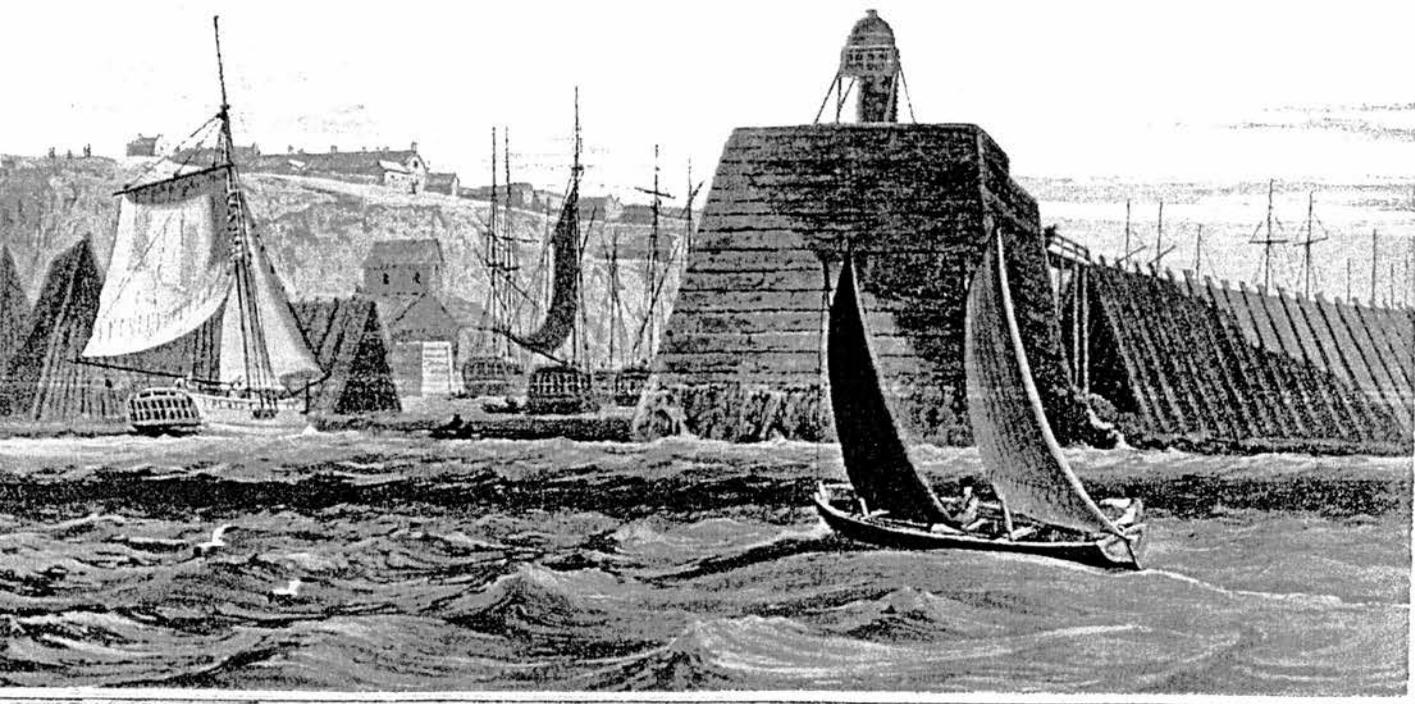


Fig 16

WD/E/15 Maryport, Cumberland from *A Voyage Round Great Britain* by W.Daniell, vol II, 1815

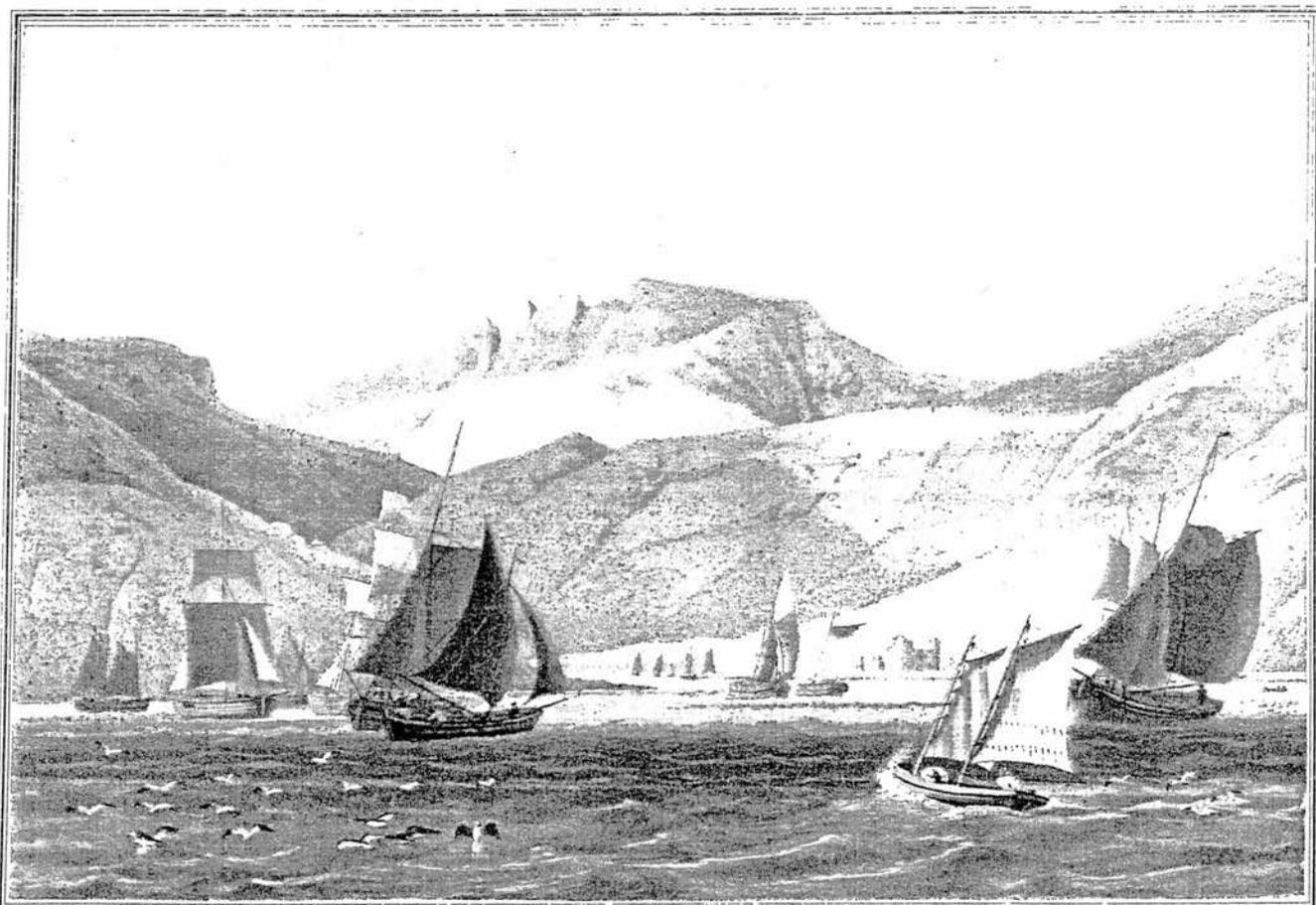


Fig 17

WD/S/20 Loch Ranza, Isle of Arran from *A Voyage Round Great Britain* by W.Daniell, vol III, 1818

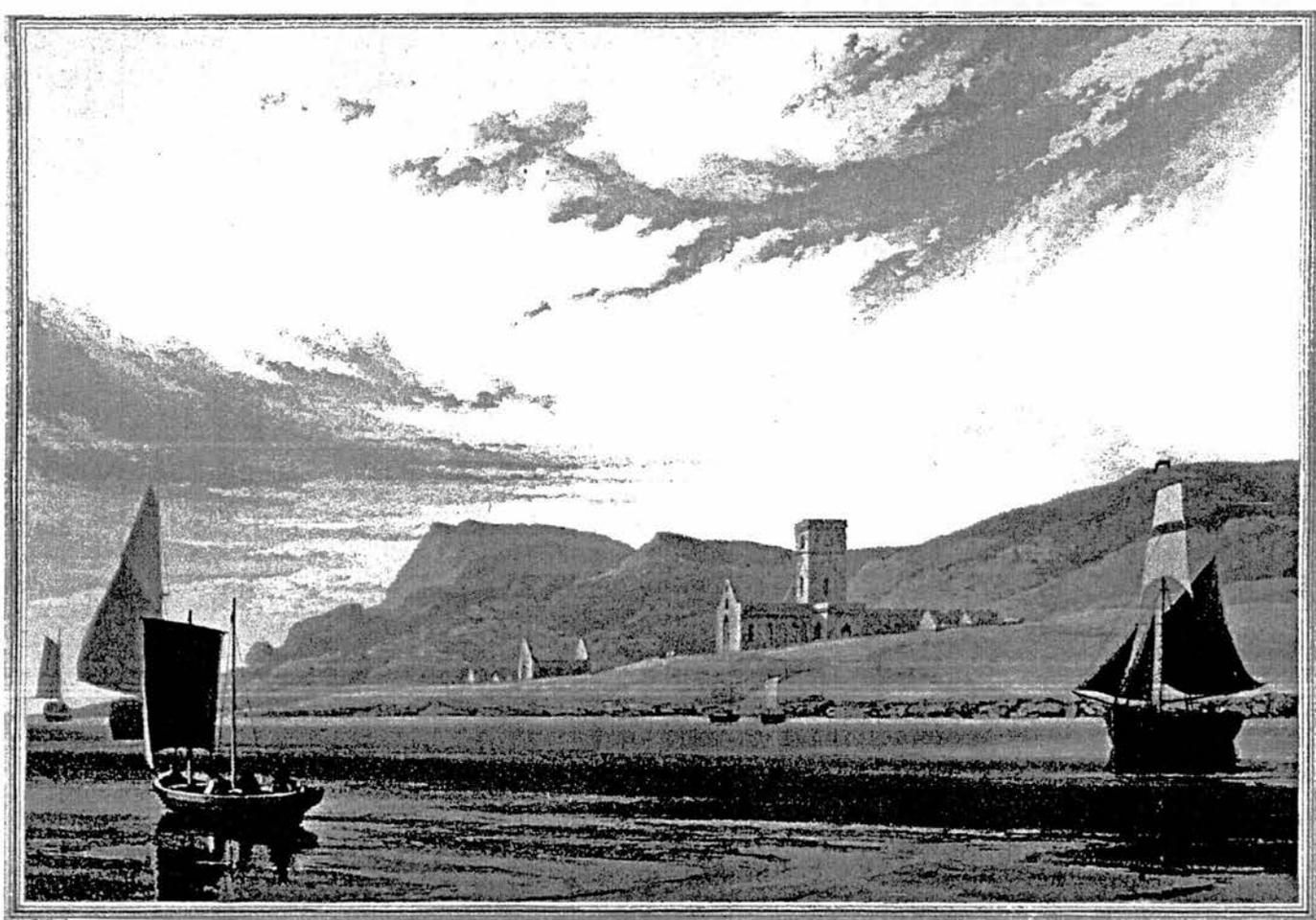


Fig 18

WD/S/26 Iona from the N East from *A Voyage Round Great Britain* by W.Daniell, vol III, 1818

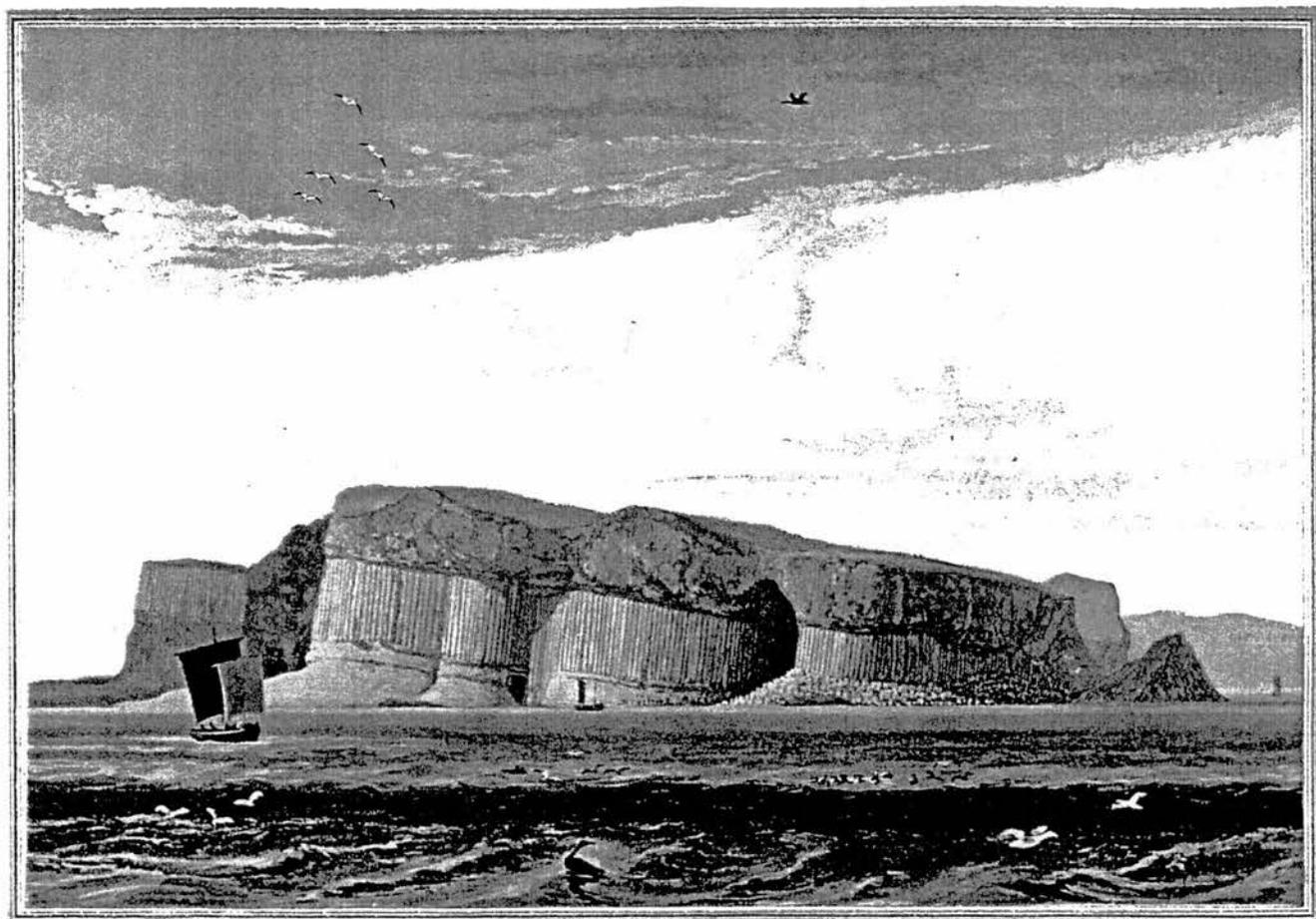


Fig 19

WD/S/25 Staffa from the S West from *A Voyage Round Great Britain* by W.Daniell, vol III, 1818

are of equal length, with the forward mast stepped well forward. The hull is bluff in the bow and has a short transom. The mainsail clearly has one set of reefs, although she is sailing under full rig on a broad reach into the harbour. The contention is that this is typical of the wherry, although there is no evidence from the picture that this vessel is being used for fishing. She is crewed by two persons. (WD/E/15)

In the view of Loch Ranza (WD/S/20), he shows a similar vessel, this time schooner-rigged – the main having two sets of reef points – but otherwise almost identical in detail and hull shape. That these two vessels do differ to a degree leads to the assumption that Daniell was not simply painting small boats as mere additions to his picture, but that they were from the reality of the scene. If the opposite was the case, then presumably these two boats from different locations would be identical.

Another such wherry is illustrated by Daniell in his print of Iona (WD/S/26). The hull shape is similar although the transom has some tuck so that it is clear of the water. What is very different is that the forward sail, the only one set, is a square sail. The mast is stepped well forward again, and there appears to be a forestay. In practice this would be impossible as it would foul the sail, the yard being only inches below the top of the mast where this forestay is attached. Does this, then, suggest a degree of inaccuracy in Daniell's work? One general observation is that, from personal memory, I do not recall such rugged and high mountains on the tiny island, such as Daniell has depicted them. Is this mere artistic licence or exaggeration?

Staffa – of which Daniell made nine prints - lies several miles to the north of Iona and he shows another square-sailed wherry-type vessel, although it is impossible to make observations upon the hull, given the distance off (WD/S/25). However, the vessel has

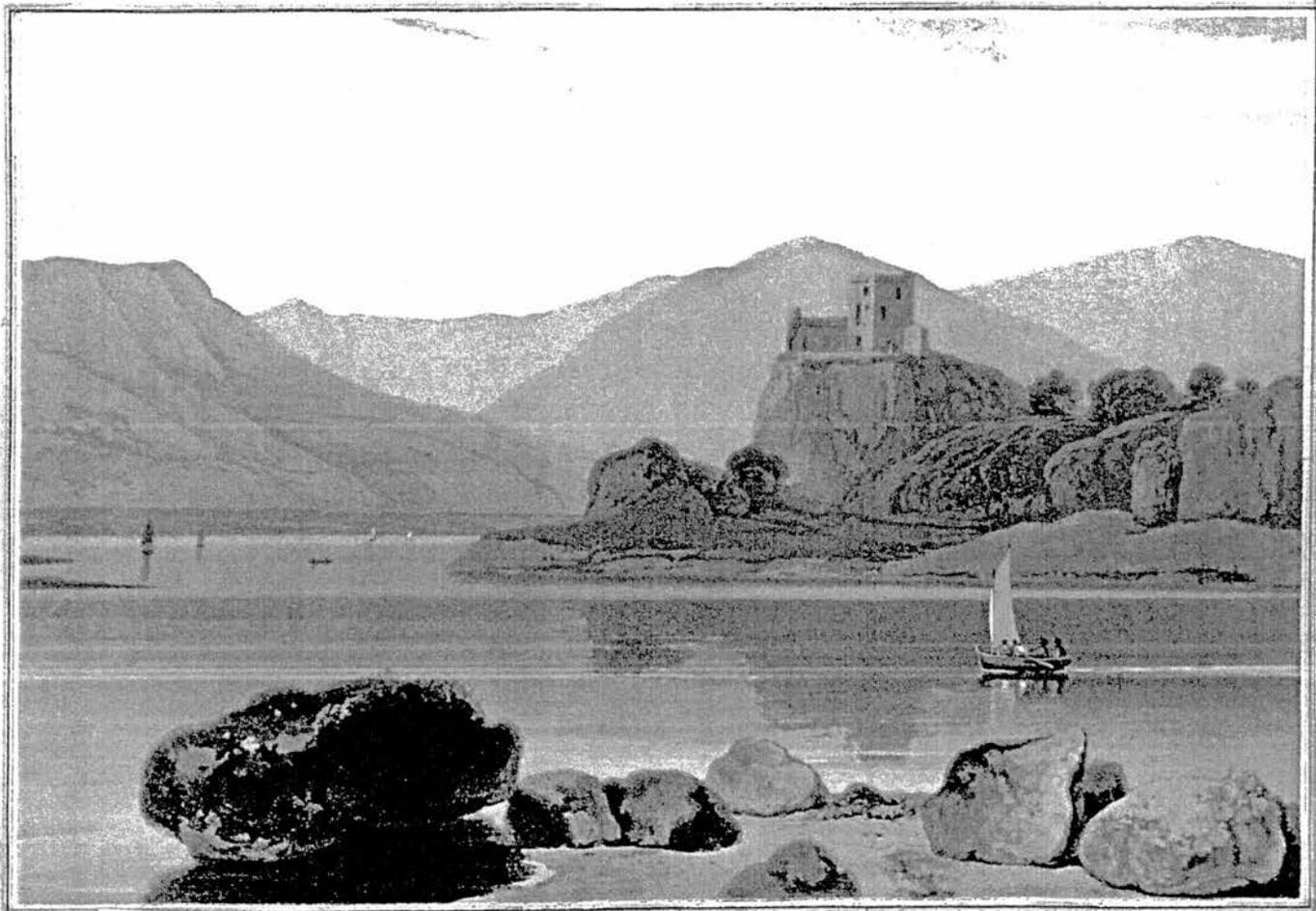


Fig 20

WD/S/23 Dunolly Castle near Oban from *A Voyage Round Great Britain* by W.Daniell, vol III, 1818

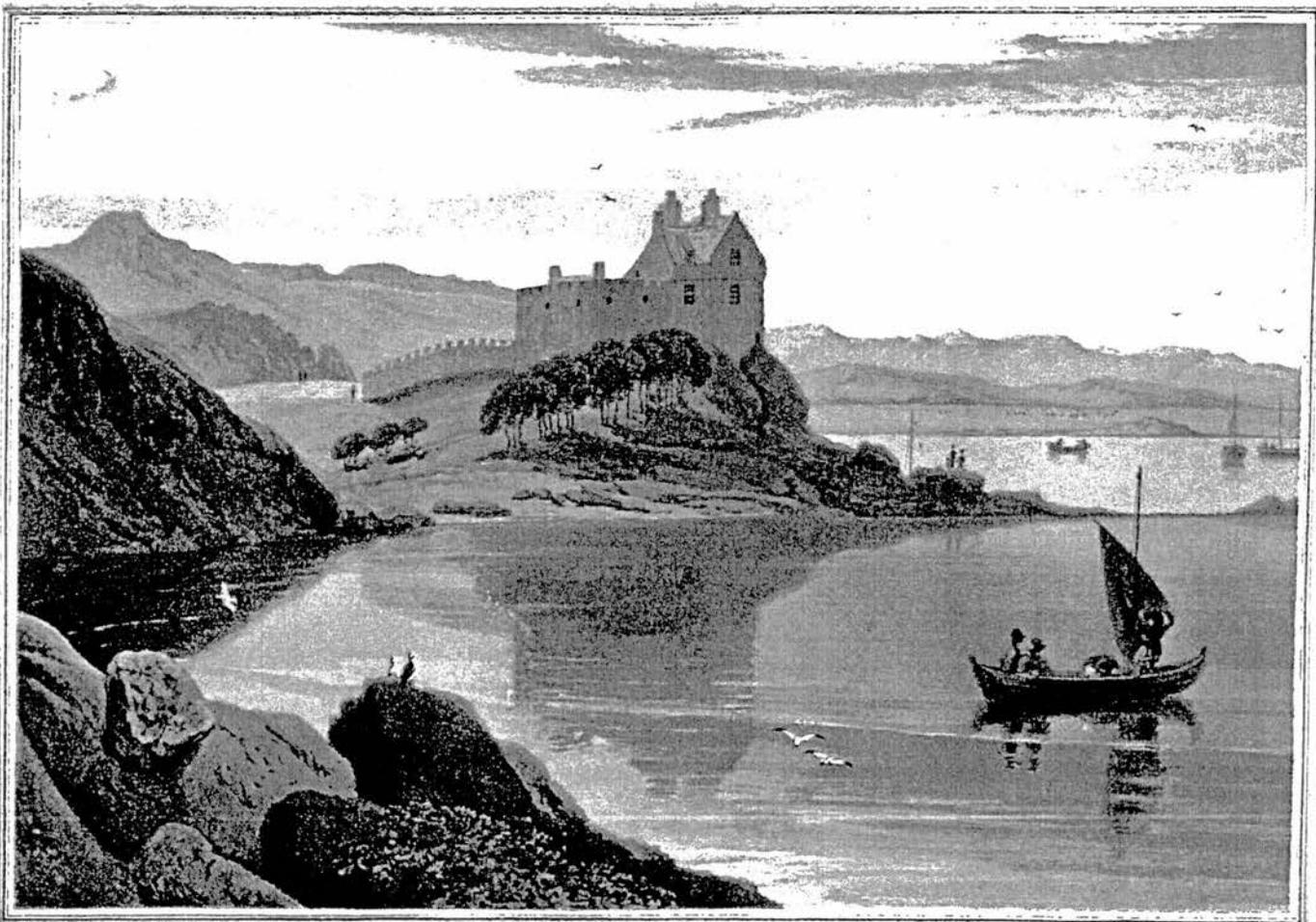


Fig 21

WD/S/22 Duntrune Castle, Loch Crenan from *A Voyage Round Great Britain* by W.Daniell, vol III, 1818

two square sails set, the forward being much smaller than the main. There is, then, a suggestion of continuity from the previous picture. Are we seeing, in these inaccessible parts of the coast, the old square sail still in ascendancy when, in the more populous and, probably, more thriving areas, the wherry rig prevailed. The documented evidence supports this divide.

In his view of Dunolly Castle near Oban (WD/S/23), he shows what appears to be a recreation vessel sailing in Loch Etive. It appears to be a transom-sterned vessel, some 15-18 feet long, judging by the size of the four characters aboard, two of which are rowing. The peculiar fact is the boat is rigged with a standing lug – a white sail at that. It is this colour of the sail, and the folk seemingly out for a jolly, that suggests it being a pleasure craft. The standing lug is undoubtedly uncharacteristic in vessels upon this coast in the early 1820s, as Daniell's prints illustrate, so the assumption is that this boat belongs to a wealthy landowner who has been impressed with the rig that he has encountered elsewhere. At Loch Crinan – Daniell refers to it as Loch Crenan – in the foreground there's another transom-sterned, clinker-built vessel with a pronounced curve in the stem similar to the Norway skiffs (WD/S/22). As the sail is being raised, it is not possible to determine whether it is lug- or square- rigged, although taking into account the point where the sling is attached to the yard, it would probably be a square sail.

The view of Tobermory (WD/S/24) is included solely because it contains several clinker-built double-enders on the beach. The village was built by the British Fisheries Society, and there is a substantial pier. Some of the vessels lying at anchor in front of this pier have single masts although one does appear to have two. His view of the island of

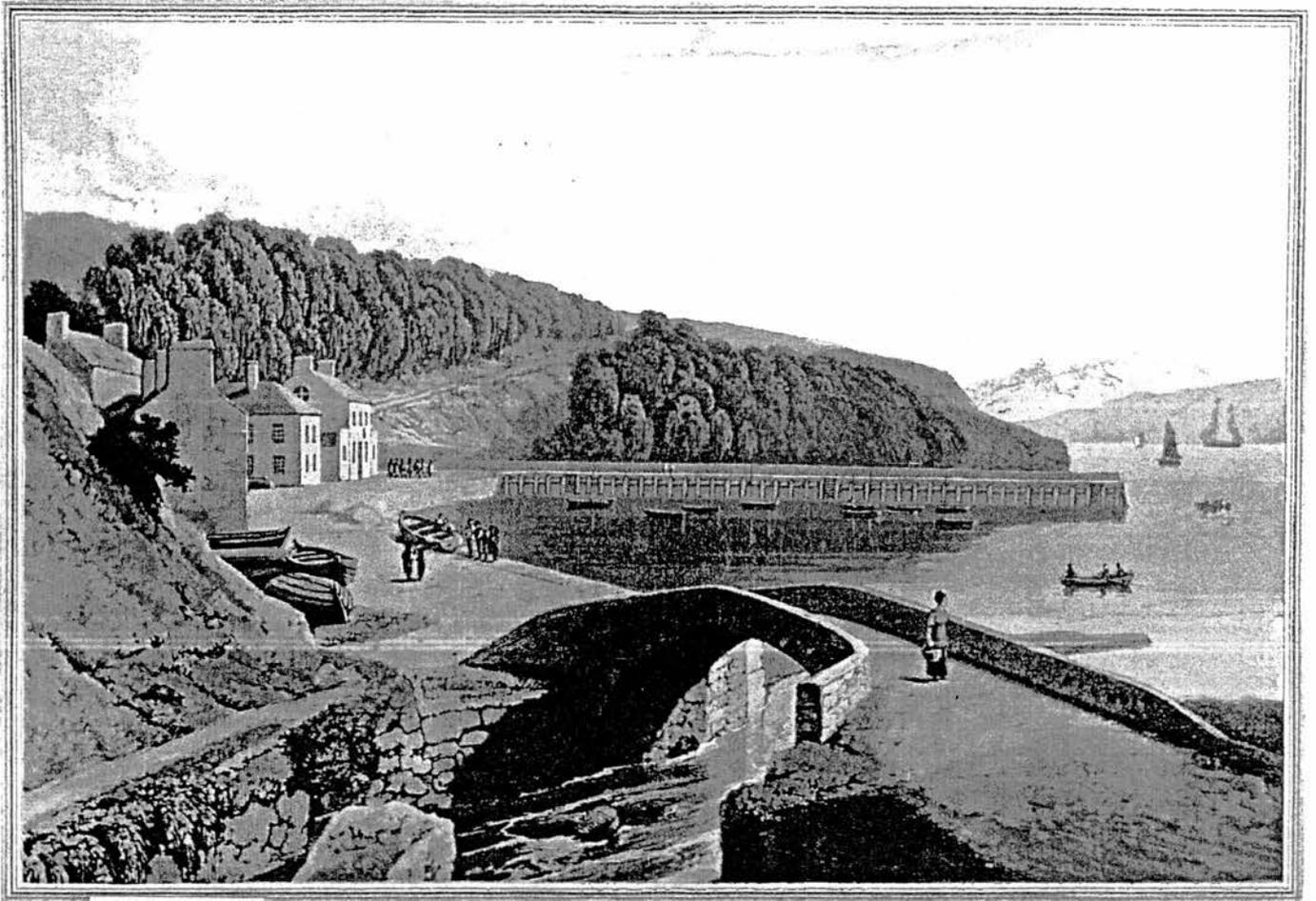


Fig22

WD/S/24 Tobermory on the Isle of Mull from *A Voyage Round Great Britain* by W.Daniell, vol III, 1818

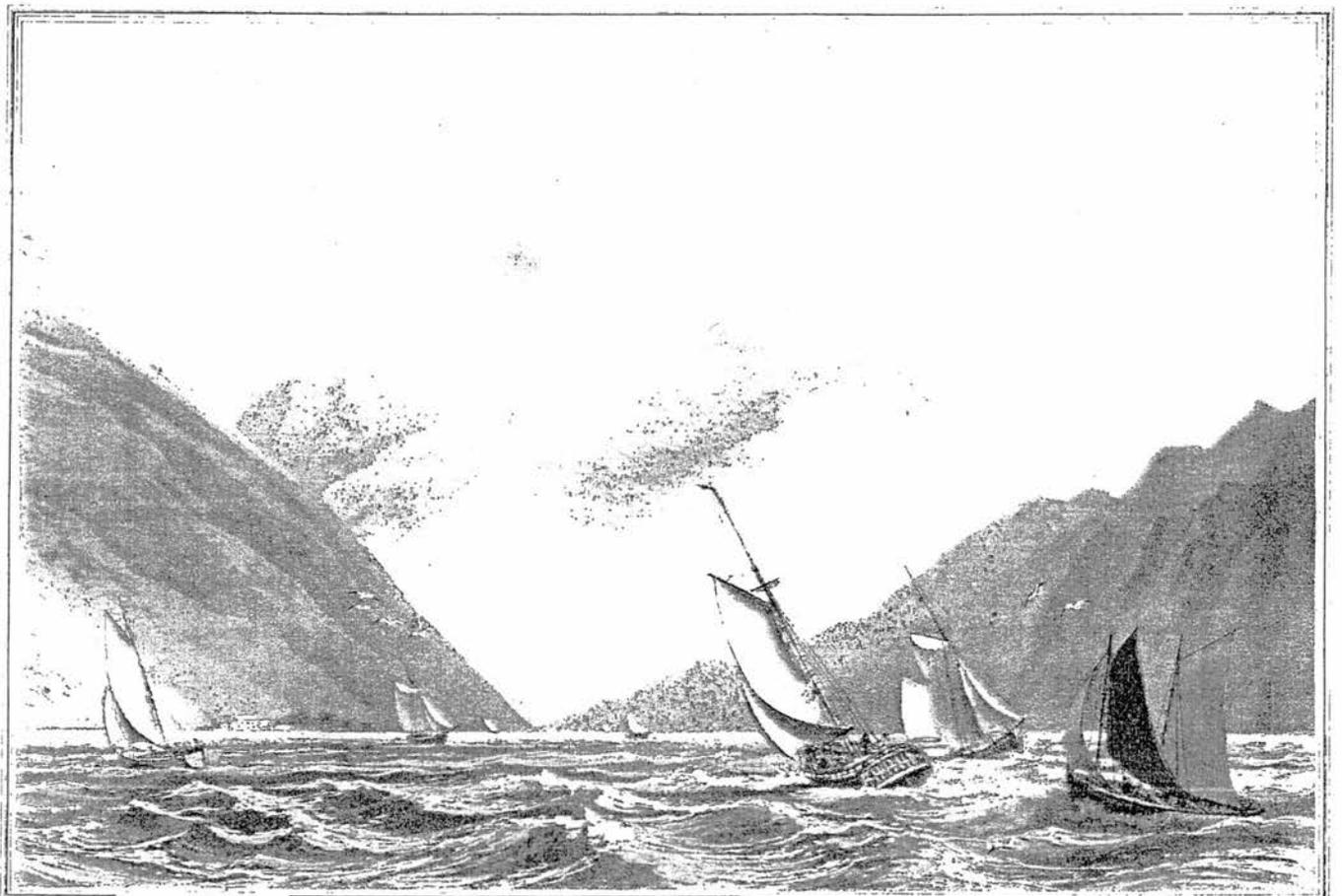


Fig 23

WD/S/27 Barrisdale in Loch Hourm from *A Voyage Round Great Britain* by W.Daniell, vol III, 1818

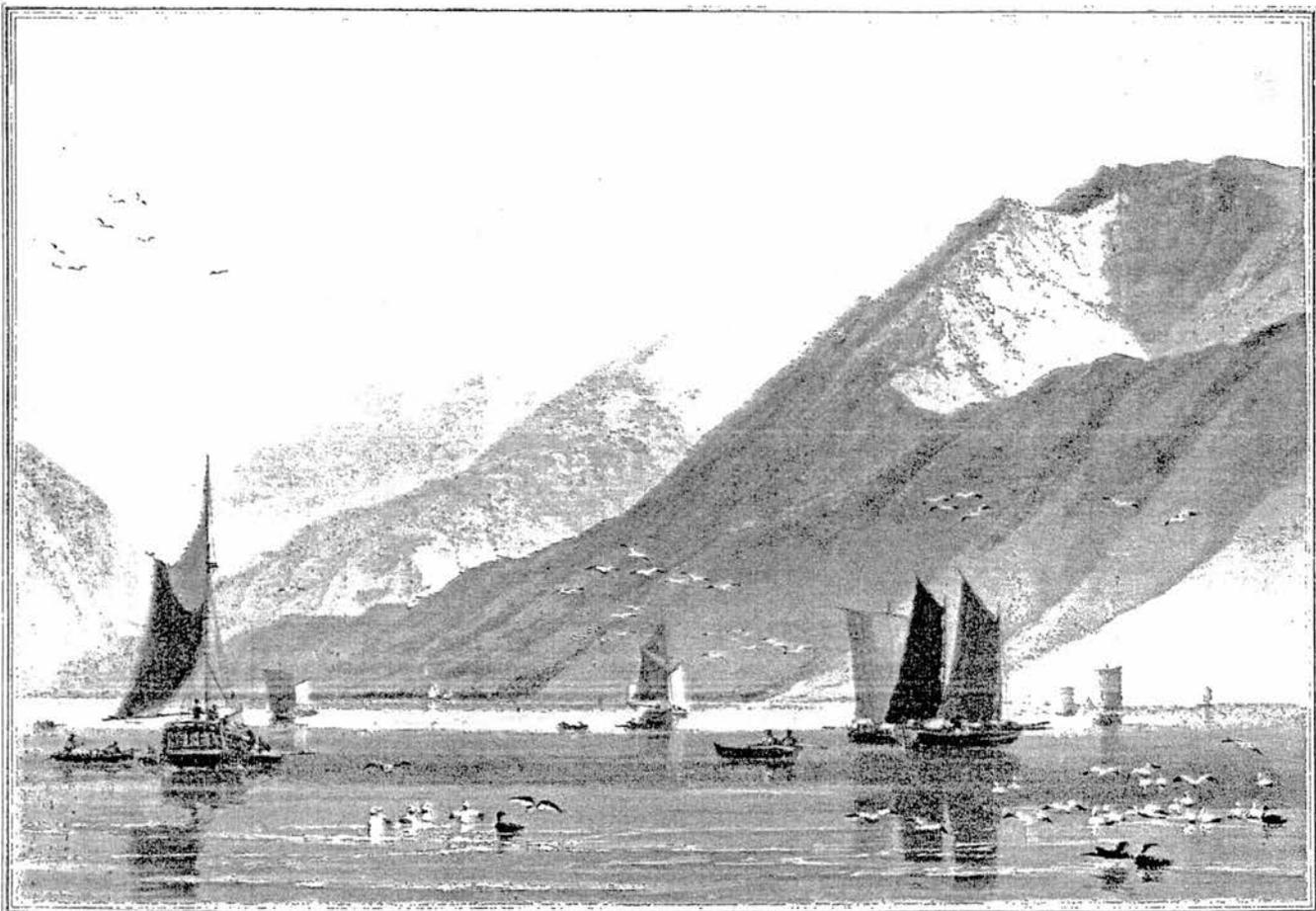


Fig 24

WD/S/28 Loch Duich, Ross-shire from *A Voyage Round Great Britain* by W.Daniell, vol III, 1818

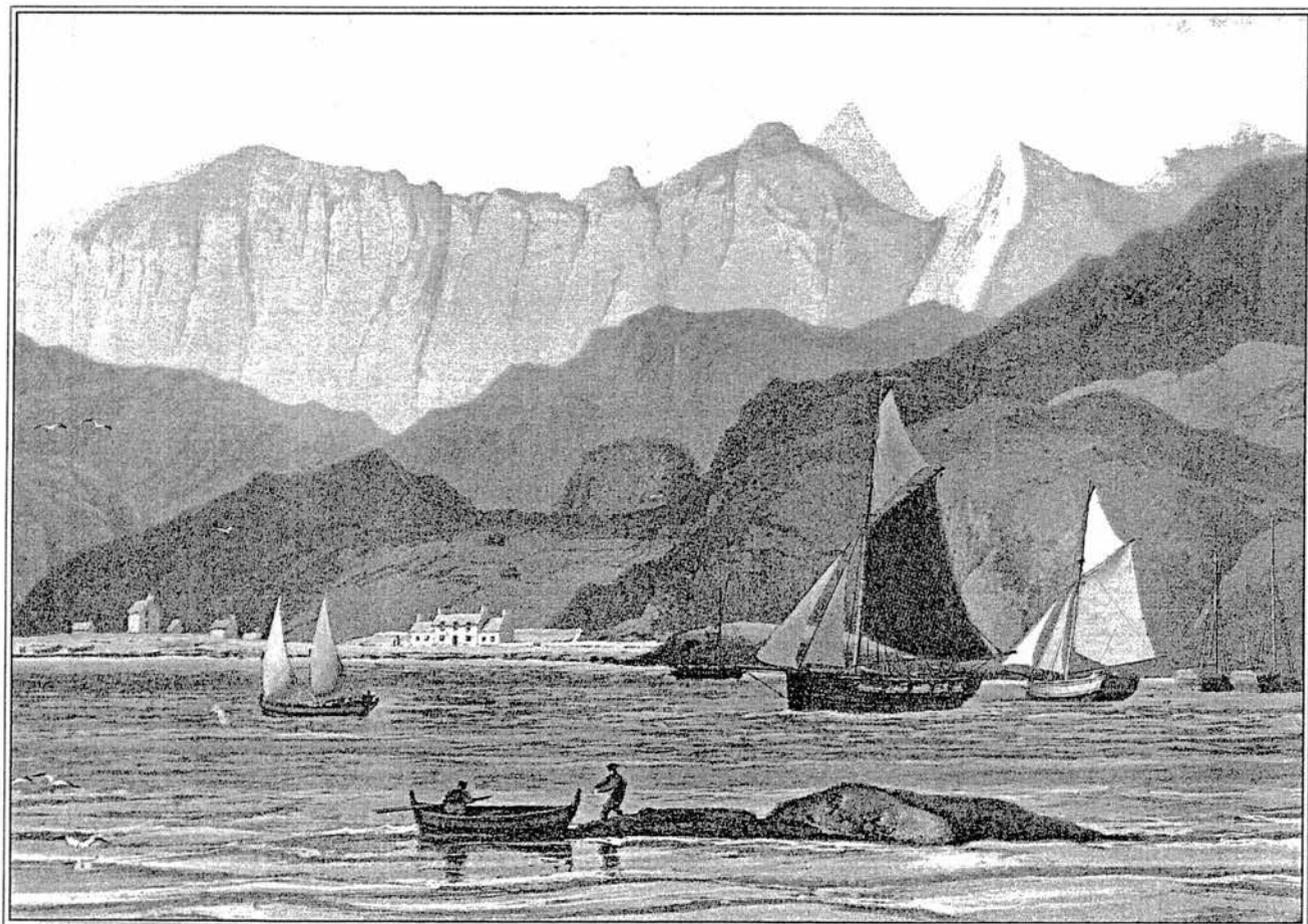


Fig 25

WD/S/30 View of Cuniag, Loch Inver from *A Voyage Round Great Britain* by W.Daniell, vol IV, 1820

Rhum shows a double-ended, clinker-built vessel with raking sternpost similar to the Lochfyne boats, sloop rigged with a large mainsail and jib.

Loch Hourn was home to a prosperous herring fishery although access by land was almost impossible. The area where herring was cured lies on the north side of the loch, and even today it is only served by a single-track road and is rarely visited. Daniell's view (WD/S/27) shows one two-masted wherry-rigged vessel sailing off Barrisdale, which is on the opposite, south, side of the loch. This wherry seems longer than all the previous examples. Again using the crew to estimate the length, it appears to be about 25 feet and has what looks like a rounded or counter stern. Three thwarts are visible. On the left-hand side of the picture there's a transom-sterned smack-rigged boat whose hull has little sheer. Neither of these craft has a Norse appearance.

A similar vessel with a transom appears in Loch Duich (WD/S/28). Several square-sailed skiffs are working in the background and two or three rowing skiffs are perhaps selling herring to the bigger boats. The scene is alive with seabirds both in the air and sat on the water that suggests a trade in fish. In Daniell's own words 'it has been observed that, along this extensive coast, where one hundred ploughs are scarcely needed to till the scanty spots in which it is possible for them to operate, a thousand vessels may annually be loaded with valuable cargoes, extracted from the ocean'.⁴

Daniell gives two views of Loch Inver and each has a small open skiff, double-ended with a curved stem and raked sternpost and no rig. These would appear to be the normal tiny Norway skiffs that every crofter owned wholly or in part. The view of Cuniag (WD/S/30) shows a craft, some 20-25ft long, that has two masts, the foremast being almost stepped right in the bow of the vessel, with high peaked gaff sails. It is

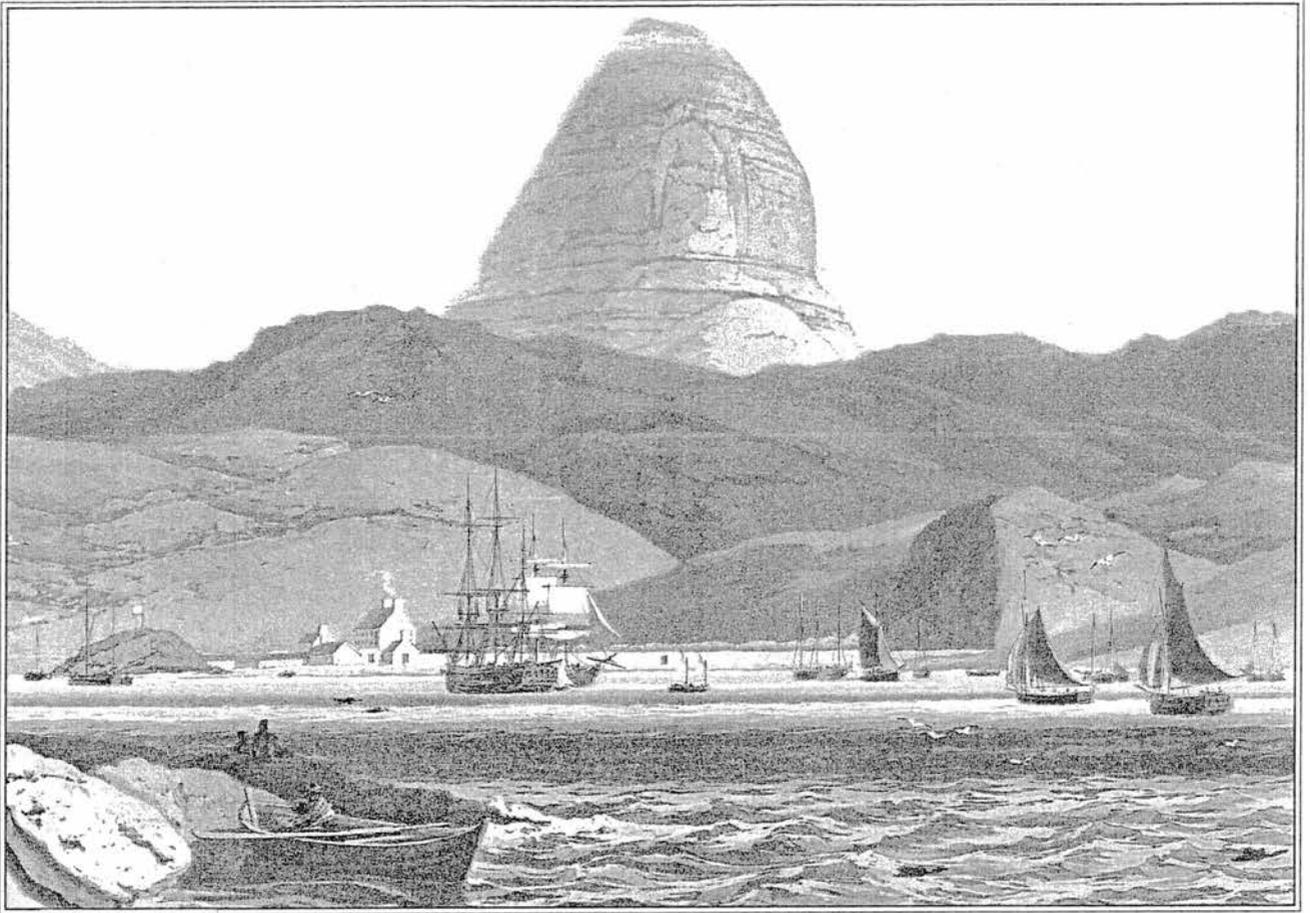


Fig 26

WD/S/29 Ben Sulvhein, from Loch Inver from *A Voyage Round Great Britain* by W.Daniell, vol IV, 1820

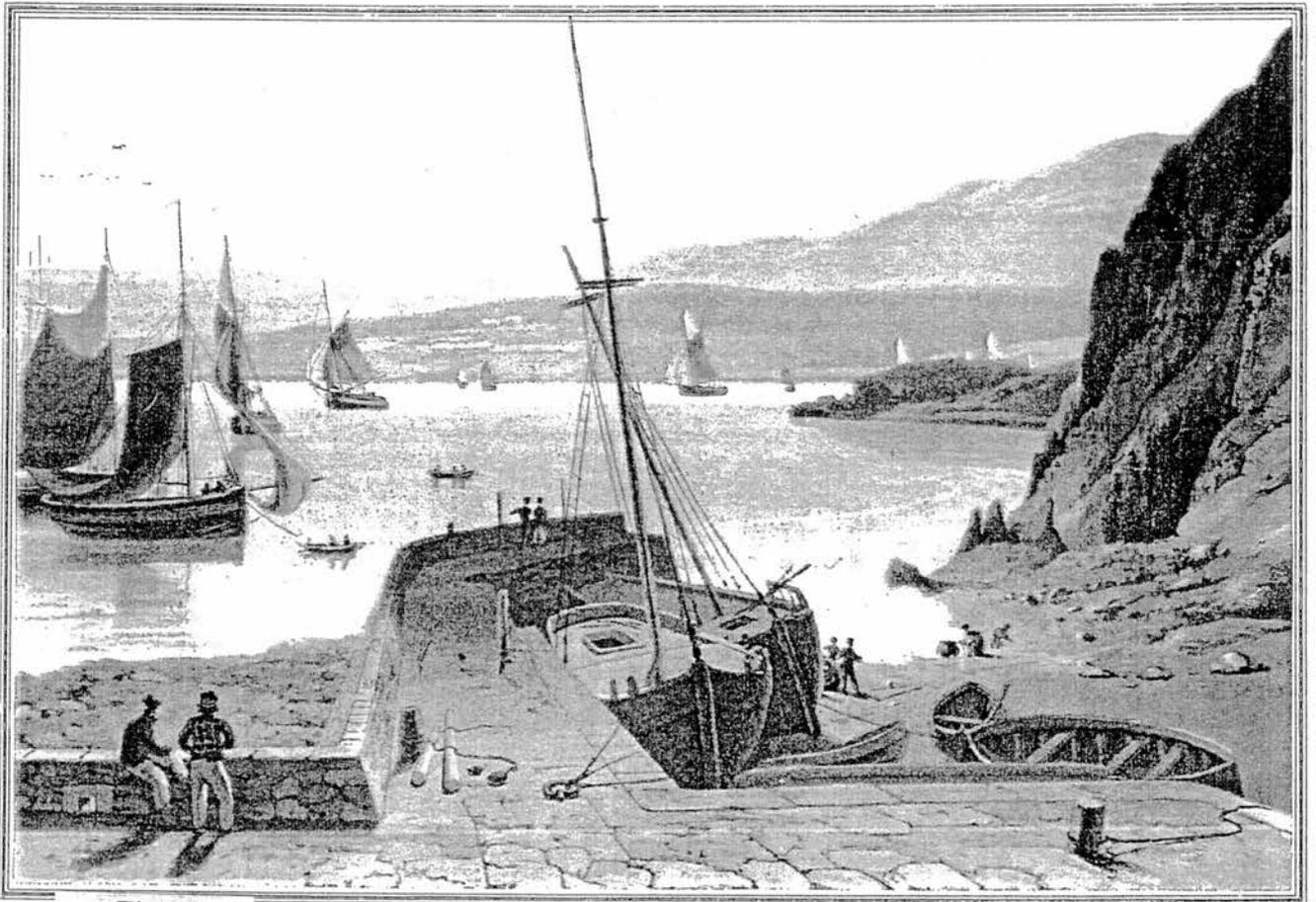


Fig 27

WD/S/31 Pier at Tanera, Loch Broom from *A Voyage Round Great Britain* by W.Daniell, vol IV, 1820

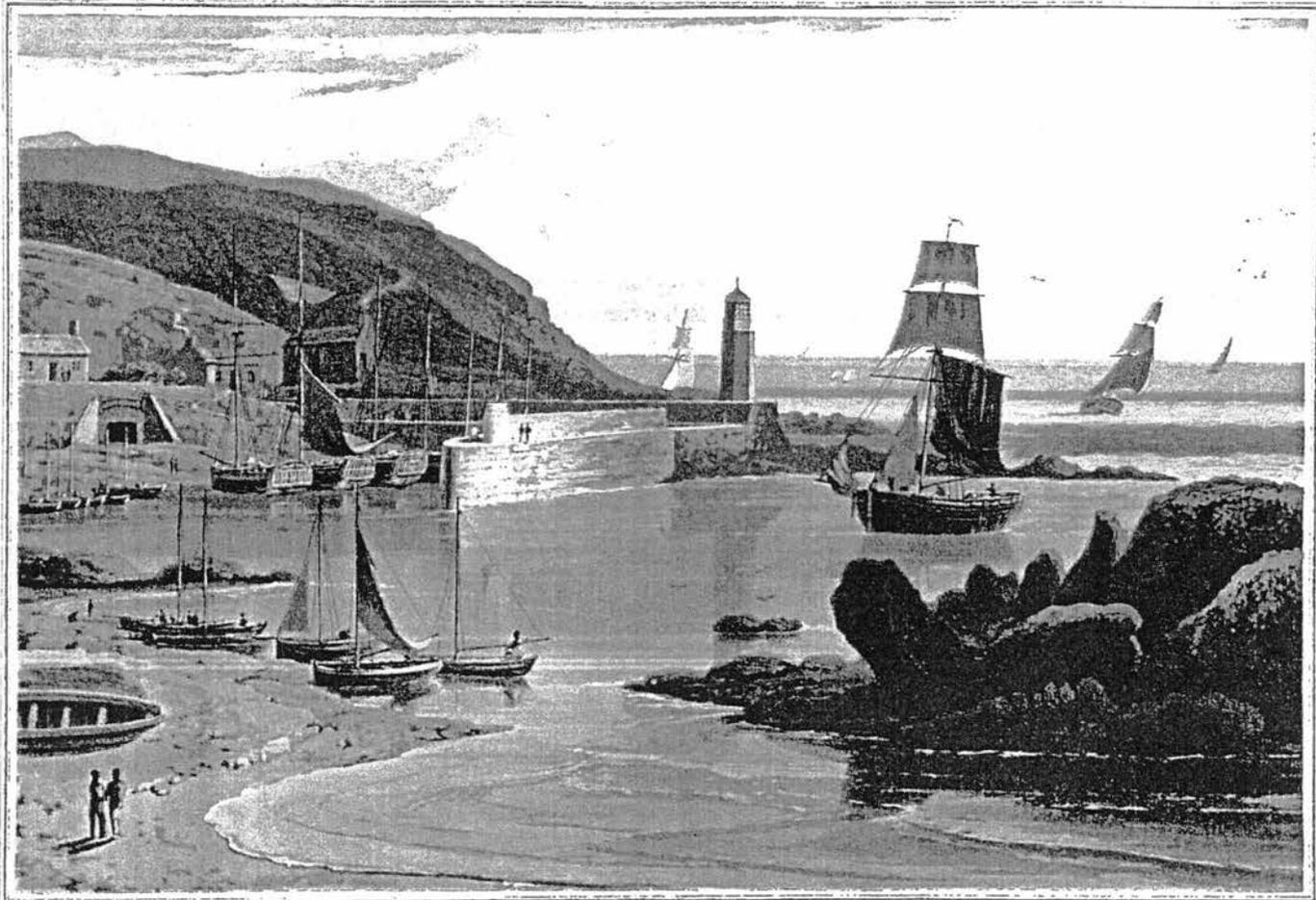


Fig 28

WD/S/16 Portpatrick, Wigtonshire from *A Voyage Round Great Great Britain* by W.Daniell, vol III, 1818

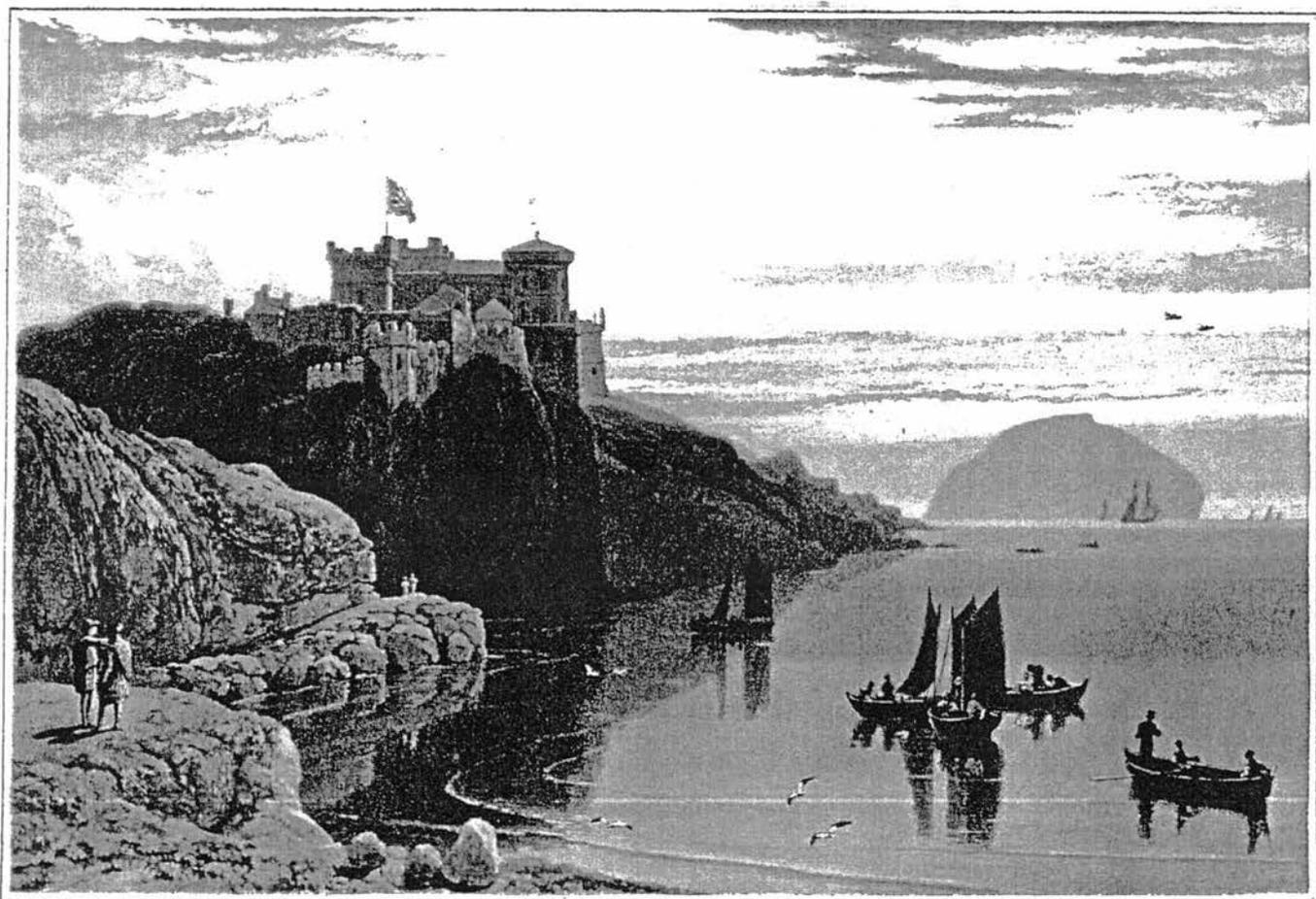


Fig 29

WD/S/18 Culzean Castle, Ayrshire from *A Voyage Round Great Great Britain* by W.Daniell, vol III, 1818

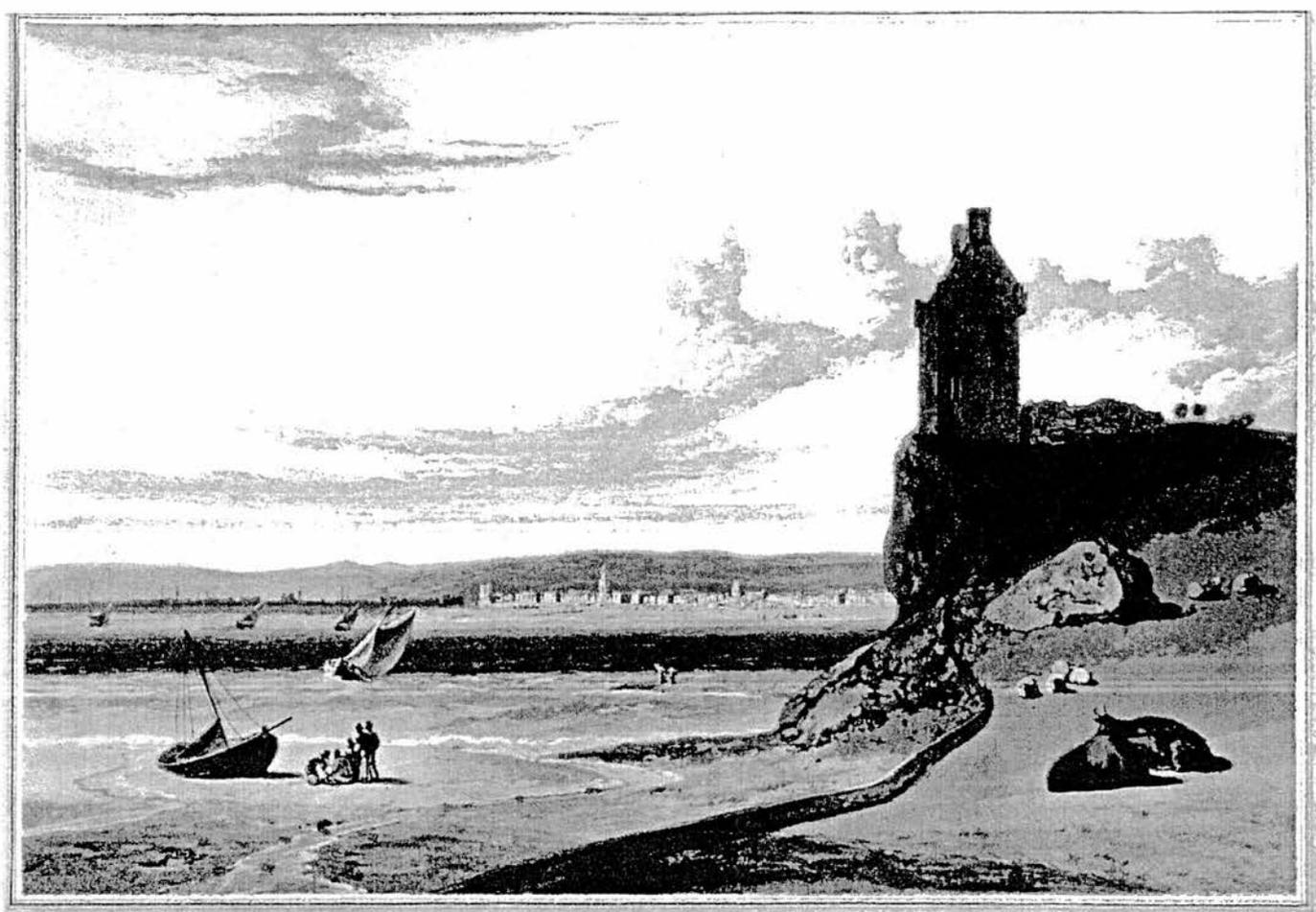


Fig 30 WD/S/19 Distant View of Ayr from *A Voyage Round Great Britain* by W.Daniell, vol III, 1818

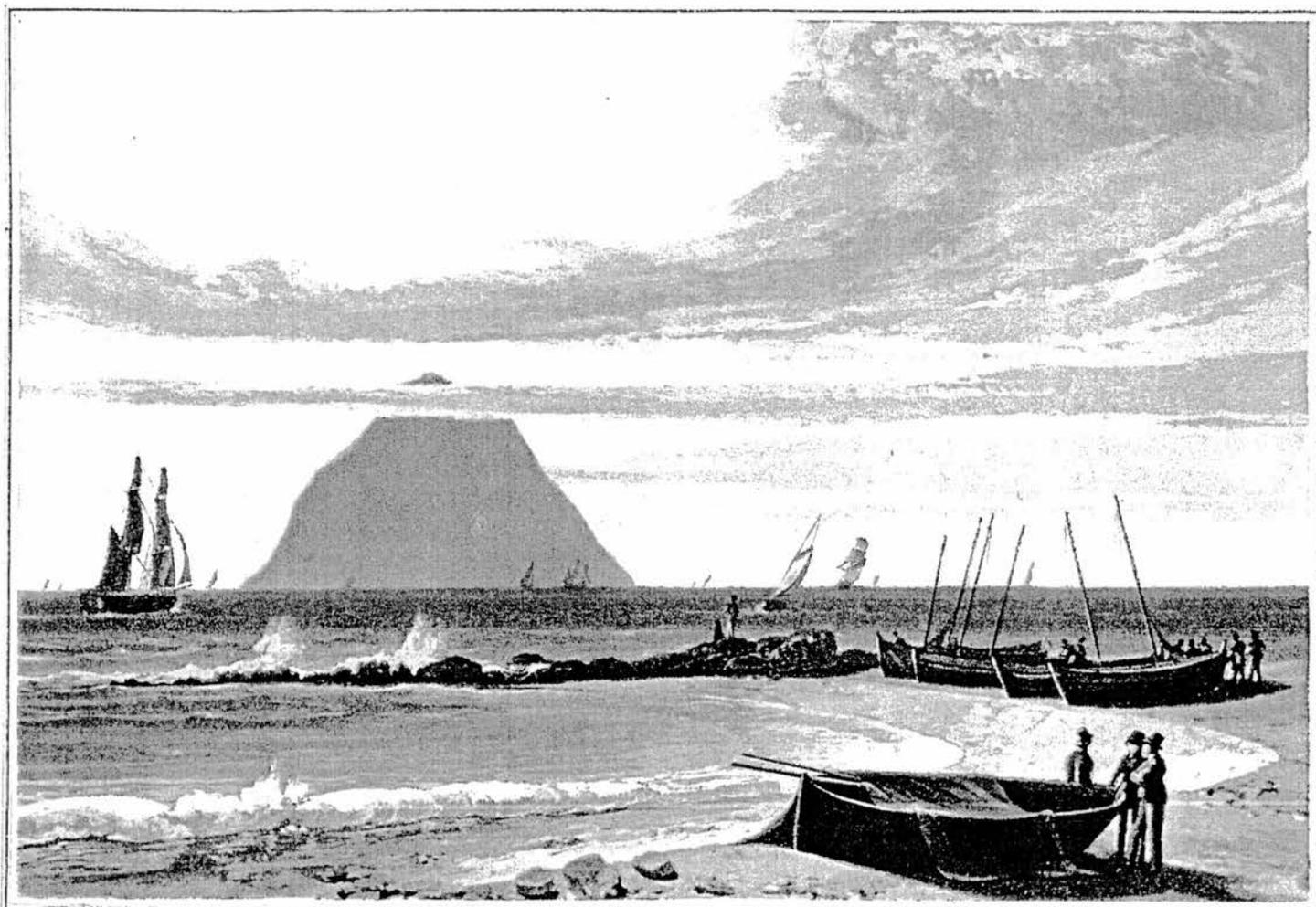


Fig 31 WD/S/17 The Crag of Ailsa from *A Voyage Round Great Britain* by W.Daniell, vol III, 1818

unusual indeed. There's also an excellent example of a smack with topsail set that could well be a trading vessel or drift-net boat. His second view of Loch Inver (WD/S/29) has a variety of smacks and another (perhaps the same?) gaff-rigged vessel as described previously.

At Tanera More, on the Summer Isles, the remains of a herring curing station can still be seen. When Daniell arrived, there were several Norway skiffs on the beach (WD/S/31). Two smacks lie alongside the pier, sails unbent, and several smacks lie at anchor with more sailing in. The smack in the foreground, drying its sails, appears to be a round-stern vessel.

Returning to the Clyde once more, his view of Portpatrick (WD/S/16) shows a topsail smack entering the harbour. In the foreground are several double-ended gaffers of about 15-18ft. These are unusual in that they feature a tall mast and presumably are the forerunners of the Portpatrick line boats measured by Oke (see Part Four). There is one such boat pulled up the beach at the extreme left of the picture, which has a sharp stern that ends up rounded at its extremity.

At Culzean, under the castle (WD/S/18), Daniell depicts two or three wherries and a couple of open boats, one of which appears to contain a gentleman with a top hat. The wherries are double-ended. At Ayr (WD/S/19) there are four small smacks sailing towards the shore and one small double-ender on the beach that would appear to be gaff-rigged as well. Presumably the group on the beach are selling fish.

Amongst the best views of Daniell's pictures is the view of Ailsa Craig (WD/S/17). On the beach, at what must be close to Girvan, are seven skiffs drawn up. Six have masts stepped and these are raked back. The one in the foreground has a sail lying

⁴ Daniell, 1820, vol IV: 5.

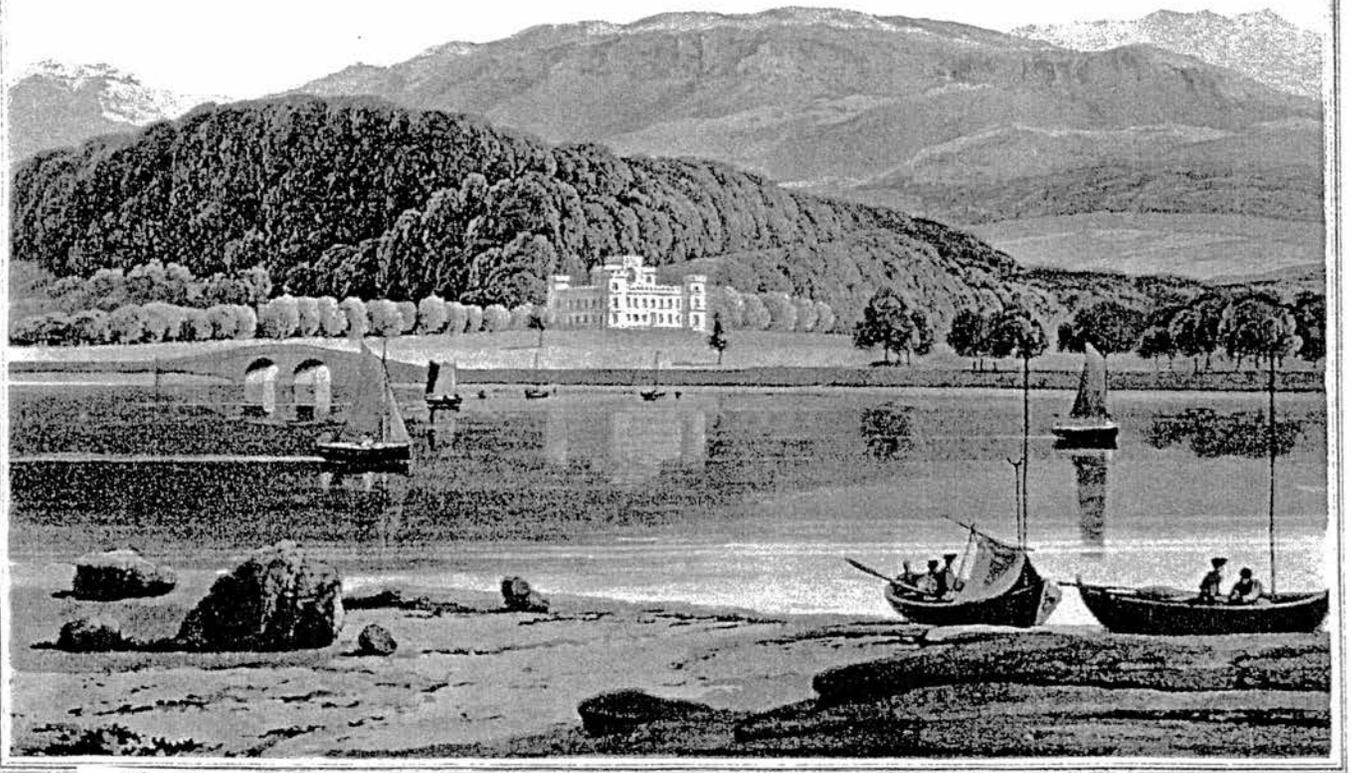


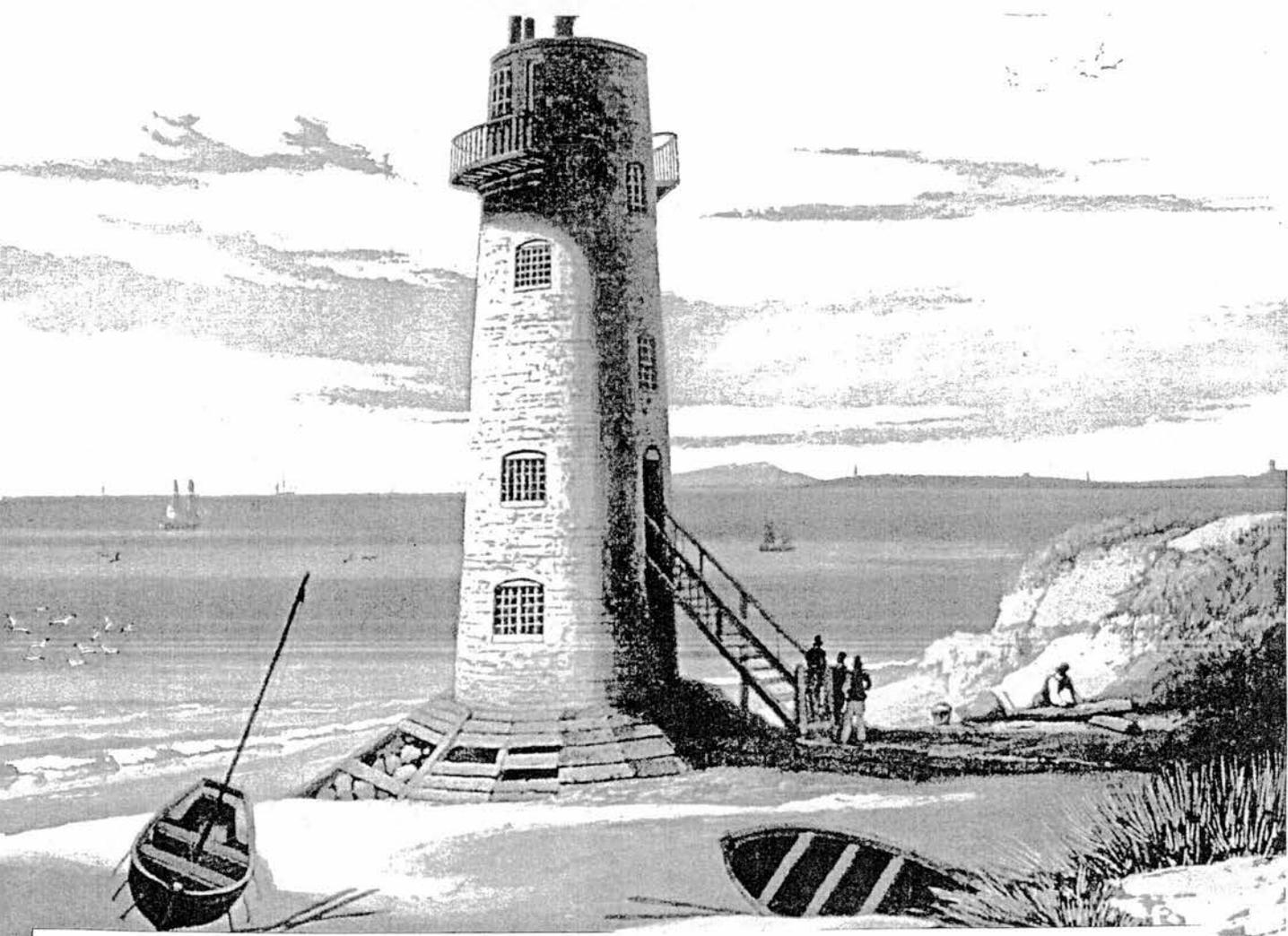
Fig 32

WD/S/21 Inverary Castle, Argyleshire from *A Voyage Round Great Britain* by W.Daniell, vol III, 1818



Fig 33

WD/W/01 Tenby, Pembrokeshire from *A Voyage Round Great Britain* by W.Daniell, vol I, 1814



34 WD/W/02 Point of Air, Flintshire from *A Voyage Round Great Britain* by W.Daniel, vol II, 1815



WD/E/13 The Towns-end Mill, Liverpool from *A Voyage Round Great Britain* by W.Daniell, vol II, 1815

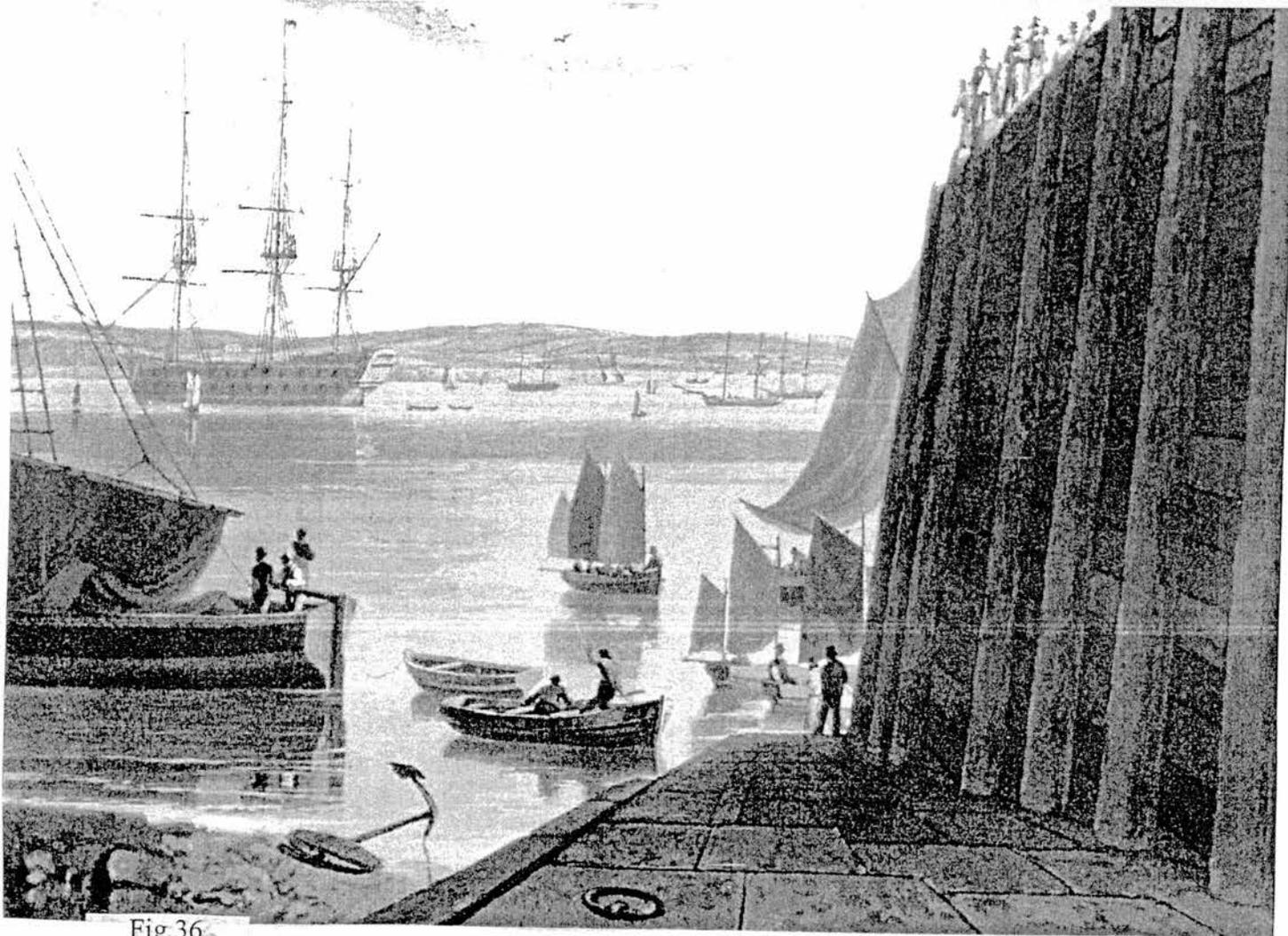


Fig 36

WD/E/14 Seacombe Ferry, Liverpool from *A Voyage Round Great Britain* by W.Daniell, vol II, 1815

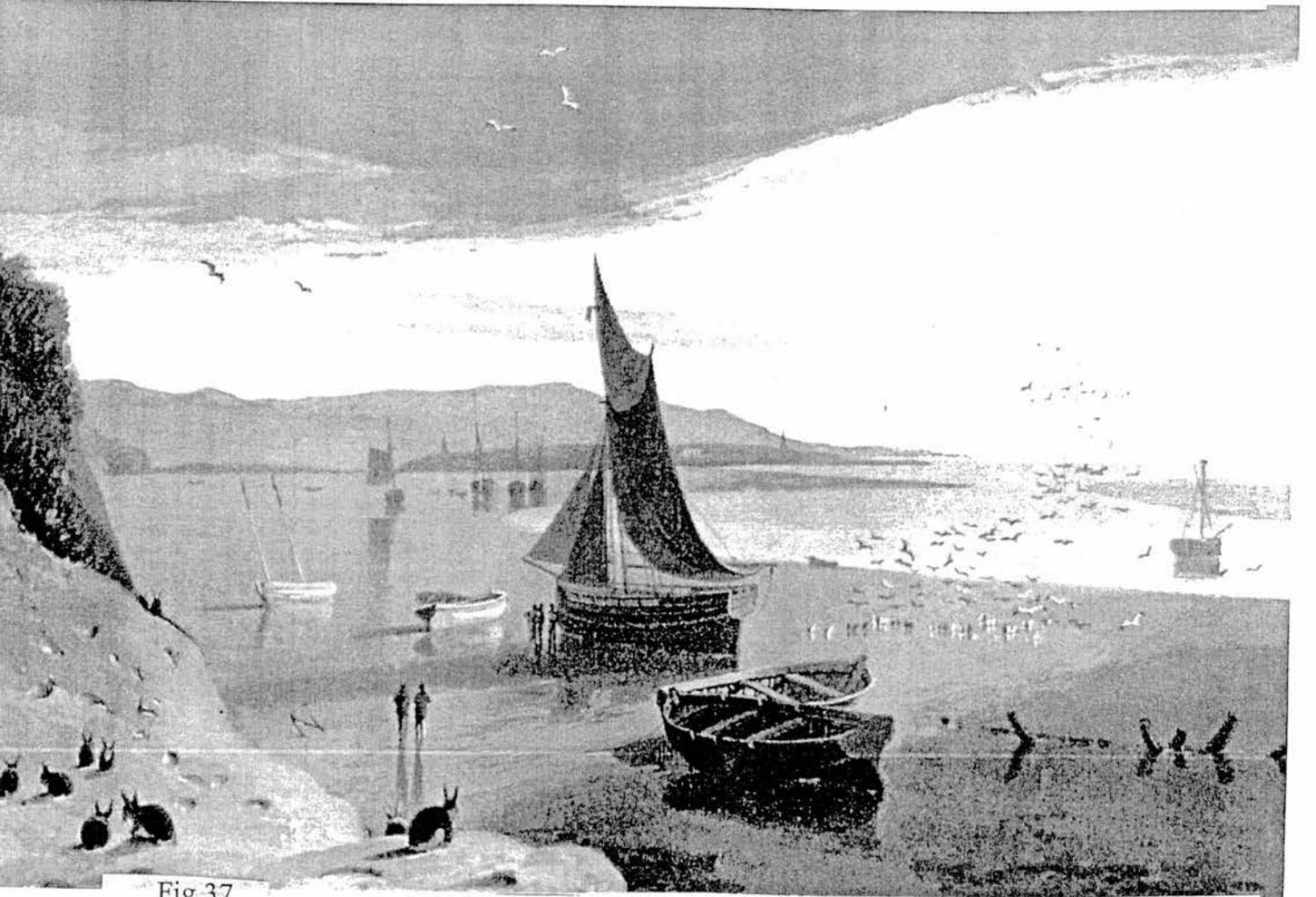


Fig 37

WD/E/12 View near Hoylake, Cheshire from *A Voyage Round Great Britain* by W.Daniell, vol II, 1815

over its gunwales and is totally open. These other six, therefore, are showing us for the first time that typically raked mast for which the Loch Fyne and Clyde boats became renowned. This, being 1823, supports the documentary evidence that this rig emanated from the Ayrshire coast. Could it be, also, that the Ayrshire men were the first to adopt the particular hull shape with its raking sternpost, although the shape is nowhere near as similar to the Lochfyne skiffs with their sloping keel? It is perhaps just the first step in the transition from the wherry hull to skiff. Maybe a combination of the Norway skiff, the wherry and East Coast influences.

And just when we thought we were beginning to make progress, we come finally to Daniell's view of Inveraray (WD/S/21). Here he shows two skiffs with a sail covering the forward end of the boat, as has been described in the documented evidence. However these are not wherry hulls but double-ended Norway skiffs with curved extremes. The fishers within appear dressed in full Highland regalia! Offshore is sailing one wherry-rigged schooner and two gaff-rigged vessels of a similar length. This tends to lead to the supposition that skiffs similar to those in the Highlands were in use in Loch Fyne, working alongside the wherries at the time Daniell visited the area.

With the exception of the view of Maryport, all these views of Daniell's have been confined to Scotland. However, it is important to consider his prints from further south in the Irish Sea. His view of Tenby (WD/W/01) shows a small vessel with a lugsail, main and gaff mizzen. Such a vessel is considered to be an early version of what became known as the Tenby lugger. Tenby – in Welsh *Dinbych-y-pysgod* (the little fort of the fishes) – had the Welsh herring fisheries of the south centred upon its tiny harbour from

SAIL PLAN
TENBY LUGGER
c.1886
LOA 24-FT BERN 8-FT 10-IN
© WINDSVALE '74

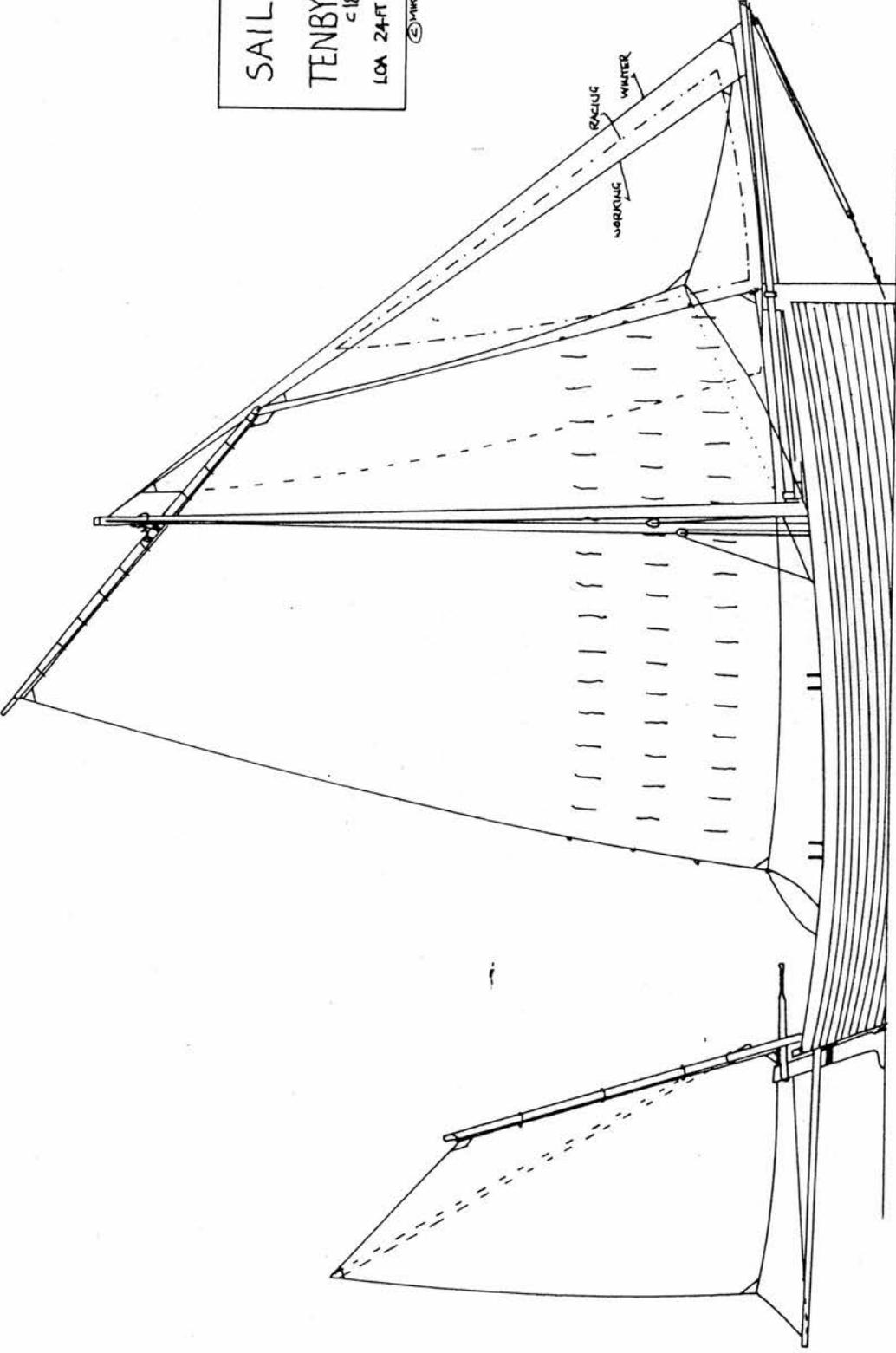
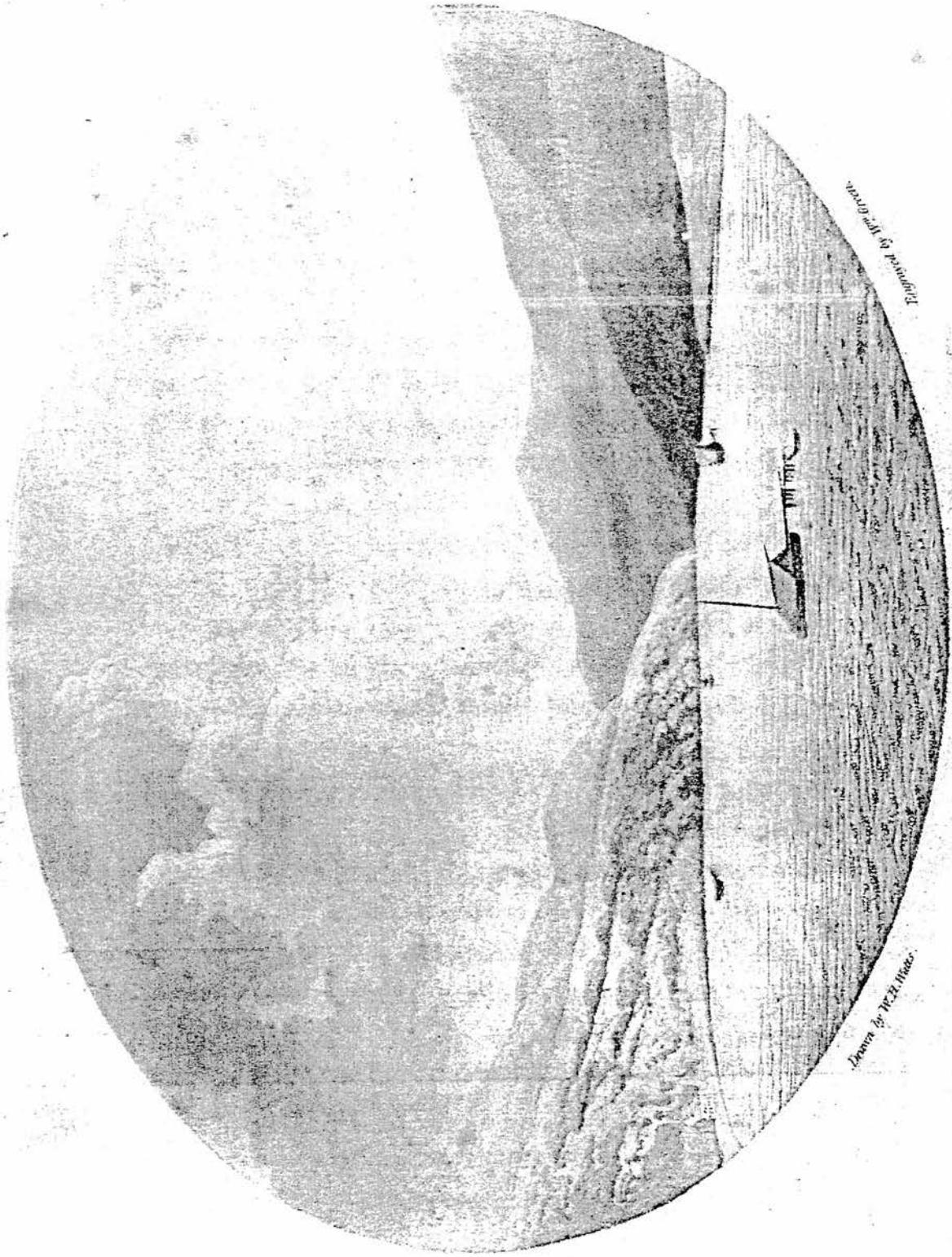


Fig 38 Sail plan of Tenby lugger c.1886 by Mike Smylie after P.J.Oke



Loch Long

Fig 39. TG/S/01 Loch Long from Observations on a Tour through the Highlands of Scotland by T. Garnett, vol I, 181

medieval times right up to the nineteenth century.⁵ The luggers were prevalent, and, although their design evolved through localised needs, there is some resemblance between these early craft and the wherries.

On the coast of North Wales, at the Point of Ayr lighthouse (WD/W/02), Daniell shows a bluff-bowed single-masted vessel dried out on the beach. Propped up with legs, yet leaning over, the boat has two transverse thwarts and seating around the stern. The shape is similar to many Irish Sea craft. Another, almost identical, vessel is depicted on the beach below the Town Mill at Liverpool (WD/E/13), although the internal arrangement of seating differs. On the water, a small two-masted gaff-rigged clinker vessel is being rowed, and three more are shown. All these vessels have a wineglass transom and, presumably, are of the same ilk. In his view of Seacombe Ferry in Liverpool (WD/E/14), the small ferry boats have a similar hullshape yet have three gaff sails. Over the Mersey, at Hoylake (WD/E/12) a vessel, again similar in shape, has two masts, the fore mast – the shorter – being stepped well forward in the wherry fashion. Presumably this is the same type of craft depicted at Seacombe with the mizzen mast missing. However, these three prints do show various stages of the transition from the wherry rig to the better known traditional gaff yawl or ketch.

OTHER SOURCES

Garnett's view of Loch Long (late 1790s) shows a very low vessel without any sheer lying at anchor in the loch (TG/S/01). A canvas covering is suspended below a boom from the one mast stepped. Although perhaps not a very exact engraving, it does

⁵ Smylie, 1998 (2):15-16.

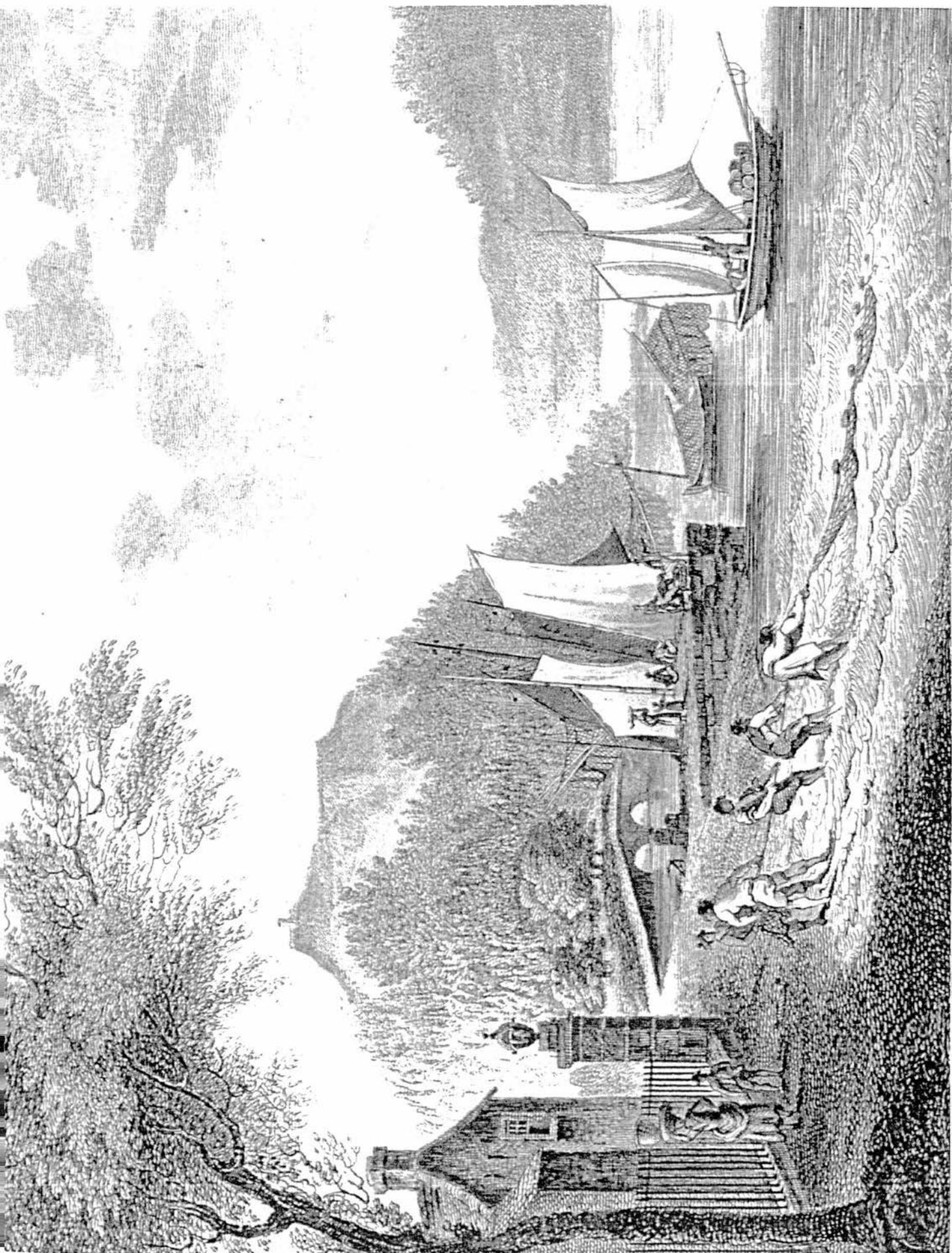


Fig 40. Inveraray from *Scotiae Depicta* by J. Fetter. 1804, plate XVIII

illustrate further that the fishermen were sleeping aboard their vessels during the herring season.

Fettler has produced one of the finest prints entitled 'The Port of Inveraray' in his *Scotiae Depictae*, the picture being dated 1799 (JF/S/01). A wherry-rigged vessel is sailing inward, the hull having scarcely any sheer, as depicted by Garnett. The bow is bluff while the stem is more pointed with a considerable rake. What look like barrels of herring are carried on board. Behind is an obvious fishing boat with a curved stem, and nets lying over the boom and spars that protrude over the stern, again in a similar manner to Garnett's interpretation. His description of the place echoes much of what has been said previously but is worthy of inclusion.

The harbour was formerly called Slochk Ichopper, meaning the inlet where vessels came to barter and sell their fish; and we find in the arms of the town a net with a herring, and this motto, *semper tibi pendeat halec*. The herring fishery lasts from July to January, and is the chief support of the town, which contains about eleven hundred inhabitants. While this continues, all is activity and gaiety. During the day the little flotilla of boats, sometimes to the amount of several hundreds, lies moored near the shore; while "every evening" says Pennant, "they cover the surface of Loch Fyne, an arm of the sea, which, from its narrowness, and from the winding of its shores, has all the beauties of a fresh water lake. On the weekdays the cheerful noise of the bagpipe and dance echoes from on board, while on the Sabbath all the boats divide the day between psalmody and devotion".⁶

An engraving by Robert Wallis entitled 'Loch Fine' was discovered in a private collection and its origins are unknown, as is the date (RW/S/01). However it depicts two Norway-type skiffs from which the two crew of each are setting drift-nets. It has been suggested that this view is taken at the upper end of Loch Fyne and that the castle on the left is at Dunderave Point, north of Inveraray. The large schooner-rigged vessel is probably a fishcarrier while the square-sailed, bluff-bowed vessel could be either. Nets are drying on the shore and several small craft can be seen in the distance.

⁶ Fettler, 1804: plate XVIII.



Fig 41 RW/S/01 Loch Fine by Robert Wallis from a print of unknown source

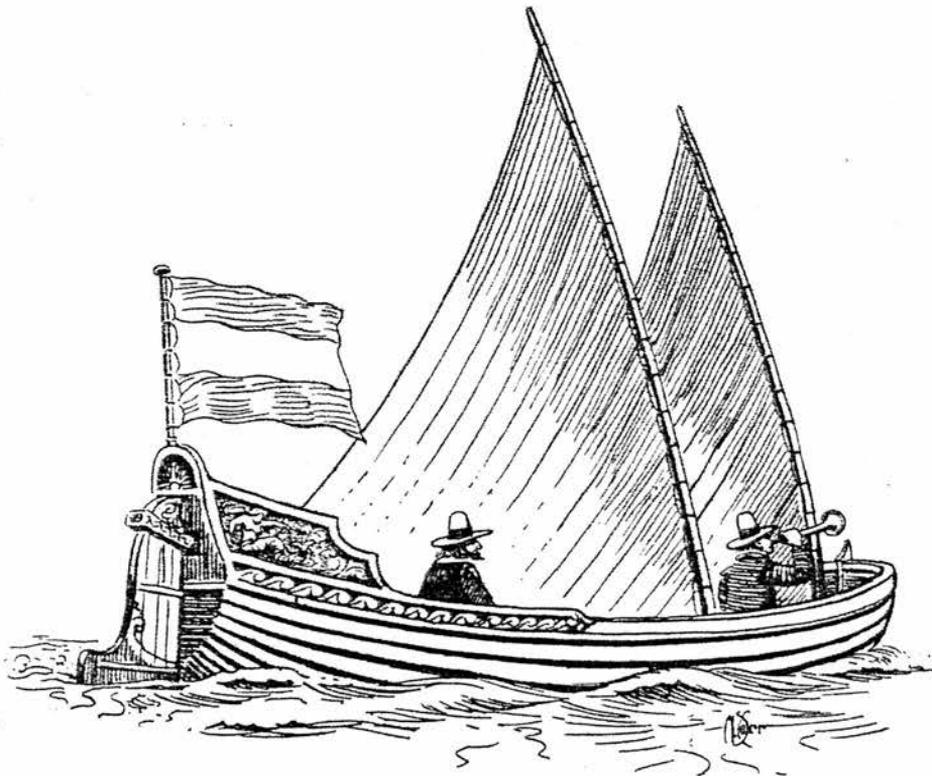


Fig 42

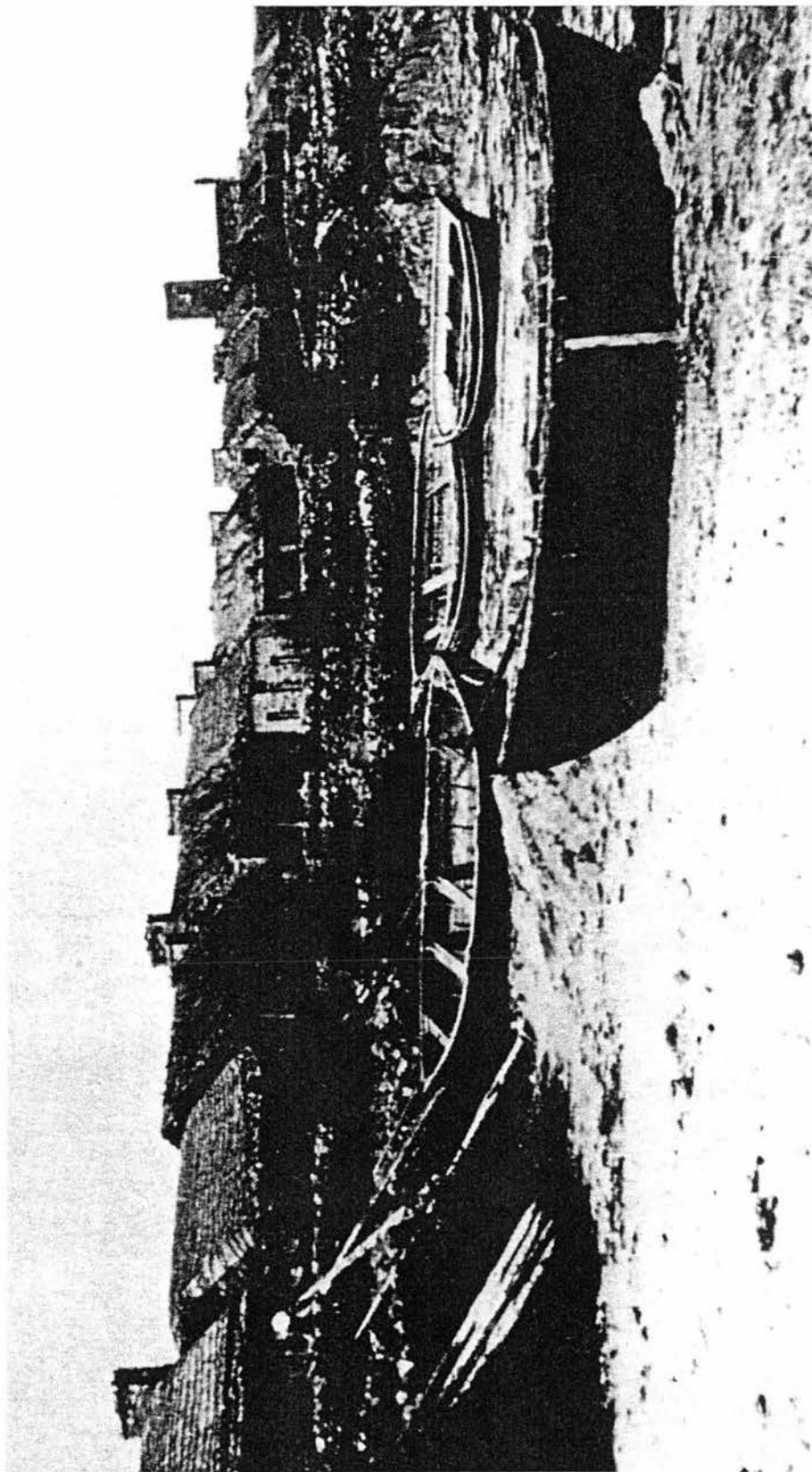


Fig 43 TK/S/01 Norway-type skiffs on beach at Iona in September 1856.
(as photographed by Dr. Thomas Keith.)

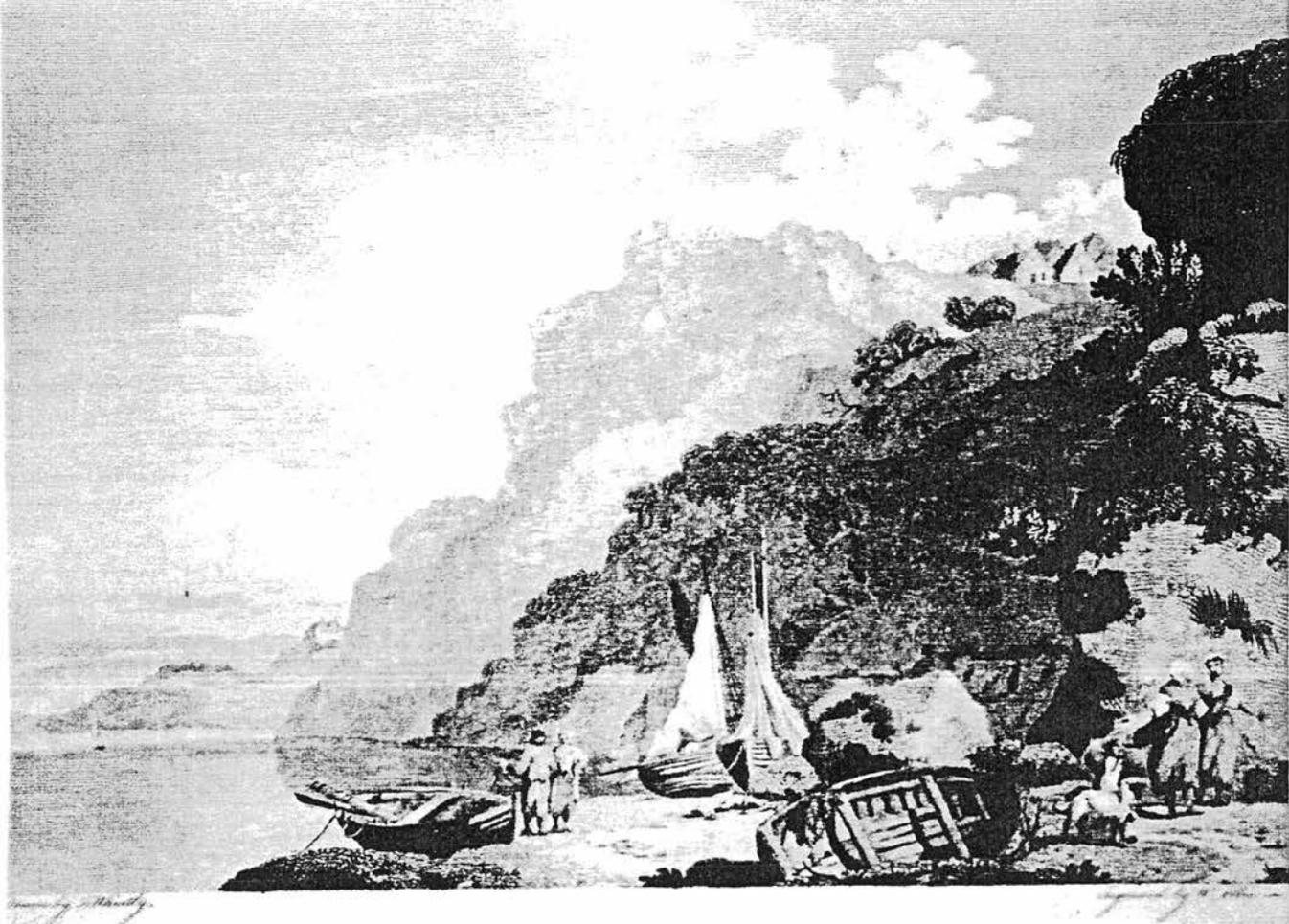


Fig 44 FW/E/01 'View near Lancaster Sands' by F.Wheatley – print in Lancaster Museum

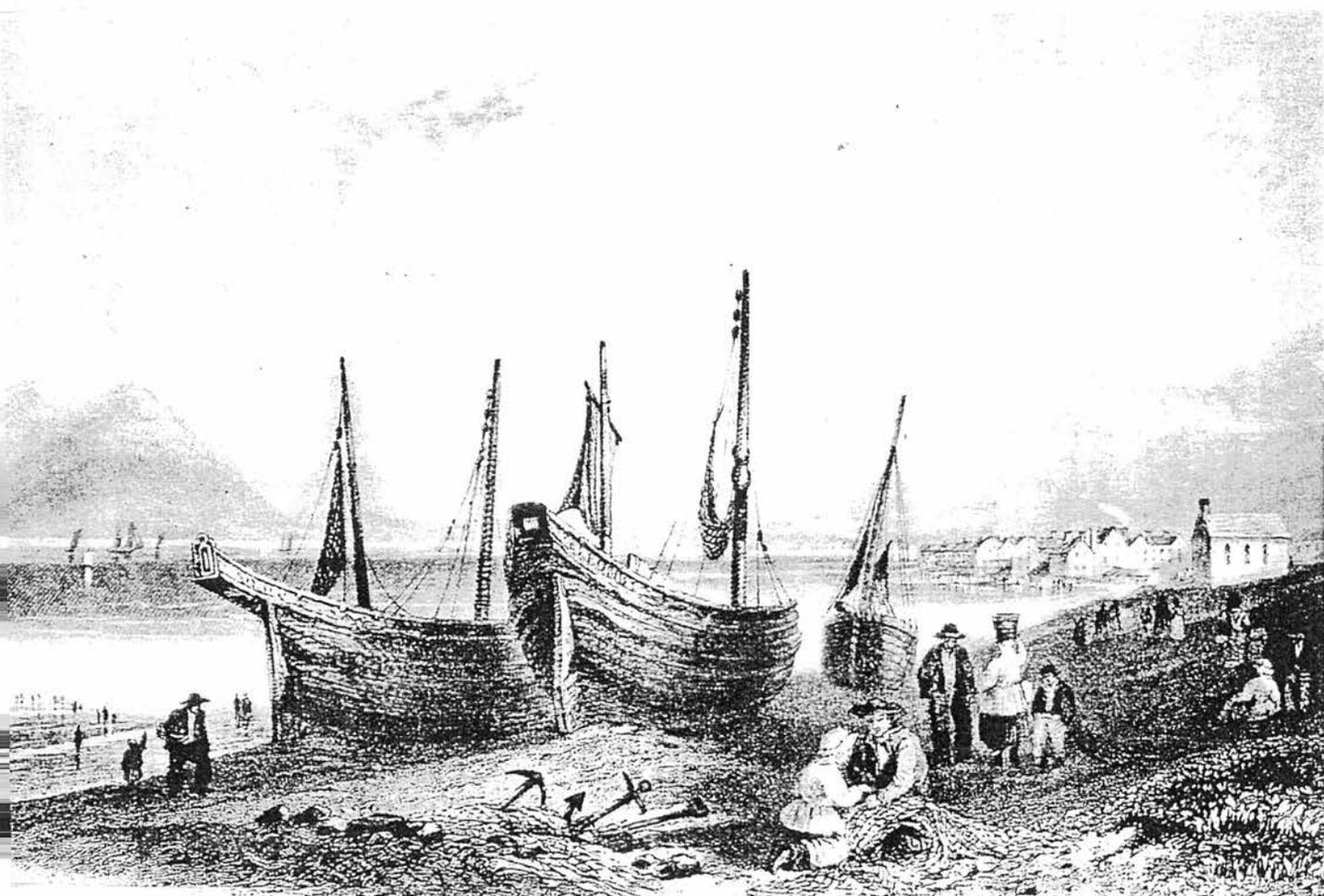


Fig 45 VB/E/01 'Luggers at Allonby, Cumberland' by W.H.Bartlett, from *Boats and Boatmen* by T.C.Lethbridge



Fig 46

JEB/S/01 Loch Lomond from *Highlands and Islands – a 19th Century Tour* by J.E.Bowman

Perhaps the oldest photograph of a Norway-type skiff was taken by the Edinburgh surgeon and amateur photographer Dr Thomas Keith when he visited Iona in September of 1856 (TK/S/01).⁷ The vessels, lying upon the beach, appear to have no rig, although there are what could be spars propped up against the top of the beach.

Evidence of wherries, other than from Daniel, is not so forthcoming. Chatterton gives us a picture by Adam Willaerts of an early schooner from Holland (AW/H/01). The clinker vessel has the sails laced to unsupported masts and they appear to be loose-footed.⁸

A drawing by F. Wheatley entitled 'View near Lancaster Sands', dating from 1787, shows transom-sterned, clinker-built vessels with bluff bows. Two are open boats with two thwarts and oars and the other two appear to be smack-rigged (FW/E/01).

An engraving, dating from about 1850, of Allonby (WB/E/01), a village a few miles north of Maryport in what was then Cumberland, shows some remarkable vessels on the beach. Whether they are related to the wherries is difficult to clarify, but there does appear to be a fishing net drying from the mast of two of the boats. Lethbridge terms them 'fishing luggers' and there is obvious fishing activity on the shore. These vessels have a strange counter-stern which, he points out, 'has not yet become quite incorporated in the hull, and furthermore it ends in a kind of shrine-like carving'.⁹

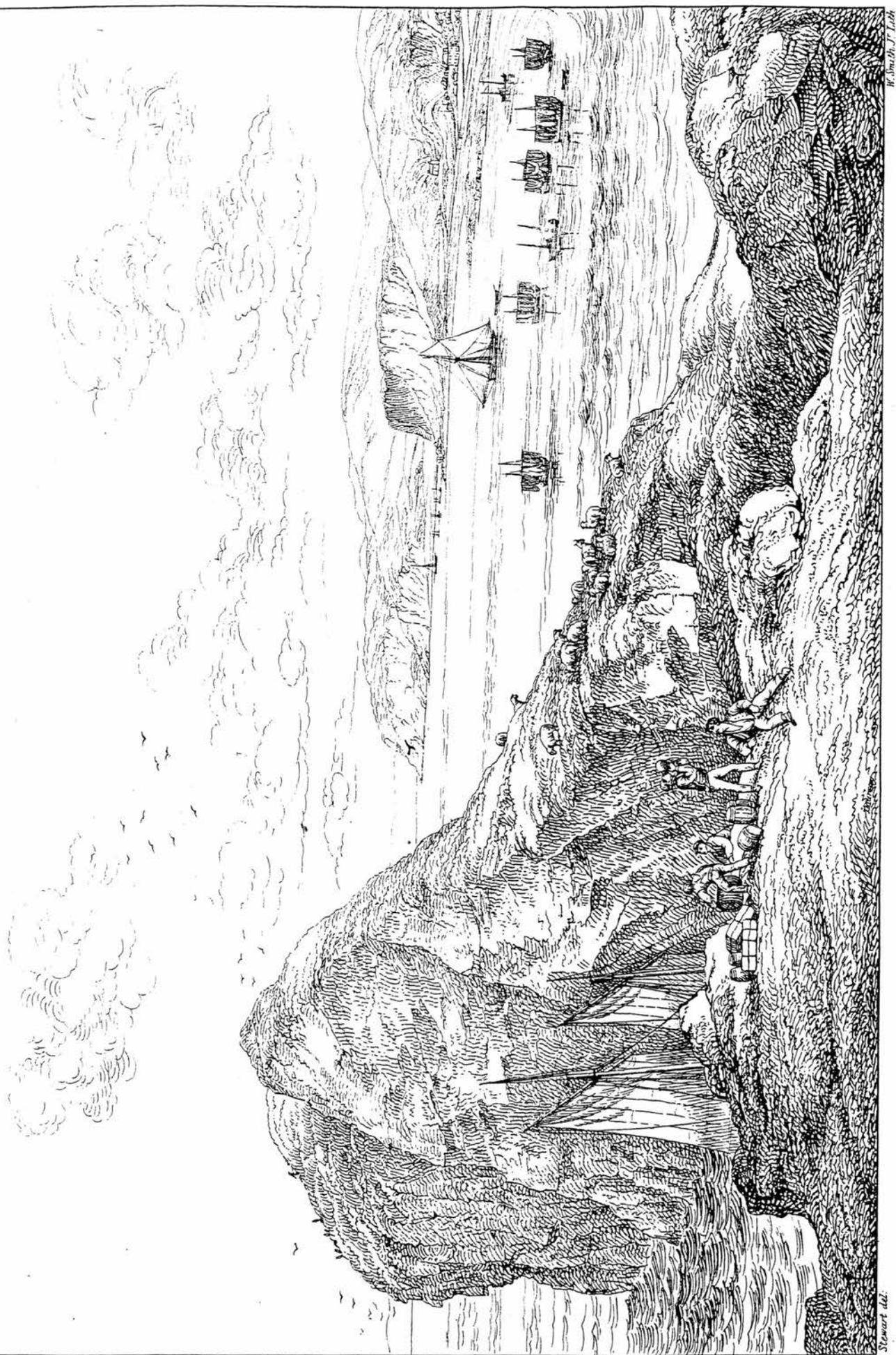
Bowman shows a view of Loch Lomond with a wherry-rigged vessel with the forward mast right in the eyes of the vessel (JEB/S/01). The detail is unclear.¹⁰

⁷ Paterson, 1987:11-12

⁸ Chatterton, 1927:76.

⁹ Lethbridge, 1952:148. The engraving by W.H. Bartlett is Plate III between pages 45 & 46.

¹⁰ Bowman, 1986:40.



DUNAVERTY.

Fig 47 JS/S/01 'Dunvarty' from *Views of Campbelltown* by James Smith, 1835

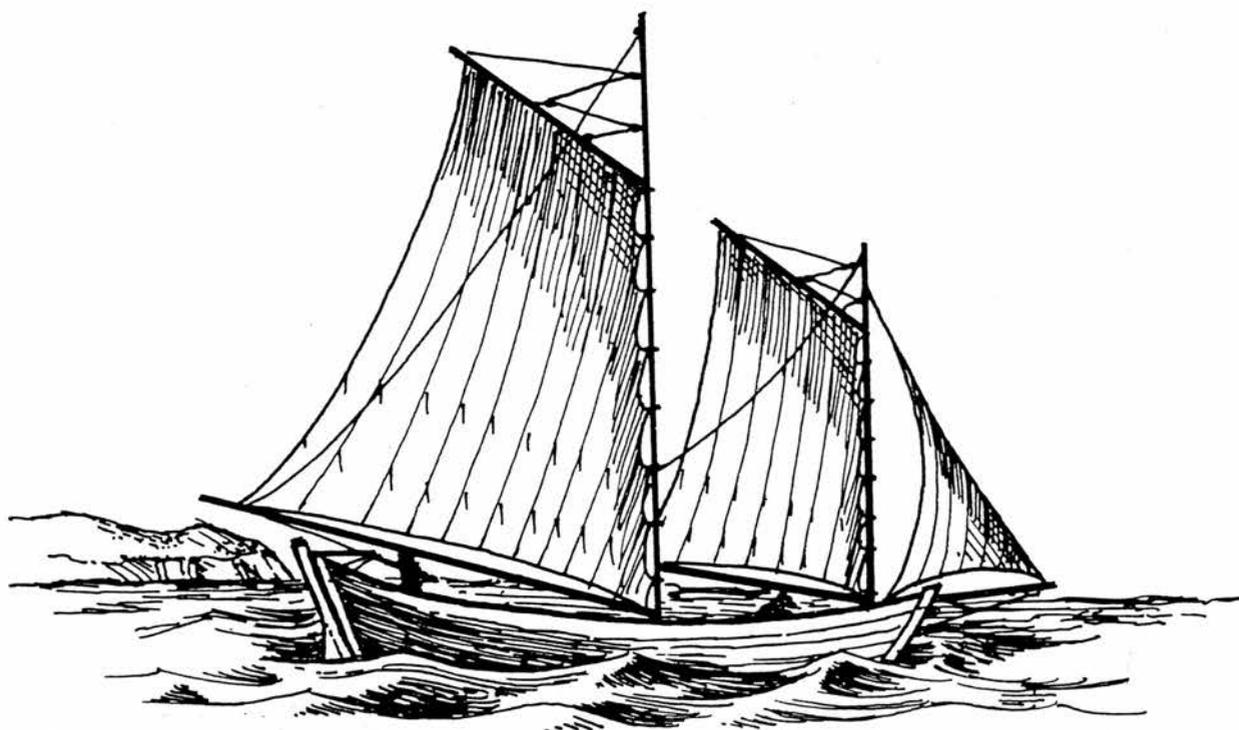


Fig 48

MHF/IOM/02 A wherry - from Manx Sea Fishing Booklet

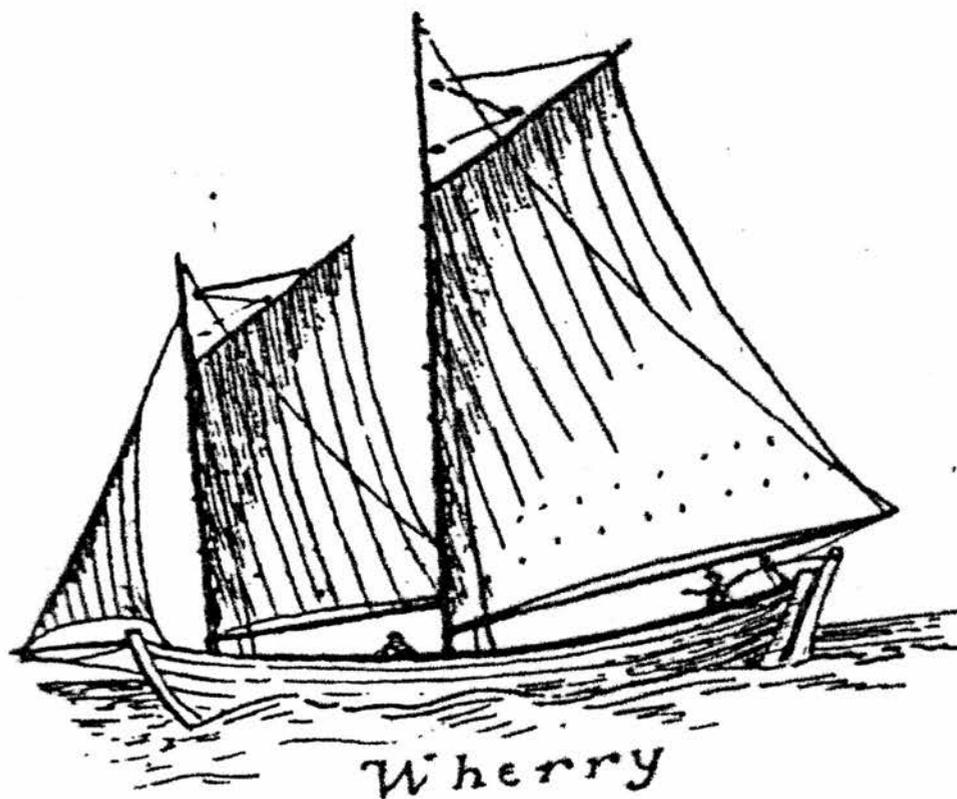


Fig 49

UN/IOM/03

A wherry - from an unknown source

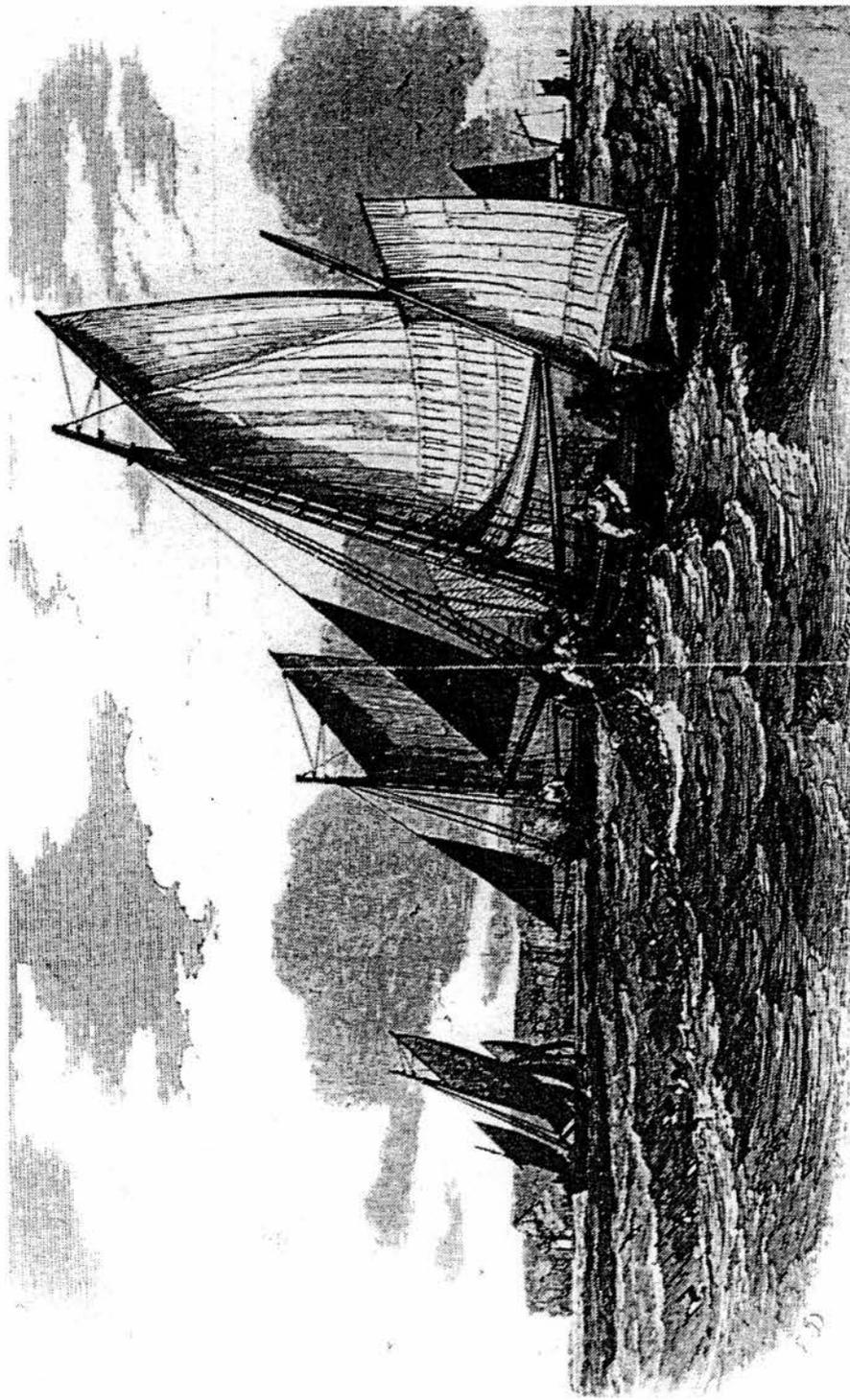


Fig 50 MHF/IOM/01 'Herring fishing' – from Manx Sea Fishing Booklet

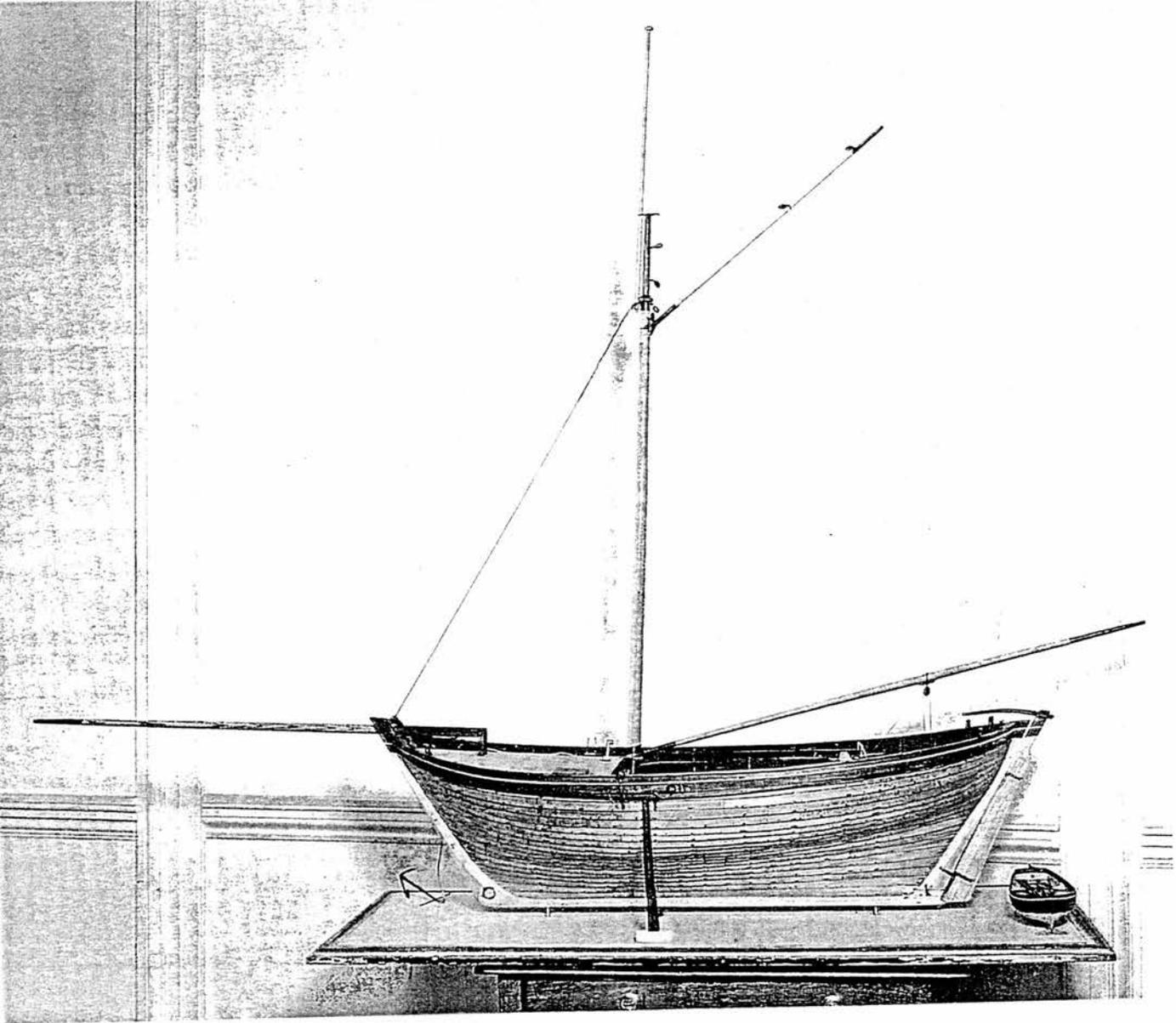
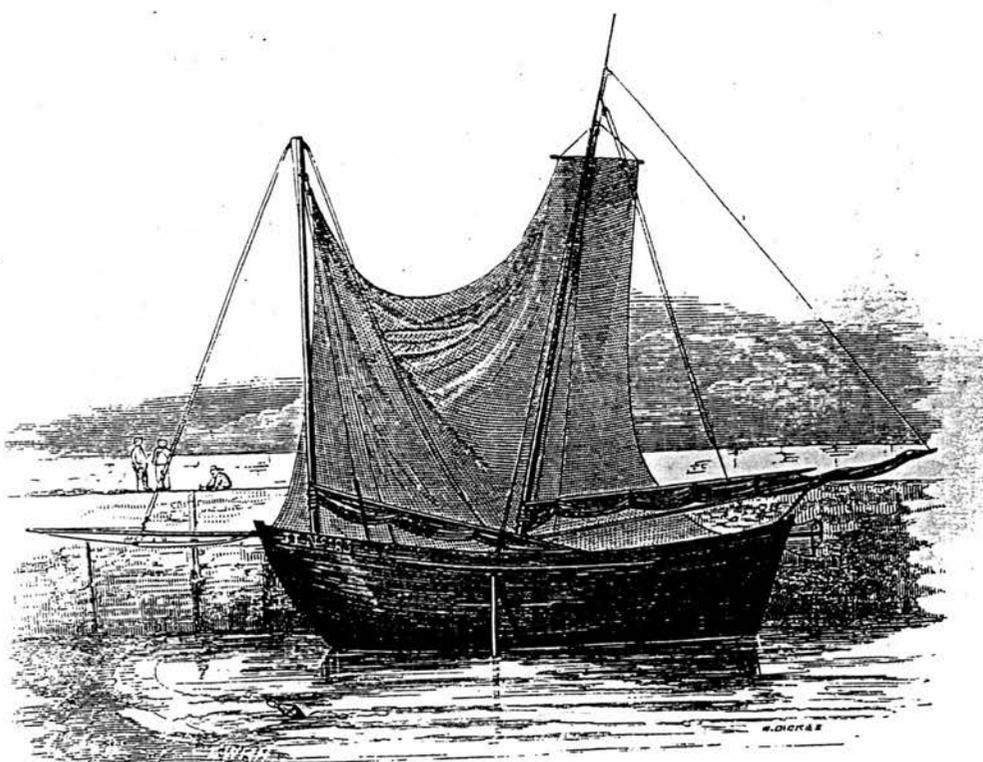


Fig 51 MNH/IOM/04 Model of the wherry 'Athol' in the Manx Museum, Douglas



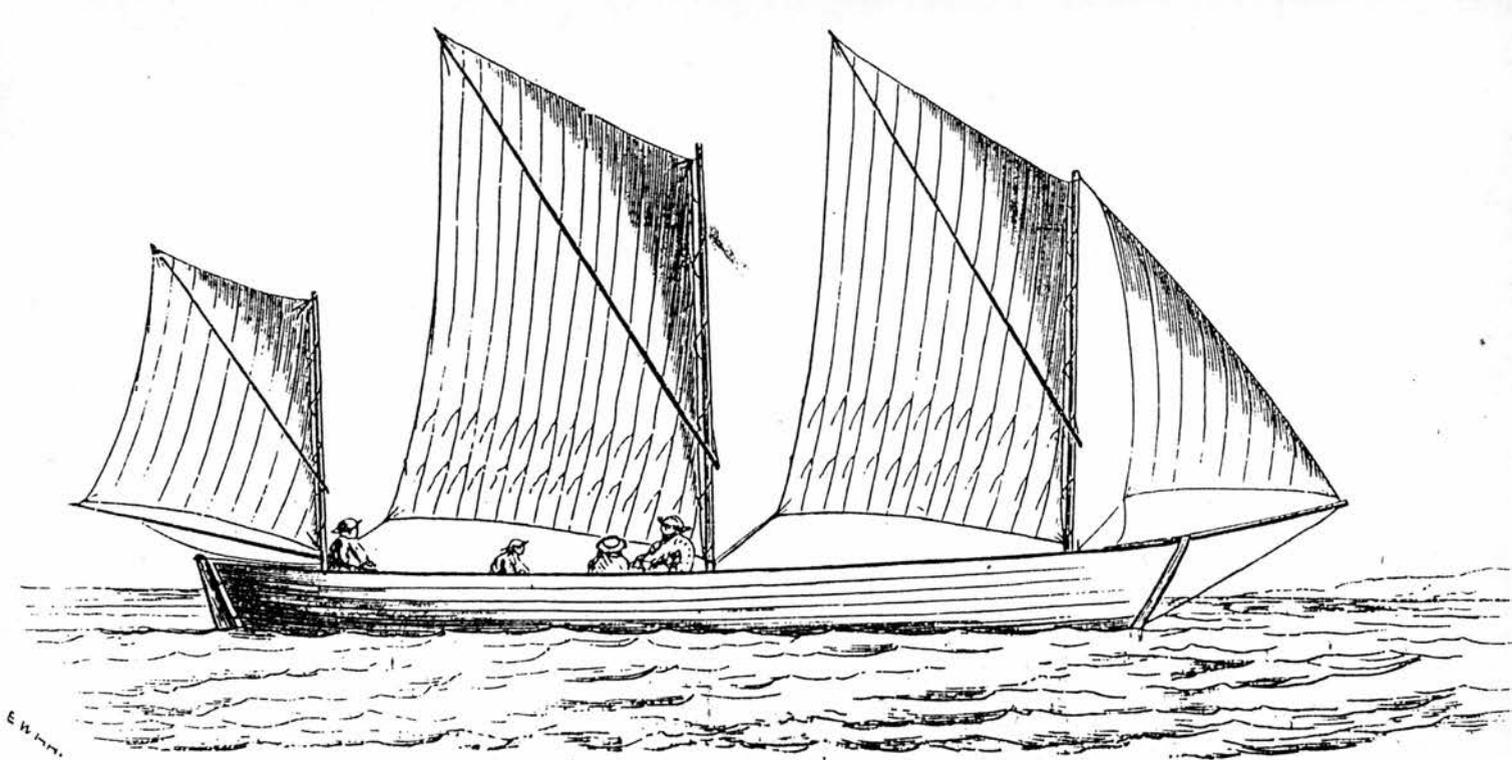


Fig 53 WEXFORD HERRING COT—UNDER SAIL.

Wexford Herring Cot under sail by E.W.H.Holdsworth from *Deep-Sea Fishing and Fishing Boats*, page 365



Fig 54 IRISH FISHING YAWL.

Irish Fishing Yawl by E.W.H.Holdsworth from *Deep-Sea Fishing and Fishing Boats*, page 393

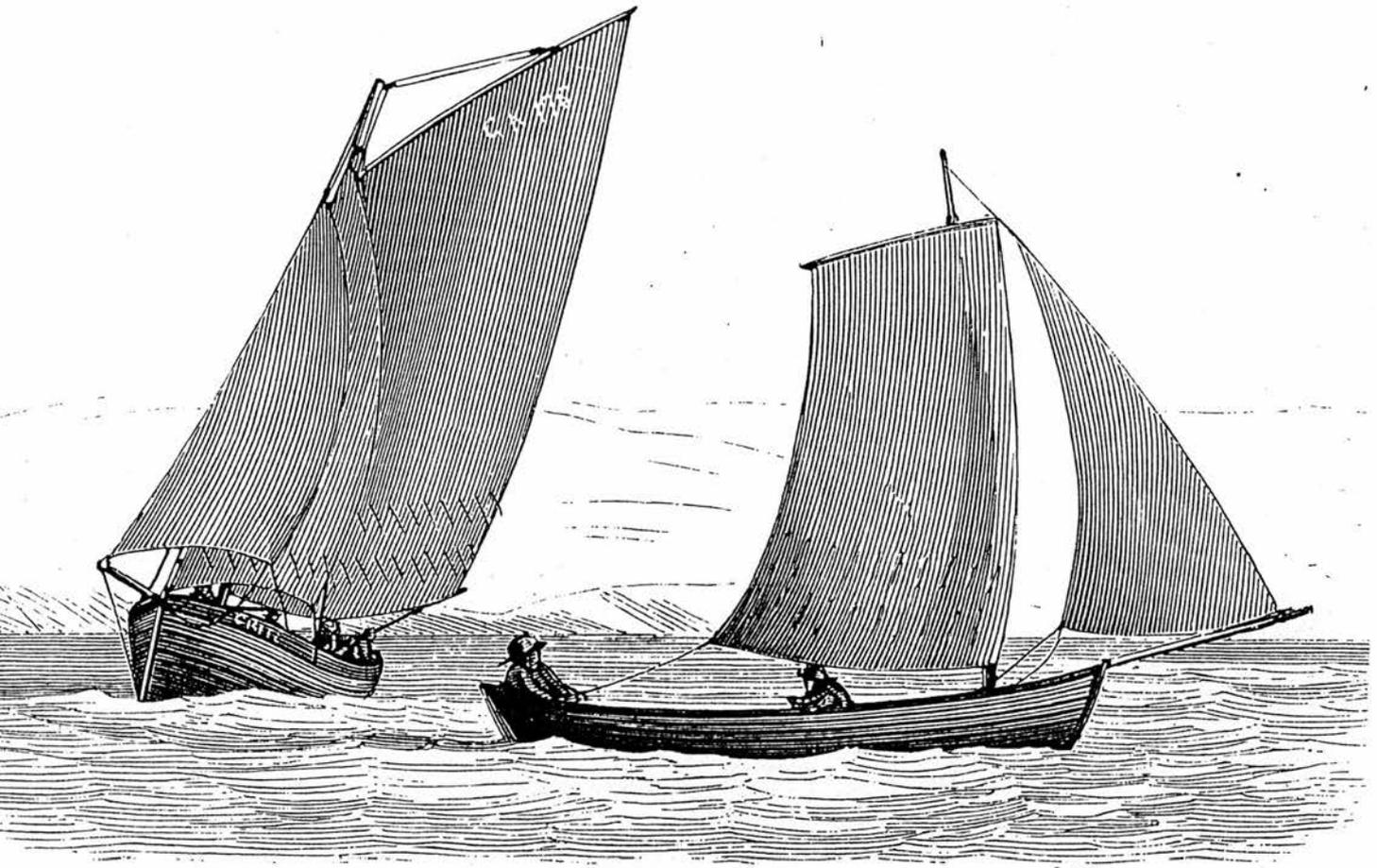


Fig 55

LOCHFYNÉ FISHING BOATS.

Lochfyne fishing boats by E. W. H. Holdsworth from *Deep-Sea Fishing and Fishing Boats*, page 332

In *Views of Campbeltown and Neighbourhood*, a series of pictures by James Stewart, lithographed by William Smith, from 1835, there's a view of Dunaverty, at the extreme end of the peninsula of Kintyre (JS/S/01). It depicts what appear to be smugglers bringing barrels and packages ashore from a schooner. The boat itself is hidden from view but the upper parts of the sails are obvious. In the bay is a fleet of two-masted wherries with their nets drying from their equal-length masts.¹¹

Several drawings of wherries exist. Two illustrations depict similar, almost identical, examples (MHF/IOM/02 & UN/IOM/03). Another view entitled 'Herring Fishing' depicts what appear to be transom-sterned vessels, dandy-rigged with a main gaff and lug mizzen. The hull shape would seem to be a wherry-type craft (MHF/IOM/01).¹²

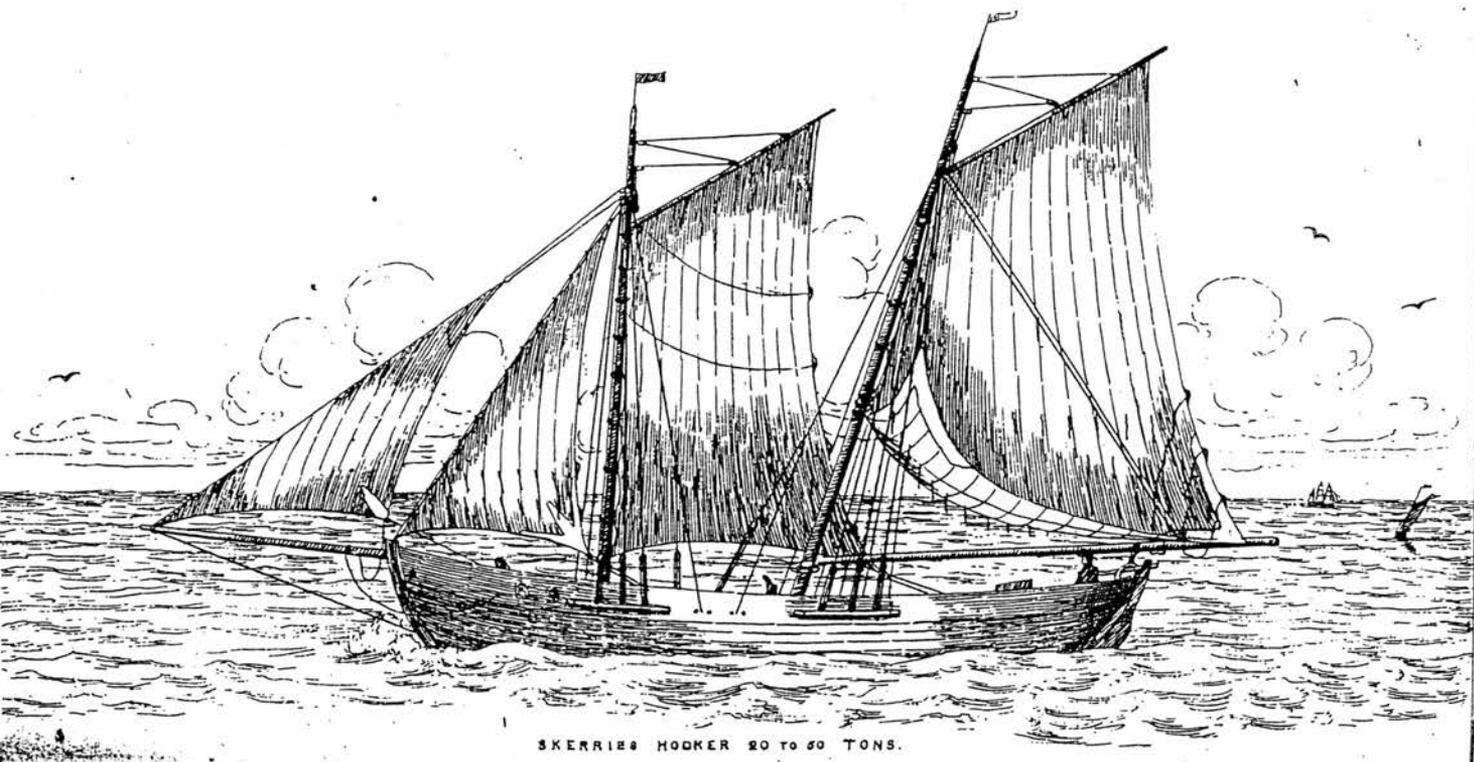
Skerries wherries are featured in several books and have been discussed in the documentary evidence. There's a contemporary model of a wherry-type vessel in the Manx Museum, which has been mentioned.¹³ This vessel is the *Athol* and dates from about 1800. Unlike those illustrated by Holdsworth and Brabazon, this vessel is single-masted (MNH/IOM/04). Holdsworth gives us a superb drawing of a Skerries wherry (EH/I/01). It has two masts and he shows it with nets hanging from the masts as it lies alongside the harbour, supported by legs in the ebbing tide. The ends are perhaps not as raking as the *Athol*, but there is no doubt about the unique shape of the vessel.¹⁴

¹¹ See Smith, *Views of Campbeltown and Neighbourhood*.

¹² See Manx Heritage Foundation Pack.

¹³ See page 59.

¹⁴ Holdsworth, 1874:361.

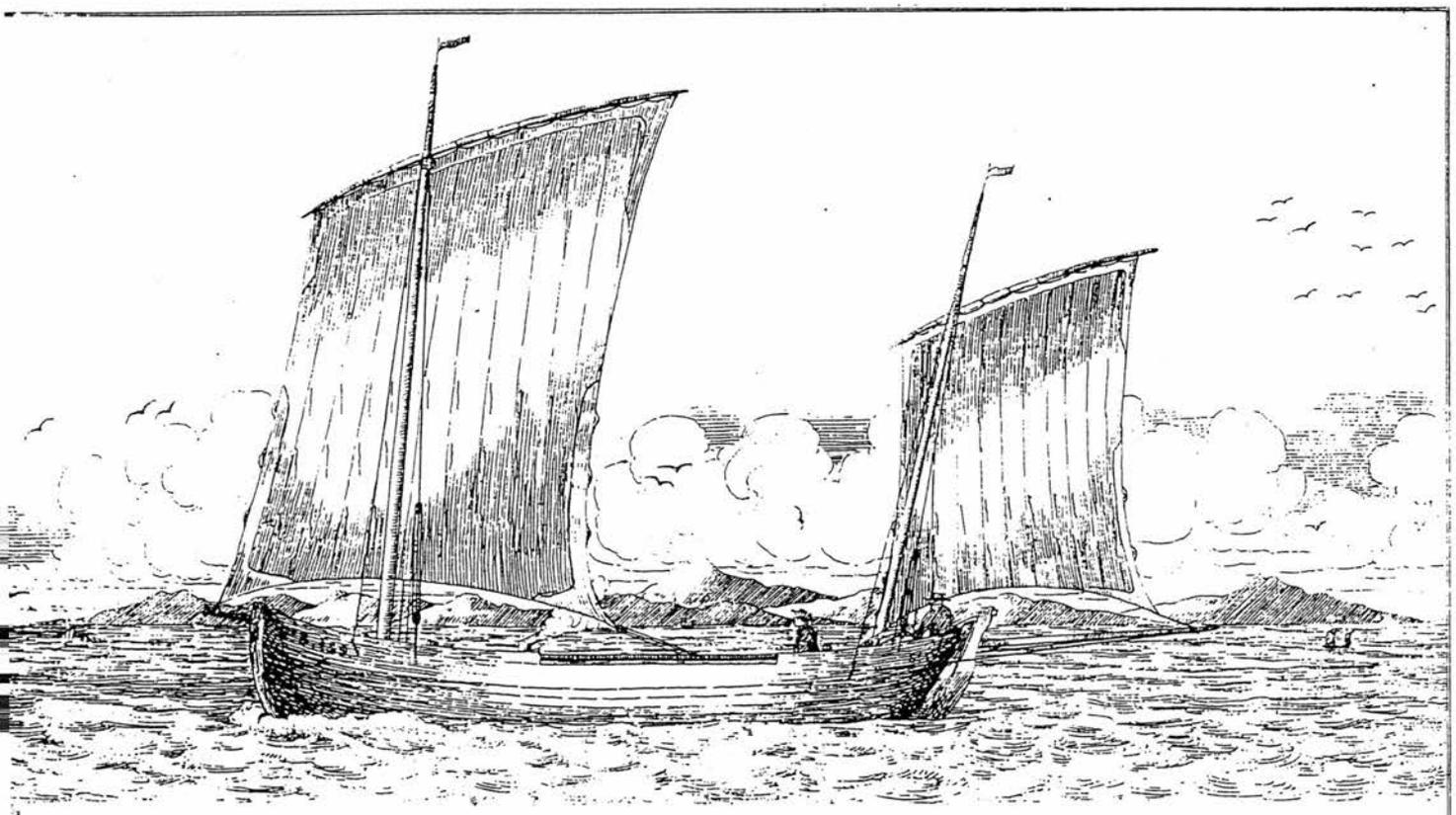


SKERRIES HOOKER 20 TO 50 TONS.

Designed by J. BERRY

Printed by J. BERRY of Britain & DUBLIN.

g 56 WB/I/01 Skerries Hooker from *The Deep Sea & Coastal Fisheries of Ireland* by W.Brabazon

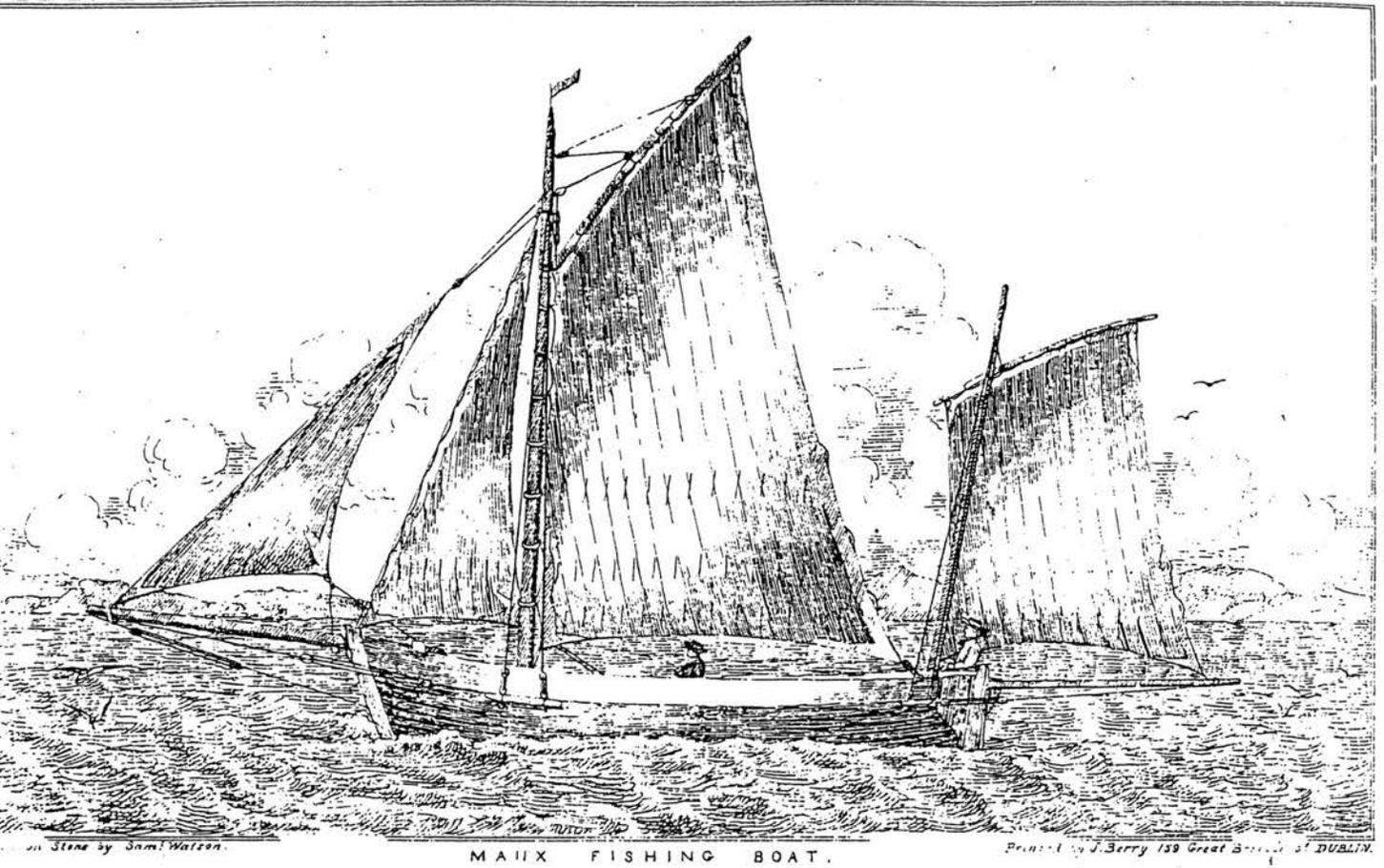


PENZANCE OR ST IVES HERRING OR PILCHARD BOAT.

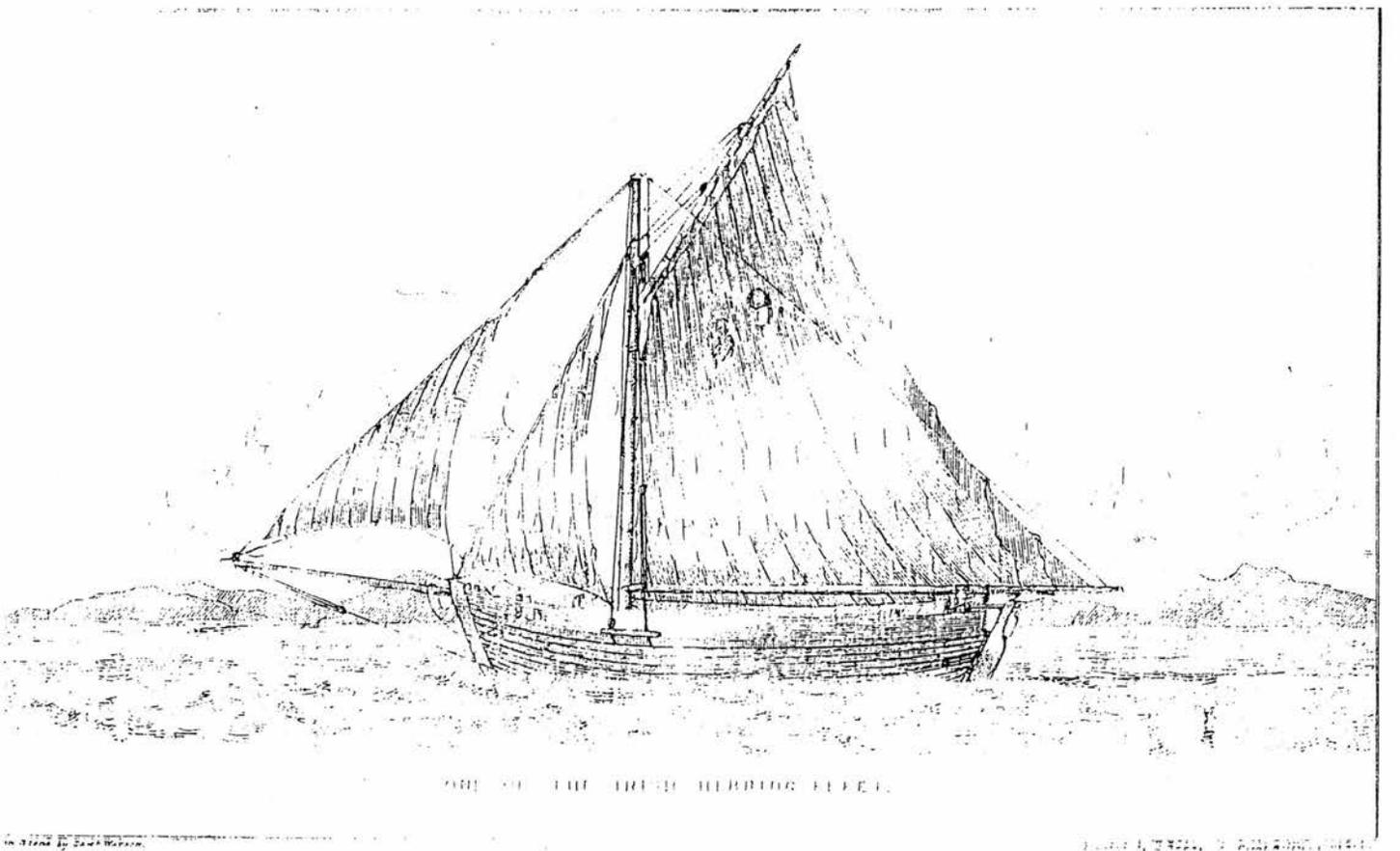
Designed by J. BERRY

Printed by J. BERRY of Britain & DUBLIN.

WB/E/01 Penzance or St Ives pilchard boat from *Deep Sea & Coastal Fisheries of Ireland* by W.Brabazon



58 WB/IOM/01 Manx Fishing Boat from *Deep Sea & Coastal Fisheries of Ireland* by W.Brabazon



59 WB/I/02 Irish Herring Smack from *Deep Sea & Coastal Fisheries of Ireland* by W.Brabazon

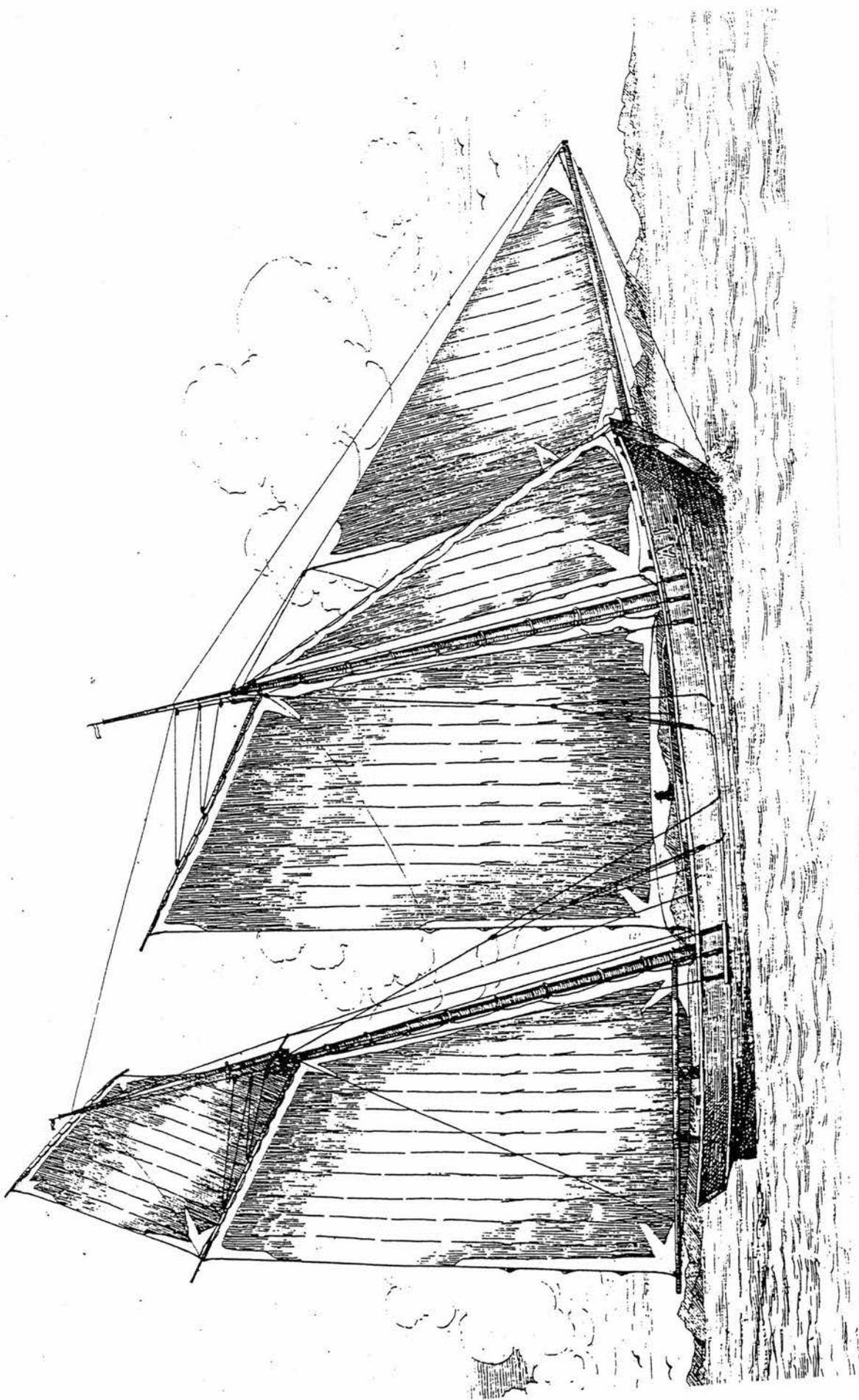


Fig 60

WB/1/03 West Coast fishing schooner from Deep Sea & Coastal Fisheries of Ireland by W.Brabazon

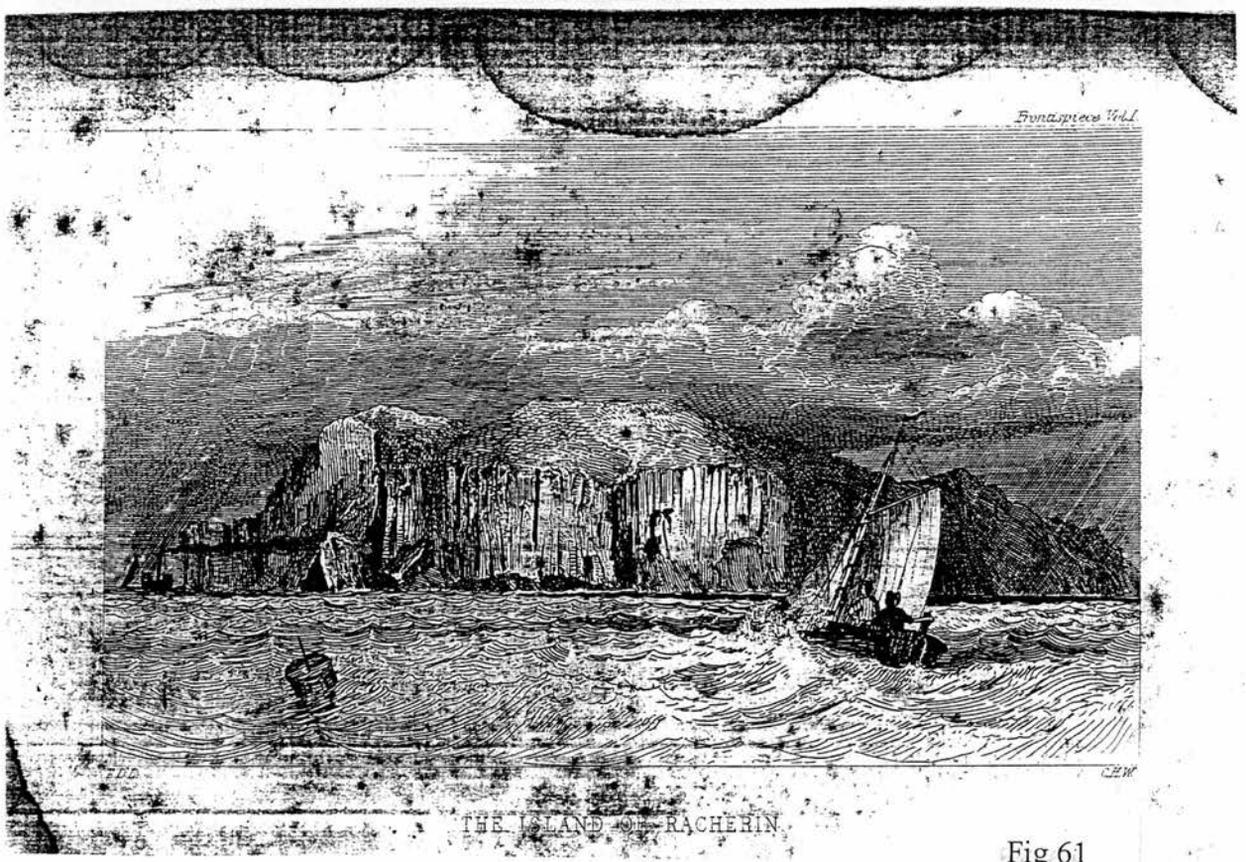


Fig 61

JW/S/01 'The Island of Racherin' from *A Voyage round the coasts of Scotland and the Isles* by J. Wilson, vol I, frontpiece

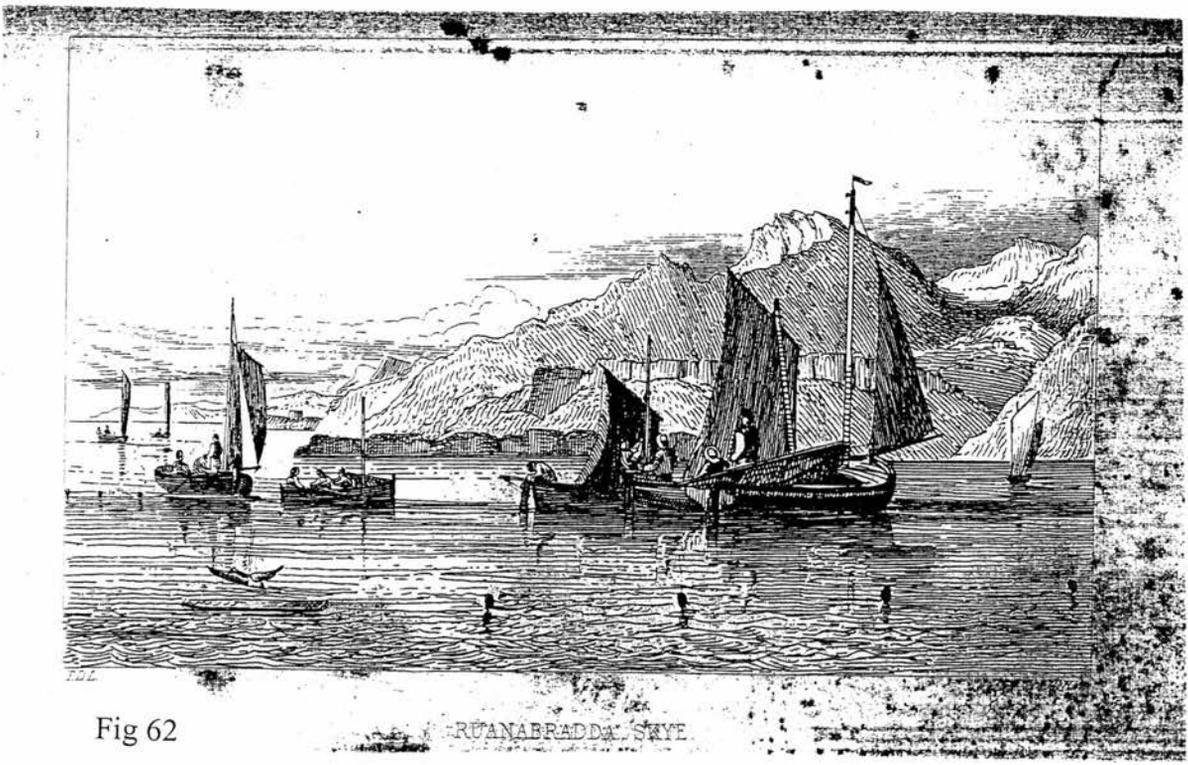
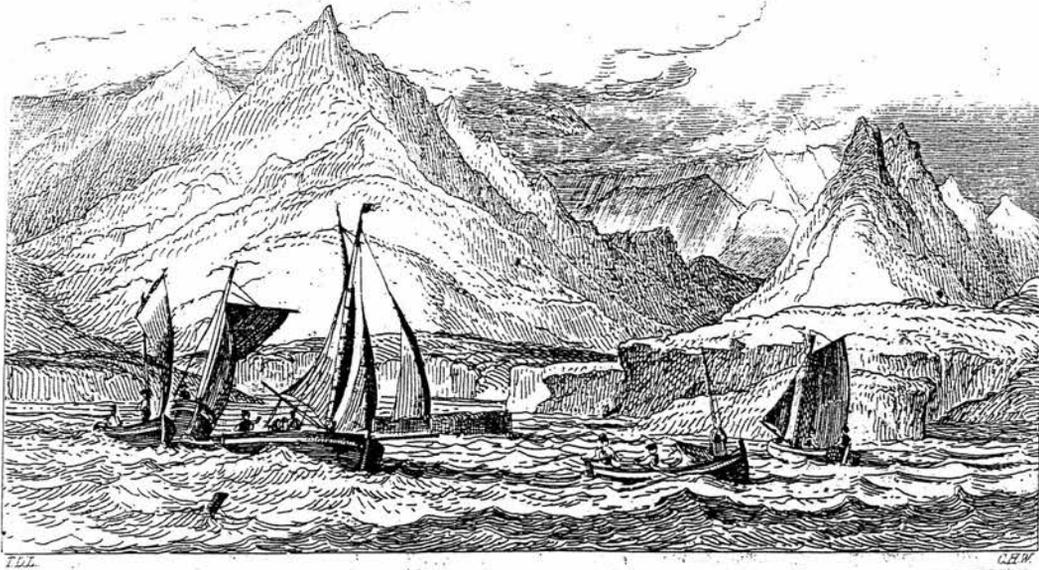


Fig 62

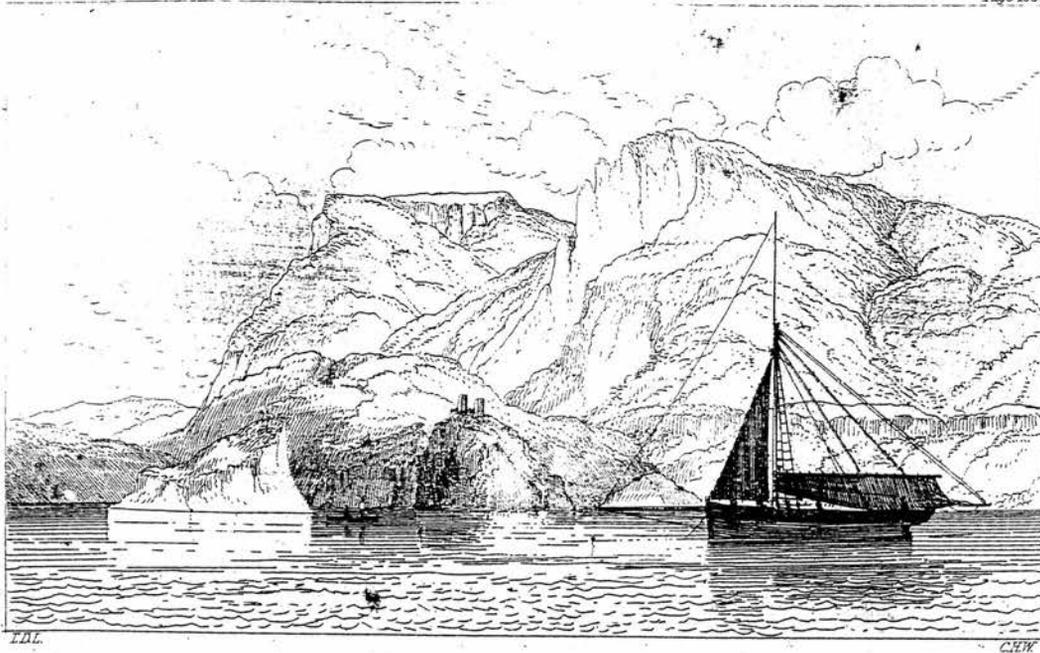
JW/S/02 'Ruanabradha, Skye' from *A Voyage round the coasts of Scotland and the Isles* by J. Wilson, vol I, p397



ENTRANCE TO LOCH SCAVAIG, SKYE.

Fig 63

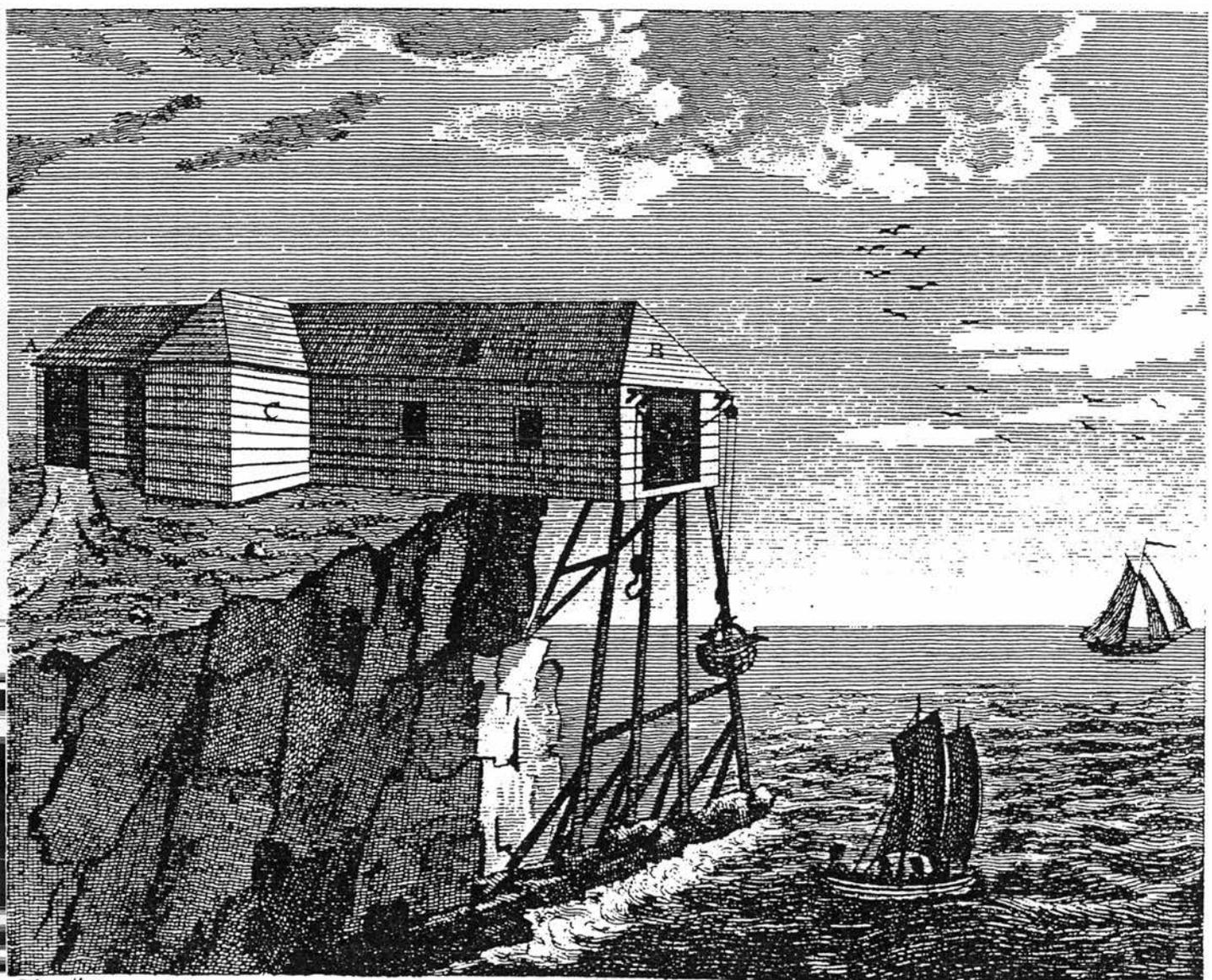
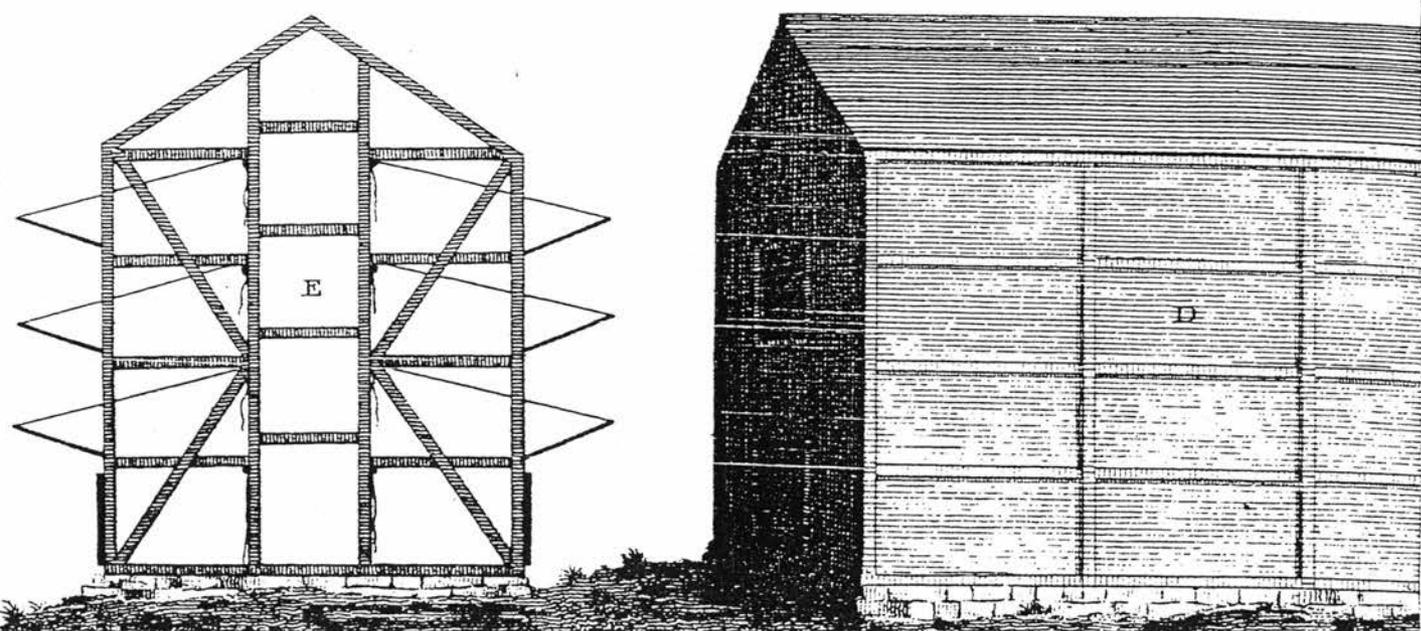
JW/S/03 'Entrance to Loch Scavaig, Skye' from *A Voyage round the coasts of Scotland and the Isles* by J. Wilson, vol I, p215



DUNTULM CASTLE, SKYE.

Fig 64

JW/S/04 'Duntulm Castle, Skye' from *A Voyage round the coasts of Scotland and the Isles* by J. Wilson, vol I, p409



J. Milne pinxt

Fig 65

A. Cary sculp

Holdsworth also gives us pictures of a Drontheim, a Wexford herring cot and Lochfyne fishing boats as comparisons.¹⁵

Brabazon gives us a wherry which he terms a 'Skerries Hooker 20 to 50 tons'. The aft mast rakes in the same way as it does upon the Swansea pilot boat, although the gaffs are not as short (WB/I/01). He also includes pictures of a Penzance boat (WB/E/01), a Manx fishing boat (WB/IOM/01), an Irish herring smack (WB/I/02) and a schooner he recommended for the west coast fisheries, it, too, being schooner rigged (WB/I/03).

James Wilson produced four interesting drawings in 1842, after his voyage around Scotland. His view of 'The Island of Racherin' is presumably Rathlin Island because it was once called Rachery.¹⁶ In this picture (JW/S/01) there's single masted wherry-type vessel with a transom stern.¹⁷ In Ruanabradra, Skye, Wilson shows a wherry with, like Brabazon's wherry and the Swansea pilot boats, a mizzen mast that rakes aft (JW/S/02). This is the first time the writer has come across such a characteristic in Scottish west coast vessels and it is definitely unusual.¹⁸ At the entrance to Loch Scavaig he shows single-masted bluff-bowed craft, two seemingly smack rigged and the other lug rigged (JW/S/03).¹⁹ His other view of Duntum Castle depicts a typical smack of the period (JW/S/04).²⁰

Newte, in his examination of a fishing station recently built on the south side of Loch Torridon, includes a print of a building overhanging the cliff to enable fish to be hauled up in a large basket (TN/S/01). Although the whole development looks decidedly unsafe, it being supported by timber legs from the seabed below and seeming as if the

¹⁵ Ibid: (in order) 393,365,332.

¹⁶ Pers comm. Angus Martin, 6/10/01.

¹⁷ Wilson, 1842: frontspiece.

¹⁸ Ibid:397.

Lochranza Castle, Arran

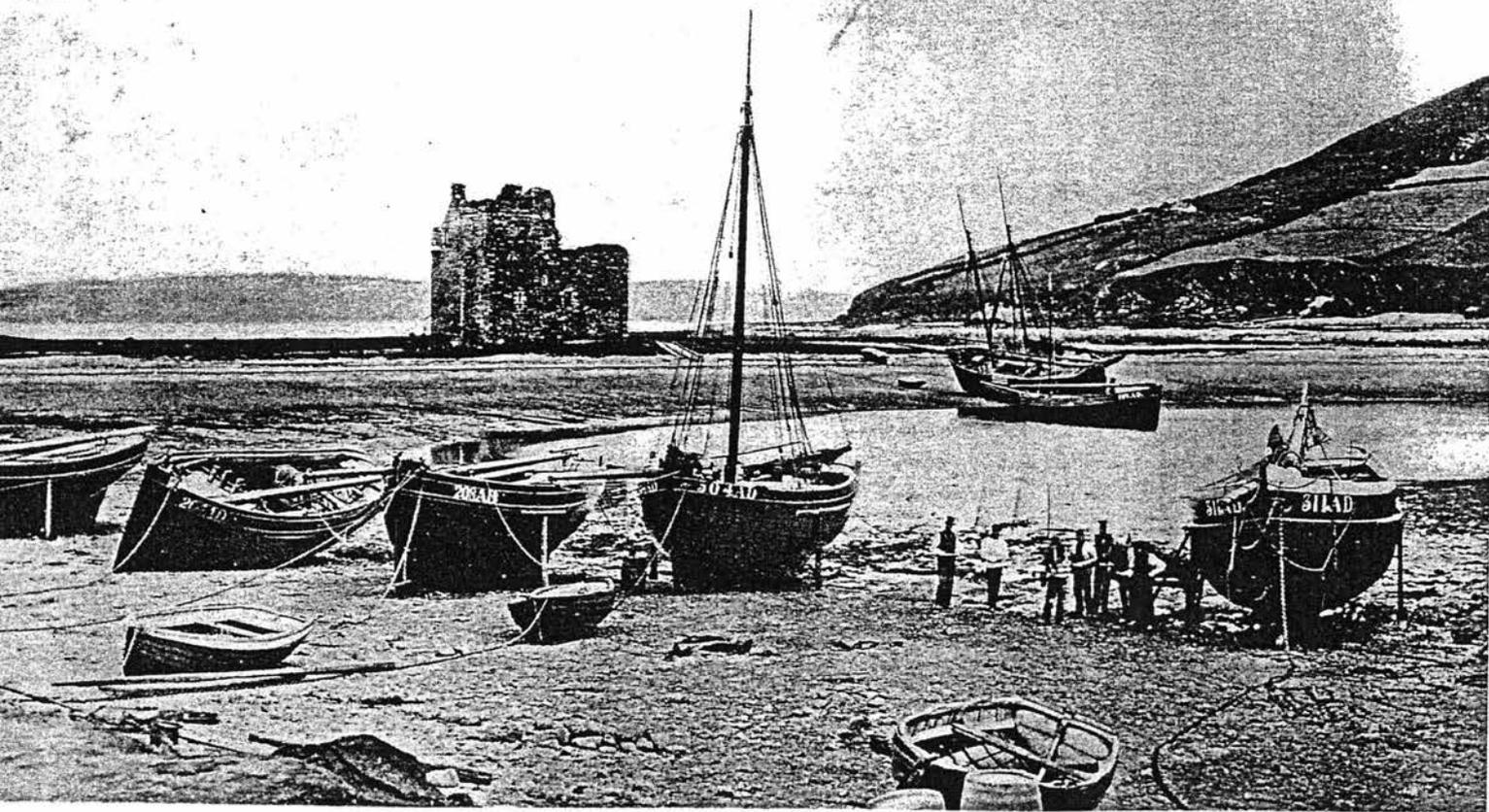


Fig 66 UN/S/04 Postcard of Loch Ranza Castle, Arran from unknown source

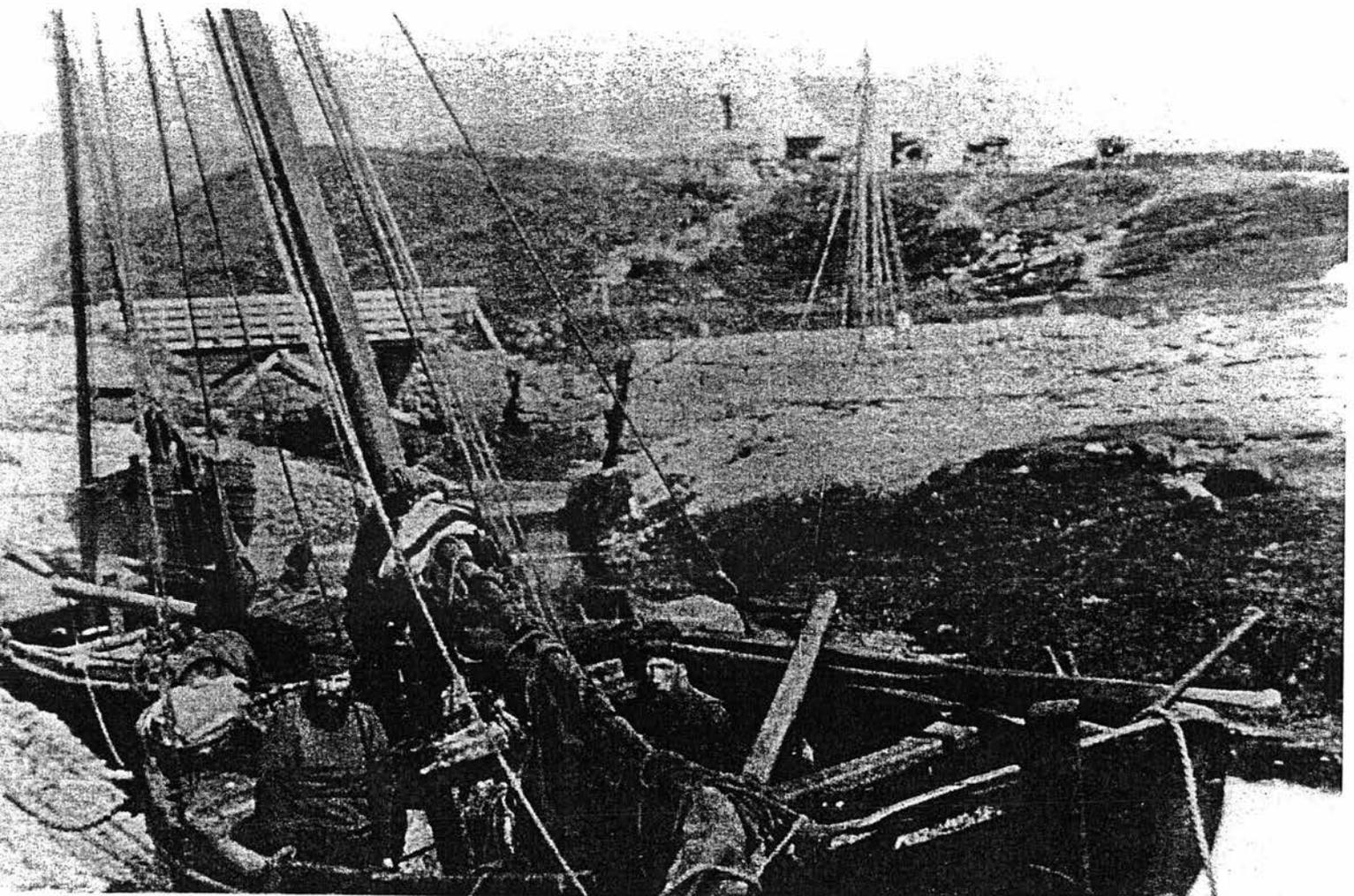


Fig 67 UN/S/05 Postcard of Blackwaterfoot, Arran from unknown source

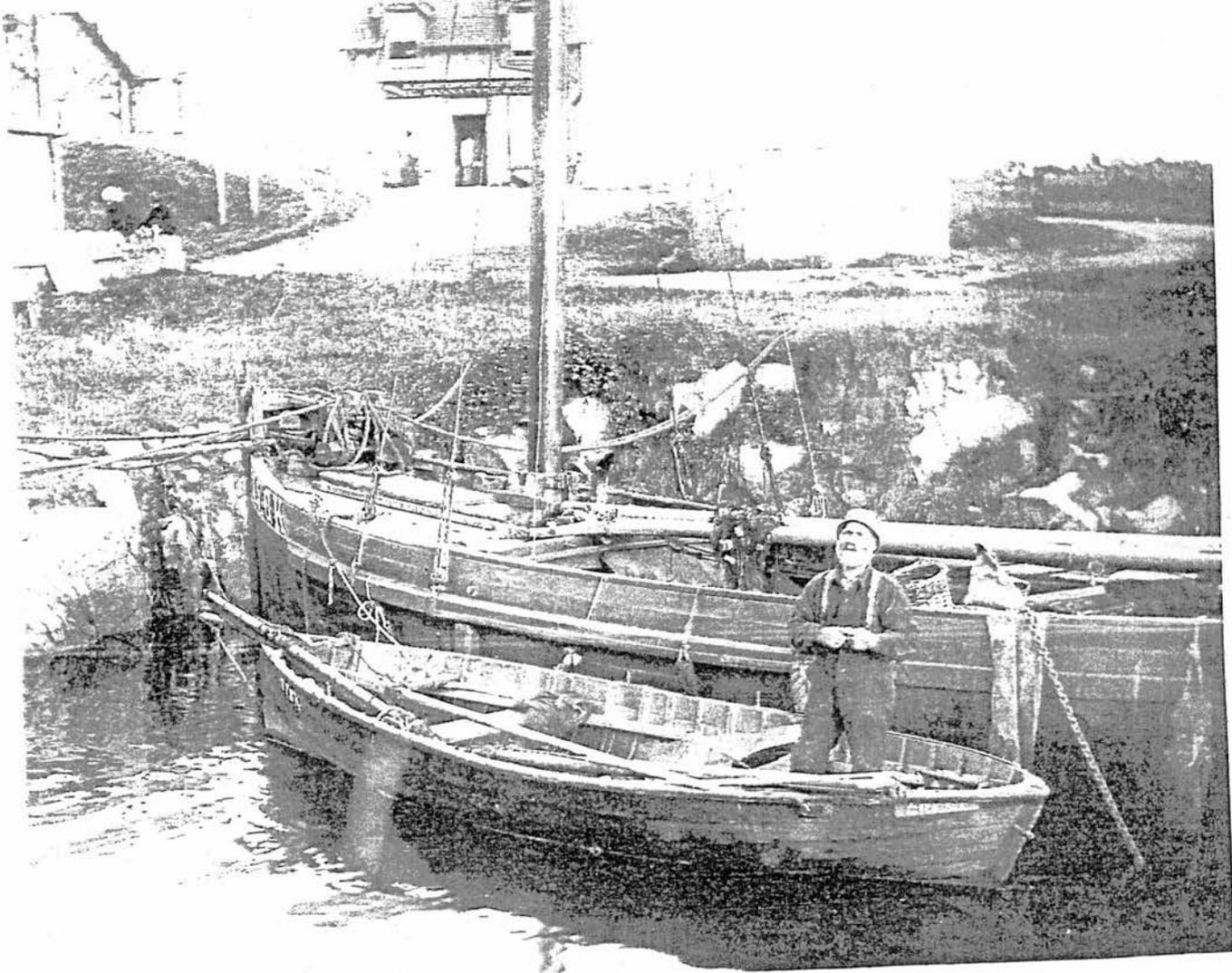


Fig 68 UN/S/06 Blackwaterfoot, Arran from an unknown source



Fig 69 UN/S/07 Postcard of the pier, Brodick, Arran from unknown source

first gale would carry it away, he does also show a schooner-rigged wherry presumably just having off-loaded its catch. Whereas the boat doesn't appear particularly accurate in its depiction, the nature of the rig probably was authentic.²¹

SMACKS

Four views of smacks come from postcards of Arran. In the picture of Loch Ranza (UN/S/04), dated about 1880, several smacks sit on the beach. These were decked up to the mast and are typical of smacks of the period. These are most likely to be drift-net boats although smacks are known to have been trawling in the Clyde in the 1880s, and before.

In the view of Blackwaterfoot, Arran (UN/S/05), prior to 1886, a half-decked smack sits awaiting the tide. The bulkhead behind the mast can be seen, suggesting a cuddy with accommodation. The view of Broderick (UN/S/07) shows a smack at the quay and skiffs in the background at anchor.

The smack that lies again in Blackwaterfoot is clearly a half-decker with accommodation below the foredeck (UN/S/06). A drift-net lies on the mast. The smaller boat alongside is typical of the pear-shaped Clyde skiffs used for the line fisheries.

From the iconographical evidence, then, we can see several distinct types of boats in use. Even as far back as 1718 we have vessels with a wherry rig, and these transom-

¹⁹ Ibid:215.

²⁰ Ibid:409.

sterned, wherry-rigged vessels appear to have been commonplace throughout the Irish Sea and Clyde waters, even working up as far as Skye in the eighteenth century. North of there, we see what are termed Norway skiffs and no evidence of any other type. What encouraged Slezer to alter the wherry-rigged vessel in the 1718-edition to a double-ended square-sailed vessel in the 1814-edition of his picture of Dumbarton is open for debate. But presumably it was a difference he noted. Therefore the possibility must exist that the transition from wherry to double-ender was occurring at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

This, then, supports the argument in the documentary evidence and really does lead on to the supposition that a wherry did exist in itself as a particular type of vessel rather than just a rig. And here I refer to the small, open wherry.

On the other hand, we see evidence of lug-rigged double-ended skiffs upon the Ayrshire coast in the 1820s. The skiffs of Loch Fyne, although being double-ended in some cases, were not lug rigged at that time. Smack-rigged craft operate throughout the region, sometimes alongside the wherries. Is it not probable that the lug rig was then introduced from Ayrshire, as the evidence of the parish minister of Glassary suggests? The next question, then, is did the Loch Fyne fishers adopt the Ayrshire-type hull?

²¹ Newte, 1791:106.

FOUR

COMPARATIVE TYPOLOGY

Comparative typology, as a methodology in this case, is the study of the similarities of form and function, and the geographical distributions thereof, of the vernacular craft of the coasts neighbouring the Clyde and Loch Fyne. As a discipline, it is widely used in the fields of enquiry in archaeology, being used in determining dating sequences, migratory movements and cultural influences (see e.g. Clarke, Moore and Renfrew). Moore deemed it necessary to have some knowledge of the past to understand the existing forms of craft.¹

So far we have considered the documentary and pictorial background to the fishing – principally the herring fishery because of its importance to Scotland's economy and to its coast-dwelling population – and the vessels in use in and around the Clyde. To make comparisons between other vessels in the building up of an evidence for those in use in Loch Fyne, we must study vessels in use in the neighbouring regions.

There are three distinct avenues that changes are brought to bear in the development of fishing boat design. Firstly there are local traditions, possibly handed down through generations, resulting in continuity across time, with only slight modifications occurring only as techniques improved. Secondly there is innovation, whether it is through the insight of the builder or vessel owner and the third is from the outside, in the main from other fishing communities. These are what are termed 'influences'.

The supposition is that these influences responsible for the Lochfyne skiffs first became apparent in the development of the trawl skiffs, whose introduction after the advent of ring-netting has already been discussed. These influences came from several quarters and we shall consider each of these. Then to illustrate these implications we shall

¹ Moore, 1925:17.

give examples of case studies including further evidence for the wider use of wherry-type craft.

1

SCANDINAVIAN

Thomson asserts that the Scottish herring fishery is unlike that of Norway. This assertion suggests that his main concentration of research was directed at the East Coast – like that of so many other writers of that era, and indeed these modern times – for, contrary to his claim, the fisheries of the north and west coasts display many similarities to Norwegian practice. Norway’s fishing, he says, is carried on in ‘the calm of the small land locked bays, or arms of the sea running far into the land, where the fisherman pursues his toil during every hour, removed from the danger or the fear of the mighty ocean’.² Similarly the west-facing lochs of Scotland are relatively sheltered from the big Atlantic swell and afford accessible shelter for fast boats. The North Sea, on the other hand, is exposed and lacked convenient harbours up to the second half of the nineteenth century. This fact, along with the design of the vessels, and the terms of employment, was the basis of Washington’s explanation for the disaster of 1848 as set out in his 1849 report. He advocated the de-centralisation of fishing, away from large ports, to smaller harbours and that the fishermen themselves should be consulted thereon. Up to the 1848 disaster, although the whole east coast was strewn with tiny landing places, the vast majority were only accessible at high water. With the gale springing up as the tide was ebbing, the fishermen found themselves unable to make shelter, thus 100 were drowned

in horrific circumstances.³ Charles St John noted the same lack of harbours and the difficulty in throwing herring overboard if a boat, threatened with swamping, had to head out to sea in the case of an impending storm.⁴

Trading routes from Norway to the West Coast and Ireland brought in badly needed supplies. Ships returned with cured fish. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Shetland where timber was almost non-existent. Campbell notes that 'not one Shrub or Tree is to be met with from one End of the Island to the other, unless it be here and there in a Gentleman's Garden'.⁵ Supplies were brought in and with the cargo came boats. In 1582 it was noted that the Shetlanders fished in two-oared vessels bought from Norway. In 1610, Scottish and Shetland ships loaded up 46 boats.⁶ These were open clinker-built craft among whose descendants today are the Ness yoles of South Mainland, Shetland. Many arrived in what can only be described as flat-pack form, ready for assembly by local shipwrights, being valued at £3 in the mid-1750s. Osler suggests such imports continued right up to the 1880s.⁷

That this trade wasn't confined to Shetland is confirmed by the fact that some cargoes of timber, and perhaps some boats, were imported into Caithness.⁸ On the West Coast, where almost every householder had a boat, some even two or three, the source seems to have been the same, although local supplies of timber were available in parts, especially on the mainland. Daniell tells us that these boats from Norway were

² Thomson, 1849:54.

³ Washington describes with sincerity the desperate situation of the fishermen. Although Parliament did take on board some of his views, action was, as usual, slow. For an overview of his report see Adrian Osler's 'The Washington Report' in *Maritime Life and Traditions*, vol 3, 1999.

⁴ St John, 1848, vol II: 276-7.

⁵ Campbell, 1970:22. This is a facsimile reprint of his 1753 work.

⁶ Fenton, 1978:552-3 (chapter entitled 'Fishing Boats from Norway').

⁷ Osler, 1983:18-9.

⁸ Miller, 1994:41, quoted from the John o'Groat Journal.

beautifully shaped and could be purchased for the moderate sum of thirty shillings and he regarded their form as more elegant than that of the Scottish boats.⁹ Boswell also noted the vessel that carried him and Johnson over to Raasay as being ‘a good stout open boat made in Norway’.¹⁰

These boats were seldom larger than 16 feet by 7 feet in beam and, as we’ve seen throughout the coast, were open.¹¹ In Barvas, on the Isle of Lewis upon the West Coast, the boats were 16-19 feet and either had eight or six oars, and there were 42 in about 1790.¹² These were the early versions of the type that became known as the *Ness Sgoth* (pronounced ‘scaw’). The Port of Ness sits on the northern tip of Lewis and these skiffs were used to sail out to the line fishing – cod and ling being the preferred catch – and they display a prominent Norwegian ancestry. Within fifty years however, their size had increased, ranging from 30 to 33 feet in overall length, although they only had a keel length of 21-22 feet, due to long overhangs. The sternpost raked more sharply than previously, resembling the *scaffie* or *Zulu* after end, and the bow raked to a lesser degree, with a well-rounded forefoot. Their increase in size seems to coincide with the building of the harbour in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Whether the idea of increasing the angle came from the boats from further south, or from influence from the East-Coasters who frequented Stornoway every year for the herring season, is unclear. However, it must be borne in mind that harbour dues in Scotland were often based on the keel length of a vessel, thus keeping this as short as possible was desirable. So too were building costs based on the length of the keel

⁹ Daniell, 1820, vol IV: 78.

¹⁰ Johnson & Boswell, 1996:276 (1773).

¹¹ Dunlop, 1978:7. She notes that the northwestern lochs had always been considered more suited to boats rather than busses.

Working out of the tidal harbour at Ness, the boats had to often be manhandled and thus they were regarded as the biggest of Britain's beach boats. Rigged with a single dipping lug, they were fast and seaworthy craft. In the late 1990s a replica sgoth - *An Sulaire* - was built by John Murdo MacLeod, whose father built the small sgoth *Jubilee* in 1935, and grandfather the *Dell* in 1925. This has led to an interest in the boats, and some recording of the type.¹³

That the lineage of these boats is Scandinavian seems clear. McCaughan suggests that 'there has been a continuity of the double-ended clinker-building technique for more than a 1,000 years'. This was in reference to another type of Irish double-ender known as the *Drontheim* or Greencastle skiff already mentioned in respect of the Islay fishery.¹⁴ However, the inference applies to both types. He tells us that the Drontheims were the successors to the Norway yawls that were imported from Trondheim and Christiansand in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and quotes one such import in 1834 from the *Londonderry Shipping Register and General Price Current*.¹⁵ Thus it is easy to see where the name 'Drontheim' originates.

We've also already seen that Knox observed what he termed the Norway skiff during his 1786 tour.¹⁶ Presumably if he described them as all being one size, then they were all of a similar design, displaying the Norse characteristics hereto described. However, McCulloch appears at first to contradict this, saying:

The Norway skiff, with its high spring, which no weather can sink, which rides on the wave like a feather, is almost unknown except in Shetland; where, mindful alike and

¹² OSA vol XIX: 266.

¹³ Information of this comes from 'An Sgoth Niseach' by Serge Le Floch in *Maritime Life and Traditions*, vol 1, 1998. Also see McKee, 1983:179-81, Simper, 1984:27 & Smylie, 1999:50.

¹⁴ See page 58.

¹⁵ McCaughan, 1982: 40-43.

¹⁶ Knox, 1787:82. See page .

emulous of the ancient maritime fame of its Scandinavian origin, it is the invariable pattern. Nor is the consequence trifling: since it is as much owing to the adoption of this construction as to their excellent management, that so very few of this people, always on the sea, and amongst the boldest of boatmen, are lost. The few losses in the Highlands, compared to their maritime occupation, arises from their excessive caution, or timidity; as they never pass a night at sea, and seek refuge on a shore whenever the weather threatens; the Barra men being among the very few who rival Orkney and Shetland in dexterity and courage, as they do in the construction of the boats.¹⁷

At first glance this seems unfair to the Highlanders of the West Coast. To these people the boat was all-important. They had two modes of transport available to them, the boat on sea and the creel between boat and their intended destination. Their lack of a need to be at sea at night stems from the availability of fish during the day when the shoals of herring swam into the lochs. And, being crofters, the land provided them with a portion of their diet. In general the westerners, unlike the Shetlanders, didn't need to sail twenty miles offshore to set long-lines. The two exceptions to this were in the case of the Ness and Barra fishermen, and McCulloch mentions the latter. As for the Lewis men, he never visited Ness.

The various Fishery Board Reports for the nineteenth century give numbers of fishing boats working the West Coast. In 1825, for example, there were 3,535 registered fishing boats between Oban and Cape Wrath. Fifty years later this had reduced to 2,003, a drop of about forty per cent. However these figures must be read with caution. John Murray reminds us that, especially on the West Coast, where fishermen were usually cottars and some acted as merchants during the season, they forgot to get their registers endorsed and eventually got struck off. Therefore we assume the figures reflect an understatement of the numbers.¹⁸

¹⁷ McCulloch, 1824: 119-20.

¹⁸ John Murray was writing in a letter entitled 'Remarks upon reading W.Holdsworth's book titled *'Deep Sea Fishing and Fishing Boats'*, (page 9): SRO AF37/176. It's worth noting that the original Register of Sea Fishing Boats (Scotland) was set up because the subsistence fishermen, especially on the West Coast,

In Part Two we considered the wherries. Knox, in his *Observations on the Northern Fisheries*, made a clear distinction between these craft and others. The eastern fishery, he estimated in his proposals, 'will employ 3000 boats, each boat carrying 5 men and 1 boy on an annual premium of 15*l.* per boat' whereas for the West Coast he judged that 'fishery will employ 4000 boats and wherries, as above'.¹⁹ The buss fishery, he added, had as good as ruined the fishing prospects for the poor fisher. In Shetland he, too, made a distinction between boats and wherries, the latter of which he described as fishing all year round.²⁰ In a later observation, he described three classes of boat, the six-oared vessels of the Moray Firth, the four-oared boat and the wherry. This presumably means the 'boats' he referred to earlier were then four-oared craft that he has otherwise described as Norway skiffs. This fits with the general impression of these craft – four-oared with one sail, probably a dipping lug. That similar boats worked off the Donegal coast could reflect the fact that a group of Scots fishers, some being from the Clyde, started up a fishery off the coast after discovering bays seething with herring. This was sometime after 1763, he tells us.²¹ However, it must be said that, with Scandinavian influence well established in Ireland since the ninth century, and boats being imported into Ireland in the same way they had into Scotland, this suggestion is extremely tenuous.

Before we can consider the individual types of boats upon the West Coast for which we have evidence – i.e. the Drontheim (referred to by the Scots as the Greencastle skiff or 'greenie'), the Oban skiff, the Loch Fyne line skiff, the Largs skiff, the Girvan

were too poor to cover legal costs to establish title for the British Register of Merchant Ships. Too often their boats were unregistered thus adding to the decline in numbers of registered boats.

¹⁹ Knox, 1786:10. He suggests that this is paid for by a tax on dogs (except farm dogs), gentlemen's carriages and other luxuries, taxes that later did evolve! Furthermore he said it was impossible to expect the fishers to follow this business for 3 months, let alone a year, without this bounty of 15*l.* for each 'boat or wherry'.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 64.

skiff, the Portpatrick line-boat, the Annan line-boat, the Grimsay boat and one particular boat from the north-western coast, the *Queen Mary* – we must mention that oldest of West Coast boat types, the West Highland Galley, from now referred to as the birlinn.

This vessel is included in this chapter on comparative typology because there is no direct documentary evidence to support the hypothesis presented here. Indeed, there are no remaining examples of birlinns, whether whole or in bits, that have thitherto been discovered for archaeologists to ponder over. However, there are several learned books on the subject, and it therefore seems appropriate to consider the vessels insofar as it is necessary to suggest a strong Scandinavian influence on boatbuilding on the West Coast. There is, too, a replica vessel, *Aileach*, launched in 1991, which was designed and built in consideration of the available iconographical evidence to support the oral traditions of the existence of such craft.²²

The majority of the iconographical evidence comes from mediaeval and early modern gravestones, over 80 of which are to be found in the West Highlands.²³ That such vessels existed seems obvious from such evidence, and perhaps more so from Gaelic history and culture, but for the purpose of this paper we shall confine ourselves to the pictorial. Thus we discover that a birlinn is a double-ended vessel, built in the Norse tradition of shell-first construction, having a single mast and powered by 12 to 18 oars. It seems likely that, although technically of Scandinavian origins, the birlinn was adapted for use in Scottish waters over several centuries so that its shape and design features were adjusted to suit the local conditions. Thus, according to MacAulay, they were of a deeper

²¹ Ibid. 71.

²² See *The Adventures of Aileach* by Wallace Clark for the story of her.

²³ Rixson, 1998:137.

draught than their Norwegian counterparts.²⁴ The other striking difference is that their rudder was hung upon the sternpost and not as a side mounted oar, as was the case with the others. This stern-mounted rudder is a common feature of today's vessels and is taken for granted.

Of course birlinn-like vessels were not the only Norse craft in existence although most of the others were larger vessels such as the *Knarr*, *Langskip* and *Skuta*. In Scotland, though, there were two or three vessels of interest, according to MacAulay.²⁵ He lists the *Carbh*, *Sgoth* (already described), *Long-luirist* and *Cnarra*, the latter being a small boat native to the Inner Hebrides and, more specifically, Islay. It was a one-masted boat, but more details of the number of oars, size or use is not known. Speculation that it was used to fish is pure presumption, although perhaps a valid consideration. Could it be that the *Cnarra* was the forerunner to the *Drontheim*, or the western skiff, for example?

²⁴ MacAulay, 1996:21.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 30-2. He gives descriptions of all of the types mentioned.

2

BOATSHAPE

The late Commander Eric McKee compared the relationship between different craft in terms of boatshape. His book *Working Boats of Britain* is the most innovative recent exercise in the comparative ethnology of boats and has been hailed as a new approach in the subject. It is, therefore, worth mentioning his findings with regard to the vessels under consideration.

He divided British work boats into 40 separate categories, but here we are only concerned with the six that relate to the boats discussed in this dissertation. These vessels are all double-enders and are sub-divided by the inclination (or lack of it) of the keel. Those with a level keel are the 'broad skiff' and 'eastern skiff', the former group including the fifies and scaffies and the latter those mentioned in the Washington report – in other words those of the mid-nineteenth century.

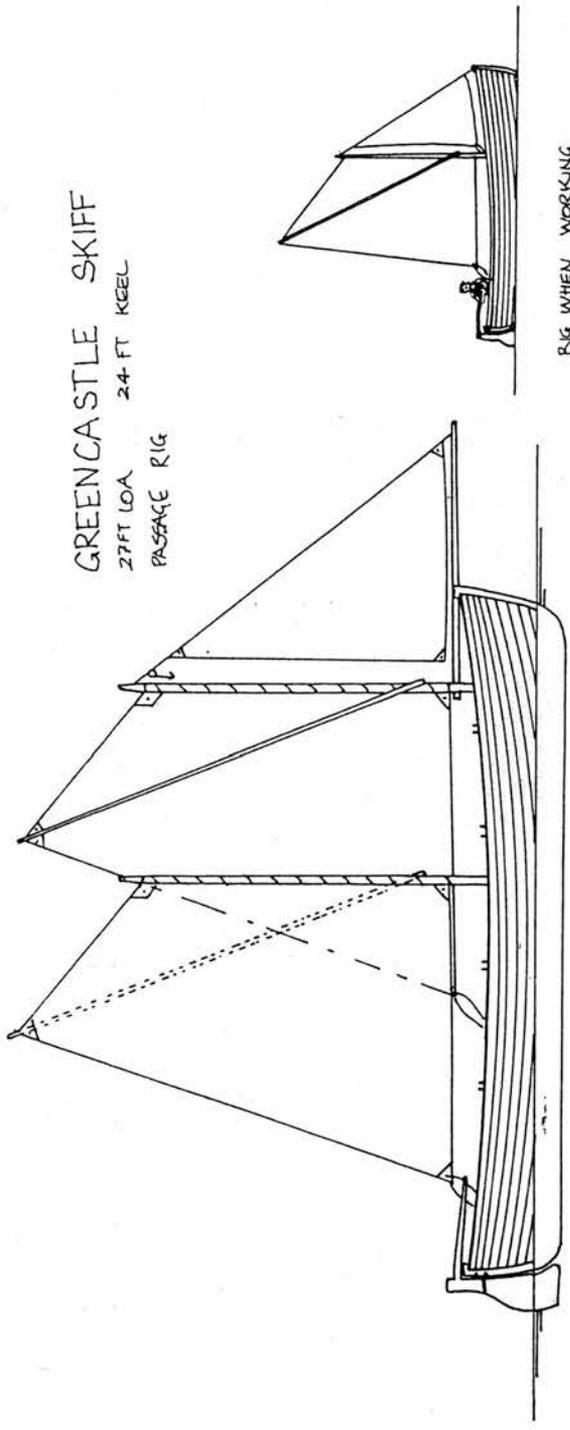
Those with what he terms 'drag' – a sloping keel – are the 'western skiff', 'northern skiff', the yole and the zulu. The western skiffs are the Cornish luggers, Manx nickies and nobbies and the Lochfyne skiffs. They have a deep hull shape (beam/depth of 2.0 or less) and have normal length/breadth ratio in the range 2.6-3.75. The northern skiffs, which include the sgoths and Pentland yawls, have normal block ratios (B/D),

while the yoles have a beamy block ratio and the zulus are narrow with a deep hull shape. Therefore we see a common factor of having a deep hull in both the zulu and Lochfyne skiff. The zulu is narrower which could be explained by its greater length. This, then, gives these two types a degree of similarity in boat shape, but, on the other hand, there is more of a similarity between the Loch Fyne boats and those from the south – i.e. Cornwall and the Isle of Man (see 3 below)²⁶

The present writer's assertion is that, when discussing the development of hull shape, it is the length/depth ratio that enshrines the 'traditionalism', in that boatbuilders tend to keep to the same profile of a vessel, while the block ratio alters through innovation. Thus a builder will set up a known profile by way of keel, stem and sternpost – the first stages of boatbuilding - and, through his eye, will make fine adjustments to the shape of the waterlines. This is especially evident in shell-first construction where the shape of these waterlines is purely the result of his forming each plank, and especially the garboard, as he feels fit. The outcome is that rarely are two supposedly identical vessels actually exactly the same, although they will appear so.

In frame-first construction, where the shape of the midship section is often determined from a set pattern, we see less innovation although the midship section will be adjusted to suit individual clients. This factor leads to the belief that shell-first construction has, over the centuries, been more adaptable and thus probably why this method of construction has had such a huge impact on the development of vernacular boat shape through the world. Once carvel construction was introduced on a large scale in Britain, we saw a 'dumbing down' in innovation and of variation.

²⁶ McKee, 1983:79-94. His chapter entitled 'Names, Shapes and Classes of British Boats' discusses his findings in full.



GREENCASTLE SKIFF
 27 FT LOA 24 FT KEEL
 PASSAGE RIG

RIG WHEN WORKING

0 1 2 3 4 5 FEET

Fig 70 Sail plan of Greencastle skiff (Drontheim) by Mike Smylie after MacPolin

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRONTHEIM

We've already seen that Holdsworth noted small boats employed in the line-fishery and described them as the same style as the Norway yawl.²⁷ These are likely to have been what Evans termed the 'Wicklow skiff'.²⁸ Further north, at Moville in Donegal on Lough Foyle, Holdsworth found more yawls, and the largest of these, he said, 'is about 24 feet on the keel with 6 feet beam, and they carry two spritsails and sometimes a jib. Good well-shaped oars are used with them, and they row and sail well, although a little tender down to a certain point'.²⁹ He continued by saying these were used for herring drifting inside the lough.

It is unclear since when these Norway yawls were being brought by ship into Ireland. MacPolin suggests that, when the country's timber supplies began to be exhausted in the middle of the eighteenth century, Norway became the main supplier. He says a 'second colonisation of Scandinavian boats occurred'.³⁰ The boats arrived as supplementary cargo and were sold off by the timber-ships as they progressed around the coast. This seems to have been the case throughout the north and west of Scotland. Morrison reflects that this reason was more influential than any 'political link or cultural sentiment', for Norway had a rich supply of timber and the islands and coasts of the Northern Atlantic didn't. Thus the Norway yawls were then in use throughout this

²⁷ Holdsworth, 1874:362.

²⁸ Evans, 2000:240.

²⁹ Holdsworth, 1874:393

³⁰ MacPolin, 1999:6. Presumably the first colonisation was after the initial Viking incursions, after which the Irish adopted the galley in the same way as the Scots, already so described in brief – see *The Hebridean Birlinn, Vyvaig and Lymphad* by G.V.C. Young who describes both Scottish and Irish galleys.

coastline and generally reflected the craft of Gokstad, Norway, Shetland, Faroes and Iceland.³¹

There is a painting by J.W.Campbell in the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum, dated 1822, of Portstewart, County Derry showing one such yawl, thus supporting the above supposition. The vessel has very curved ends and, at a guess, is about 15–20 feet long. There is no sign of any mast or rig. However we can at least gain a picture of these eighteenth-century vessels in general use around the whole of the West Coast.

The Drontheim developed through innovation in the same way as the Shetland sixareen did. March tells us that, in the words of John Smith, boatbuilder, ‘many of them came across from Norway [to Shetland] and were improved upon to suit the requirements of the haaf fishermen, being made deeper by the addition of a top strake...the boats from Norway were built with three boards to a side and were very cheap’.³² In Ireland the builders reduced the sheer, believing the high bow to catch the wind, and used narrower planks to enable local timber stock to be used. MacPolin suggests their nearest Norwegian counterparts are the *faering* from the village of Afjorden, close to Trondheim, and the *oselver* from Os, near Bergen.³³ Faeroyvik tells of the first type that they were inshore fishing boats while the latter, the Os estuary boat, has ‘become synonymous with the light three-strake boat’ and, again, was used extensively for inshore fishing.³⁴

Regardless of its origins, the Drontheim was typical of the craft right along the northern coast of Ireland. The Groomsport Yawl, described as ‘a whale boat ...imported

³¹ Ian Morrison in a chapter entitled ‘Traditionalism and Innovation in Maritime Technology’ on *Scotland and the Sea*, edited by T.C. Smout, pp114-136.

³² March, 1970:43. Smith says they couldn’t be built so cheap in Shetland and that he’d been told the boats cost £2 10s ready for sea probably in the second half of the nineteenth century.

³³ MacPolin, 1999:12.

³⁴ Faeroyvik,1979: 101 & 26.

from Norway', carried two dipping lugsails, while the Killough yawl just had one.³⁵ Skerries yawls were Drontheims in the same way as Greencastle yawls were. These have already been mentioned with regard to the Islay fishery where they were referred to as Irish skiffs. These were introduced into the area for the sole reason that Islay was closer to Rathlin Island and the Irish coast than it was to any harbour of significance on the mainland. A voyage to Campbeltown necessitated navigating around the Mull of Kintyre, infamous for its fog, strong currents and variable, sometimes violent, winds. The result was that boats were bought in from Merville or Portrush and later built on the island to the same design: there is no evidence that the Norway yawls were imported direct to Islay. These skiffs invariably set one spritsail, occasionally two, and when racing, resorted to a standing lug so preferred by the ring-netters in their Lochfyne skiffs. The boats were 26 feet in length, although smaller 22 foot versions were used when fishing off the Mull of Kintyre. The Campbeltown fishers called these Irish skiffs 'Greenies' after the Greencastle skiff. Records tell of skiffs being brought over by steamer from Ireland and dropped overboard off Sanda Isle to be collected. However, Kintyre, Islay and Colonsay were the geographical limits of the distribution of these craft in Scotland.³⁶

³⁵ Kemp, 1895:433

³⁶ Martin, 1983:65.

3

THE ISLE OF MAN, CORNWALL AND WALES

The saga of the Isle of Man fisheries, as far as recorded evidence goes, begins with another vessel of Scandinavian extraction – the herring *scowte*. The word derives from the Icelandic *skuta*, described as a fast sailing vessel with oars. Skutas, we know, sailed to all corners in Europe: they appear in records of Shetland, and in the twelfth century they appeared off the Belgium coast where they were adapted for working off the shallow sandy beaches, becoming termed *scute*, albeit completely transformed in shape. On the other hand the herring scowtes were Nordic craft, having considerable sheer and typical raked stems and sternposts. Lengths of keel ranged from 20–24 feet, with, probably, an overall length of 24–28 feet. They had a single mast for the square sail – they became known as the Manx *Squaresails* - and four oars. However, after the St Matthews Day disaster in Douglas Bay in 1787, when between 50 and 60 herring scowtes were wrecked with considerable loss of life, the fleet was rebuilt in time using decked smacks. Thus the Manxmen were decades ahead of the Scots in their adoption of these safer vessels.

The rigs of these smacks were adjusted in the early part of the nineteenth century after the Scots and Cornish luggers had begun fishing off the island in significant numbers. The gaff was shortened and a lug-rigged mizzen added to create a dandy rig. The main was tabernacle-stepped and dropped when lying to their nets. But, in the 1860s, the Cornish arrived with their drivers³⁷ rigged with two lugsails, impressing the Manxmen for the second time. Thus evolved the *nickey*, a bigger version of the Cornish lugger.³⁸

Smylie suggests that the Cornish lugger developed from the *kok*, a pilchard boat with two masts of 1620. The lug rig, he says, came from the habit of the French to sail across and menace the local fleets. The Cornishmen then copied these *Chasse Maree*, rigging three masts with lugs.³⁹ More of this later. As happened throughout Britain, the third mast was omitted in the nineteenth century to clear deck space for fishing.

The Cornish lugger that so excited the Manxmen – and later the Clydemen – came from St Ives, on the northern side of the peninsula. In a letter to Captain Washington, Geo. Davies says:

The open-sea fishing boats of St Ives (the largest of which is rather less than in the plan) will go to sea in any weather, however bad, for the sake of salvages, and from a dead lee-shore, against a sea and weather infinitely worse than what the Scotch are compelled to run from for salvation; they are only decked forward and hatched fore and aft, except a portion kept open for the nets about one-third from the stern. When attached as a lieutenant to the Folkestone station, I had a small lugger with a short-decked cuddy forward, in which I often kept at sea in hard gales in safety, in preference to taking the harbour, Folkestone being at that time a dry harbour, and in many respects very similar as to taking it to many of those to which I have referred; and it must be obvious that a boat entirely open forward, shipping a heavy sea in the eyes of her, will not have the same chance with one which, throwing it off or into the body of her abaft, necessarily rises forward, to the next; I do not think a fore-deck, both for shelter and safety, should be imperative.⁴⁰

³⁷ The term 'driver' comes from the 'driving' of the pilchards or mackerel into the nets.

³⁸ For a fuller description of Manx fishing boats see Megaw, 1941 and Smylie, 1999.

³⁹ Smylie, 1999:128.

⁴⁰ Washington, 1849:360-1.

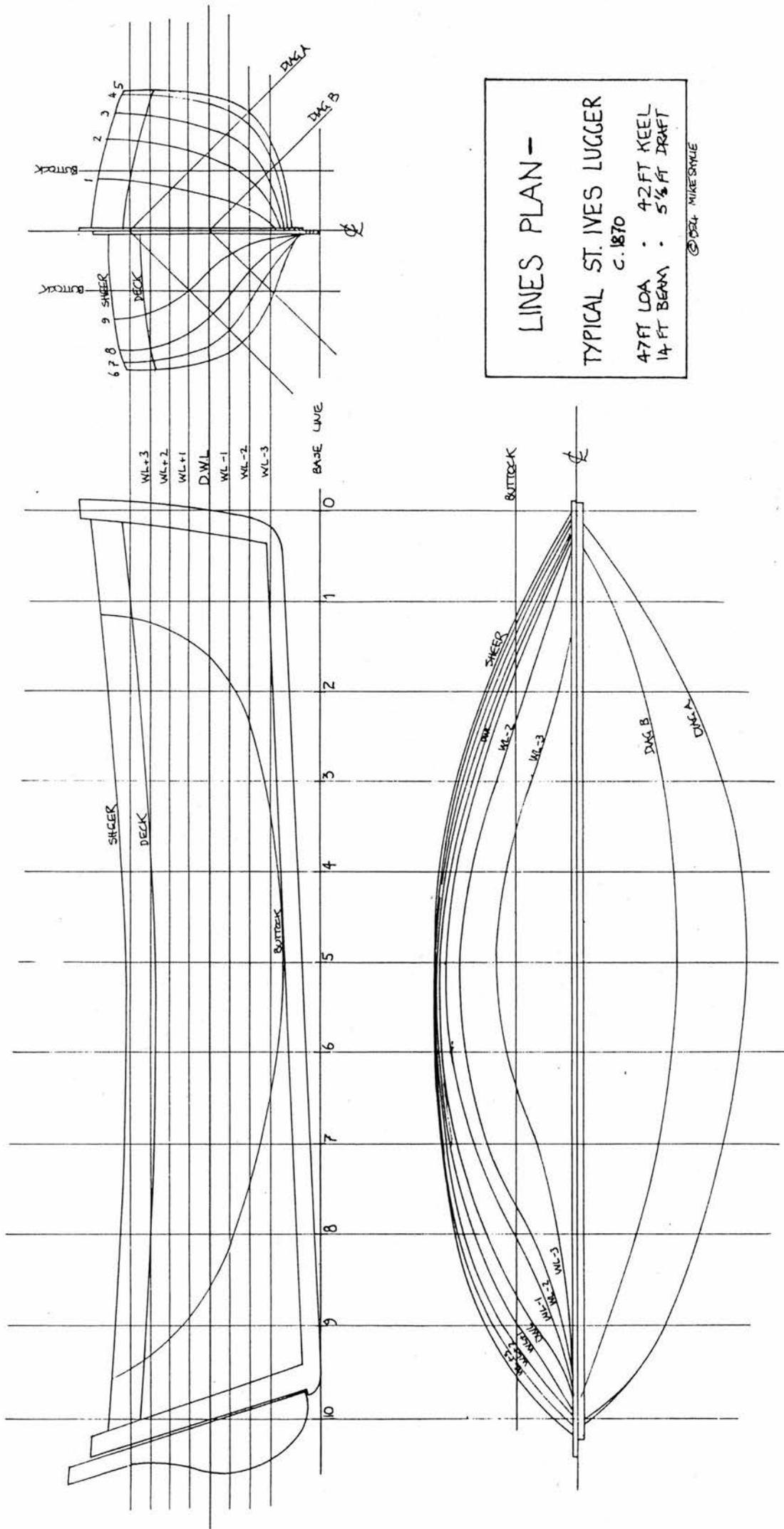


Fig 71 Lines plan of typical St. Ives lugger c. 1870 by Mike Smylie after Edgar March

William Paynter was a builder of these St Ives luggers, and he became renowned for the quality of his craft, not just in Cornwall, but around the Irish Sea. After the Manxmen began building their nickies, Paynter moved up to Kilkeel, on the Irish coast, setting up a yard there building nickies for the Manx, and for the Irish fleets, who, too, adopted the design. However this enterprise was not successful for the Manx builders undercut him, so that, after a fire gutted his shed a year after arriving, he returned to St Ives in 1883 to continue building on the beach there. However, he left his impression throughout the area. In Campbeltown, such was the preference for a Paynter vessel that, out of 22 known luggers to have worked out of the harbour, nine were built by Paynter, one was built in Ardrossan and the origins of the other 12 are unknown. Nine were later sold to Ireland.⁴¹

The first of these luggers arrived in Campbeltown in 1872 and three years later some ten luggers were sailing to the Kinsale mackerel fishery. Eight had come from St Ives, costing £400. With a set of herring and mackerel drift-nets, costing £200 each, the total investment for a new vessel was £800, which, when compared to under £40 for a trawl skiff, was a hefty sum.⁴²

A local shipwright began building luggers in 1876 based on the St Ives design and we know from the fishing registers of at least one that was built by Matthew McDougall, a fisherman from Carradale who later built skiffs.⁴³

The Kinsale fishery had declined by 1895 and the luggers were being sold or converted into coal-carriers. Some were used as homes for the destitute, being set up

⁴¹ See appendix 1 for the list of these vessels.

⁴² Martin, 1981:57-58.

⁴³ A. Levack, fishery officer at Campbeltown, report for 1876, as quoted by Martin, 1981:57. We do not know if this shipwright and McDougall are one and the same.

along the shoreside at Campbeltown. The last of the fleet, the *Europa*, CN216, ironically the first to arrive, was broken up in 1929.⁴⁴ However, there is no doubt that these luggers from the south impressed the fishers from the town much in the same way as those from the Isle of Man had been. The question is whether they had influenced the fishermen prior to the last generation of ring-net skiffs arriving in the 1880s.

⁴⁴ Martin, 1981:59.

4

THE WESTERN EUROPEAN SEABOARD

John Knox noted that 'it seems evident, from tradition and history, that the French and Spaniards frequented the western coasts of Scotland in very early times, where they traded with the natives for fish. By this it may be understood, that the Scots were the fishers, and that the foreigners were the carriers'.⁴⁵ Jenkins supports this belief and informs us that in 1674 some 20,400 barrels were exported to La Rochelle.⁴⁶ Anson, on the other hand, claims that, while herring fishing in the Clyde has been carried on since the Middle Ages, it was the French that were first fishing there before the Scots cottoned onto the benefits of fishing commercially.⁴⁷ To add to the possibility that French fishers influenced the fishermen, Coull adds that in the late seventeenth century that country was the 'leading single overseas destination, especially for the herring cured on the Clyde'.⁴⁸

In the nineteenth century French traders continued to buy fish, bartering this for wine. When the village of Tarbert was struck down with a particular virulent strain of

⁴⁵ Knox, 1786:16-17.

⁴⁶ Jenkins, 1920:116.

⁴⁷ Anson, 1950:67.

cholera in 1848-1849, this plague was said to have been brought in by these foreign traders who came to barter French goods for Loch Fyne herring⁴⁹. Local belief, on the other hand, was that it was a judgement from above on the practice of ring-netting.⁵⁰

That French fishermen worked close to the shores of Britain is documented in a series of letters to Viscount Palmerston, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the 1830s. In one such letter from Christopher Tennant dated 8th September 1834, Tennant wrote on behalf of the fishermen of Hartlepool that 100 French vessels were fishing within one mile of the shore in Saltburn Bay alongside 150 Scotch and Yarmouth boats. The French were recognisable because their nets were held afloat with casks which, he said, caused damage to the English nets, which were held up by bladders.⁵¹ Similar complaints sound from other letters. John Barrow of Brighton wrote to Captain George Pechell in January 1834 complaining of their encroachment and Pechell replied two months later, informing him that he had relayed his words to Lord Palmerston. It appears that the English boats suffered loss and damage to mackerel nets 'that were carried away'. Objection to the presence of the French fishers stemmed from Dover, Folkestone and, in 1837, from the fishermen of Cromarty. However the grievance on this occasion was not that the French were fishing but that they were purchasing herring from the engaged vessels, 'alluring them away by extra prices, bribes of Brandy, Tobacco, Biscuits, Hats, &c., and on returning to France, make it appear that they had fished their cargoes themselves'.⁵²

⁴⁸ Coull, 1996:75. He notes that France prohibited this import in 1689.

⁴⁹ Fraser, 1971:13.

⁵⁰ Smylie, 1999:57. This epidemic caused almost all the fishermen to give up 'trawling' and resort to using drift-nets.

⁵¹ BL House of Commons Parliamentary Papers 1837-38, vol LII, 8/9/1834.

⁵² Ibid, 28/12/1837.

The various Fishery Board Reports also note complaints about the actions of the French fishermen. In 1834 foreign boats shot their nets so close to the shore that the native fishermen had to shoot outside of them. The same report notes anger from the Revenue who were losing out from the practice because the 'foreigners swapped herrings for smuggled spirits and other contraband articles' while pretending to fish. The curers, who employed the fishermen, also lost out.⁵³ A convention between the two countries was supposedly to clarify the situation.⁵⁴ One report questions as to how long the French have been in the habit of visiting the Scottish coast.⁵⁵

The 1866 Sea Fisheries Report noted that French fishermen followed the herrings all around the British coasts, in large and increasing numbers. The Manx were mentioned also in the same report, as they had been successful in their fishing 'further up St. George's Channel, and Loch Fyne, and Clyde, vast hauls are occasionally taken'.⁵⁶ In Loch Fyne it has already been mentioned that a point called Frenchman's Point lay three miles south of Inveraray and that, 'anciently the French merchants used to come and barter their wines for herrings...that it was to this particular spot the herrings were in use to be brought, in order to be cured and sold'.⁵⁷

In 1869 the crew of a Scottish boat accused a French fishing vessel of destroying its nets off the coast of Northumberland. Although not proven, the magistrates did imply that, even if proved, there would be no case for compensation, given that the Scottish

⁵³ F.B.R. 1834:1-2.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 1839:3

⁵⁵ Ibid. 1841:2

⁵⁶ Sea Fisheries Report 1866, xii

⁵⁷ OSA, vol V:291-2.

boat was not displaying lights. Since the previous year, the authorities were keenly enforcing the new act that made displaying lights at sea compulsory for fishing boats.⁵⁸

It seems quite possible that some French vessels must have sailed into parts of Loch Fyne and that certain aspects of their design were noted by the indigenous fishers. Perhaps more reasonable, though, is the assumption that the two communities observed each other, noting their preferences and ideas in improving their daily tasks although the spoken word may have been difficult, given that the Scottish fishermen spoke Gaelic and no English or French. Therefore the design of craft would have been examined. There is no evidence, it must be said, that the sardine boats of Douarnenez and surrounding district of Brittany sailed to Loch Fyne, and this is generally regarded as being unlikely.

However, as the Clyde fishermen are known to have sailed extensively on the coasts of Britain – Irish Sea, Minches, Shetlands, North Sea – it would be most unlikely that the two didn't come into contact. They would have probably come across French fishers in their herring boats – largely luggers from the Normandy and Flanders coast. And, if that isn't proof of the Clyde fishers running into the French fleets, then they must surely have done so in the 1870s when some of the Campbeltown men sailed to the annual mackerel fishery at Kinsale, off the southern coast of Ireland. For this fishery they used their luggers – as previously described – and the fish was purchased by buyers in, amongst other boats, 'six smart Jersey cutters'.⁵⁹ French boats are also known to have prosecuted this fishery while the Scots probably fished close to the French coast. Indeed, Angus Martin recalls his father retelling his grandfather's story of having been aboard a

⁵⁸ FBR 1870:4

⁵⁹ Martin, 1981:57.

Campbeltown lugger 'when, on going on deck one morning, he saw the coast of France'.⁶⁰

We shall discuss the general type of boat in use off the French coast in a while and make comparisons between these and the Lochfyne skiffs. However, before we do that, there is perhaps another angle we must first consider and that is the existence of a much longer tradition of an interchange of boat technology on this western seaboard. It is in the seine-net fishery that we discover this.

The Basques were probably the first Europeans to operate seine nets from boats, this stemming from their whaling as far back as 1200. Their prime quest in this was for the species known as *besugo* or sea bream, as we know it. For this they developed three distinct types of vessel: the small *batela*, the larger *pontines* and the biggest of the three being the *bonitera*. The later boats were up to 40ft long and carried as many as 15 crew. However, the 20ft *batelas* had two masts and it is, presumably, these that Baker refers to as 'Portuguese batels' as their use in Portugal appears to have spread from Spain.⁶¹

Baker describes these vessels as being, in 1616, fuller further forward than aft and some as being intended for use as ships' boats. These he tends to regard as Biscay shallops, primarily used as whaleboats. Furthermore, he elucidates, they were used from various ports of western France, including Brittany.⁶²

Nance gives us evidence of co-operation between the Bretons and the Cornish in the sixteenth century. Even, he says, there was 'as recently as a century ago a marked likeness between the fishing boats and fisheries of Cornwall and Brittany, which speculation might be put down to influences exerted alike on both in a more or less

⁶⁰ Pers comm in a letter dated 1/11/01.

⁶¹ See article in *Classic Boat* entitled 'The other Armada' by Mike Smylie.

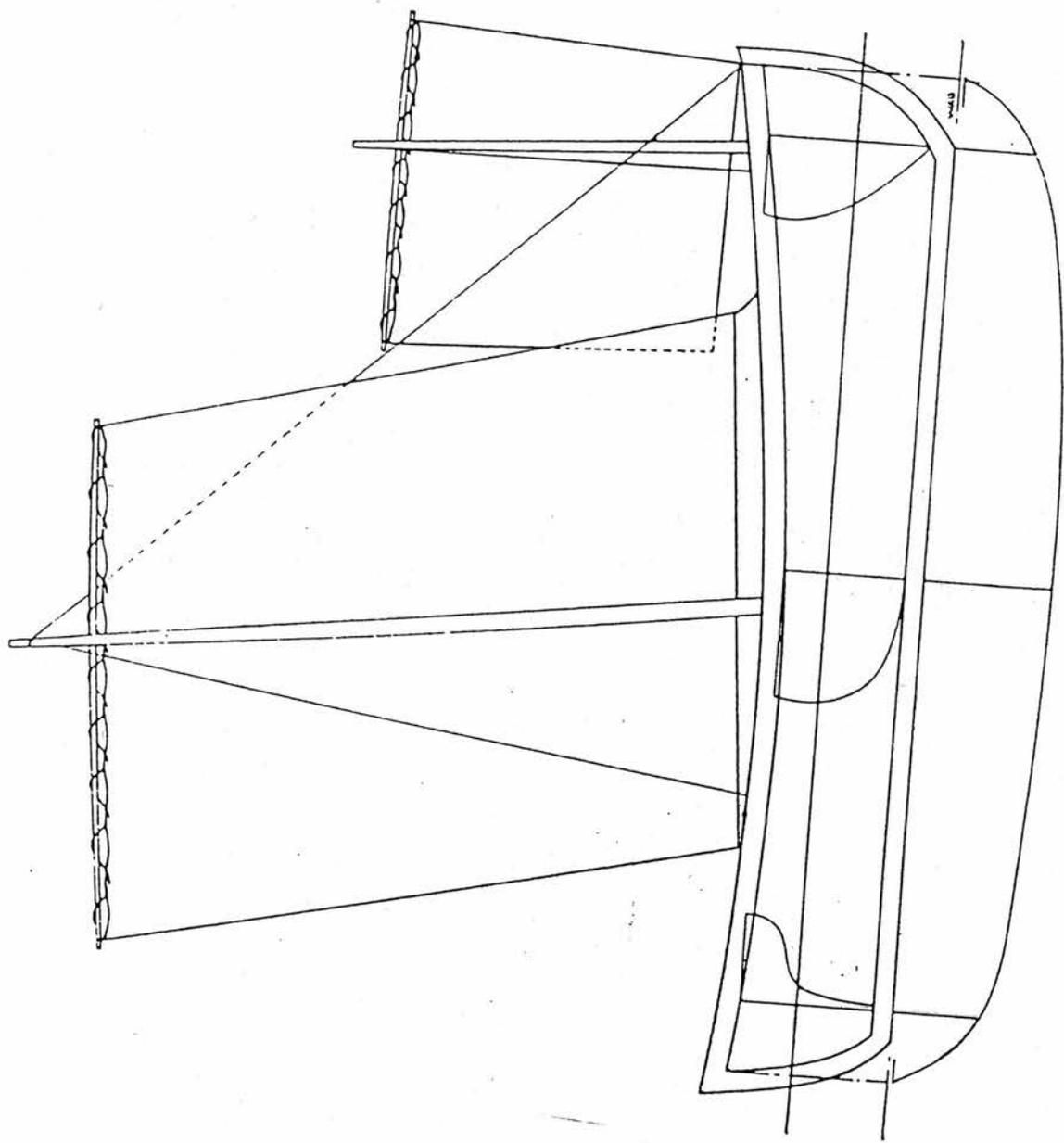
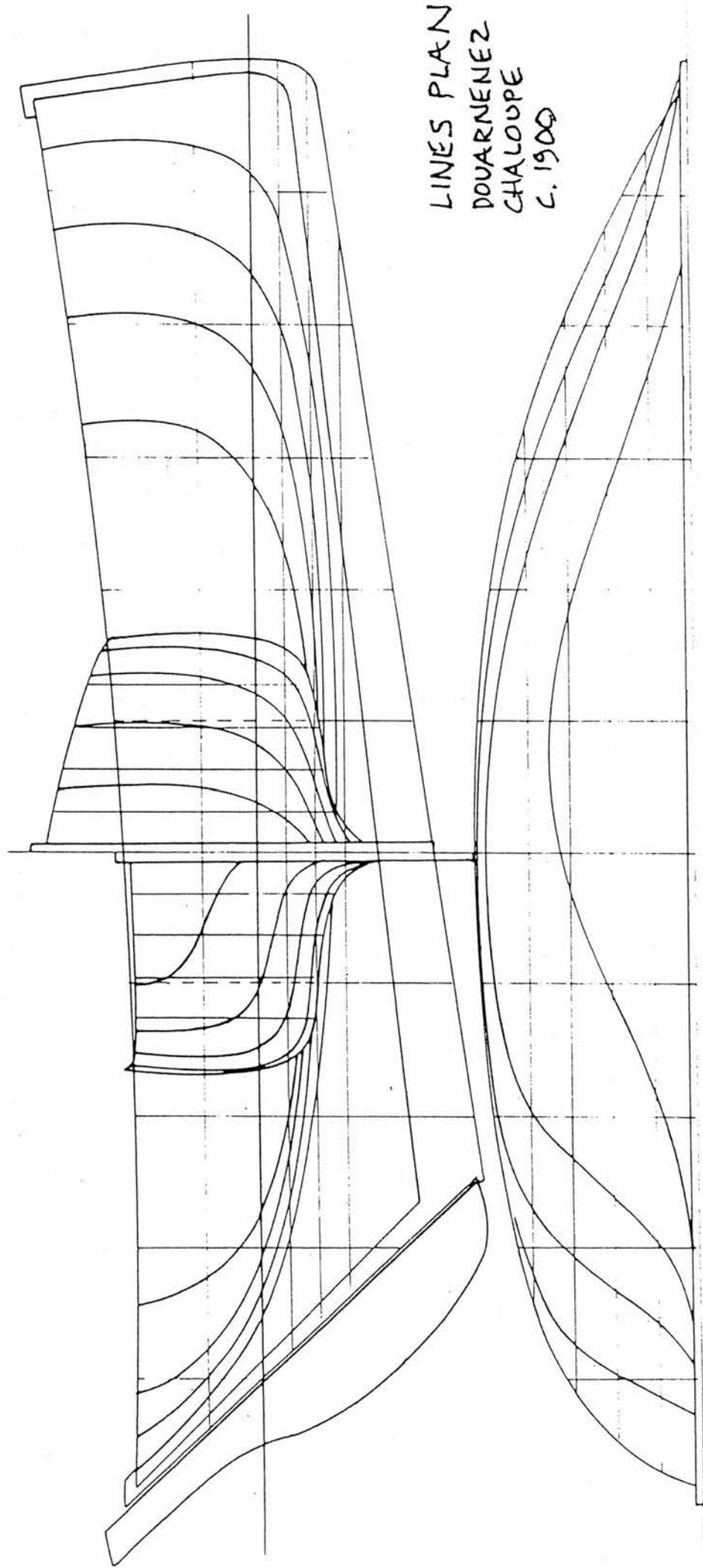


Fig72 Douarnenez fishing boat, end of 18th century, after Paris from W.A. Baker. *CV*



LINES PLAN
DOUARNENEZ
CHALOUPE
C. 1900

Fig 73 Lines Plan of Douarnenez Chaloupe from *Ar Vag*, page XIV

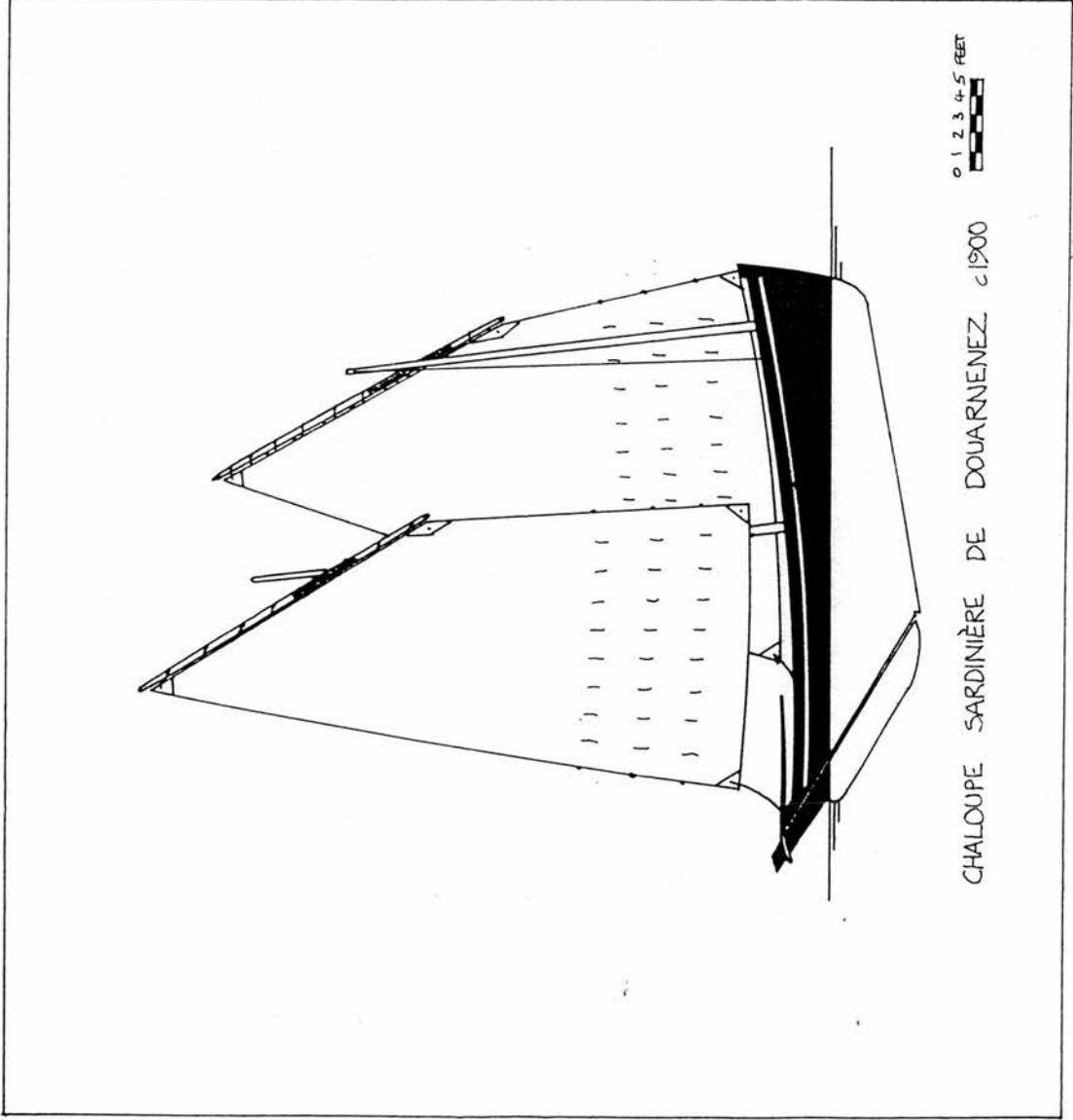


Fig 74 Sail plan of Douarnenez sardine *chaloupe* by Mike Smylie

remote past by the Venetians, by the Romans, or by medieval fish traders of Spain...'⁶³

Thus, he proposes, the Cornish vessels – which became known as the *koks* - were just as influenced by the Basque seiners as were the Bretons. For the first time, then, we see similar influences bearing upon the different fishing communities throughout the whole of the Atlantic seaboard of Europe, from the Iberian Peninsula up to the Clyde. Fish, after all, do not recognise borders. These influences probably extended further north, but these from there into the Clyde have already been examined, therefore are deemed irrelevant to this particular study.

THE BOATS OF THE BRETON FISHERMEN

Nance shows a drawing of a Douarnenez fishing boat from the end of the eighteenth century. This shows a rig of two masts, and he notes that 'the relationship with the batel and the pink is obvious and demonstrates how slowly changes were made'. The Dutch pinks, he asserts, were also heavily influenced by the Basque boats.⁶⁴

These early Douarnenez *chaloupes* do display very many similarities to the Cornish luggers. Another drawing of a Concarneau boat dated 1865 resembles the Nance drawing. Yet, by 1900, a remarkable transformation has taken place and an altogether different shape has appeared. The double-ended hull has developed in a way comparable to the Loch Fyne boats. They have adopted a steeply raking sternpost with a sloping keel, deep heeled and shallow forefooted. The principal differences are the stem that rakes

⁶² Baker, 1966:10-24.

⁶³ Nance, 1944:93.

forward, mirroring the stem of the *traineras*, the seine-net trawlers of Portugal, and the flatness of the floors and full-body of the midship section. These sections, it must be said, show absolutely no likeness to the Loch Fyne boats. However, one very relevant factor has been calculated using a lines plan of a 10.4m Douarnenez *chaloupe*. Dividing length by the maximum breadth gives us a figure of 3.25 which lies within the normal range according to McKee's prognosis. Similarly, dividing beam by depth produces a deep hull. Therefore, according to his categories, this Douarnenez boat can be classed as a western skiff as is the Lochfyne skiff. At the turn of the twentieth century there were 3700 of these boats working off the west Breton coast, principally from Douarnenez and Concarneau. These figures represent the highest numbers of a particular European boat-type ever being built.⁶⁵

The Bretons were not charged for their harbour fees a set rate per length of keel. Nor were the original building costs of the vessels necessarily dependent on this length. This is in direct contrast to the payment schedules in Western Scotland, as already mentioned. Boats were always built at a cost per length of keel, and harbour charges were levied similarly. So the question remains: why did the Bretons adopt the shape?

When one considers the task of shooting and hauling the seine net, the answer seems simple. It is to create a vessel that turns quickly yet retains a good grip on the water when sailing. The shape of the sternpost is known to have given the craft a superb sea-keeping ability in following seas. Speed was essential to run the catch to port, and the standing lug, so favoured by the Clyde fishers, was relatively easy to handle with a crew of four or five.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 37.

⁶⁵ See *Guide des Voiliers de Peche* published by Le Chasse Maree.

These are the sailing abilities of paramount importance when working seine-nets, the ring-net being a form of seine-net even if it is towed by two boats as part of the practice. They are qualities that were recognised by both the Cornish and Lochfyners alike, as well as the Bretons, and the hulls proved themselves proficient over several decades of their working lives.



Fig 75

MS/S/01 &02 Two views of the *Queen Mary* at Gairloch Heritage Museum in 1994

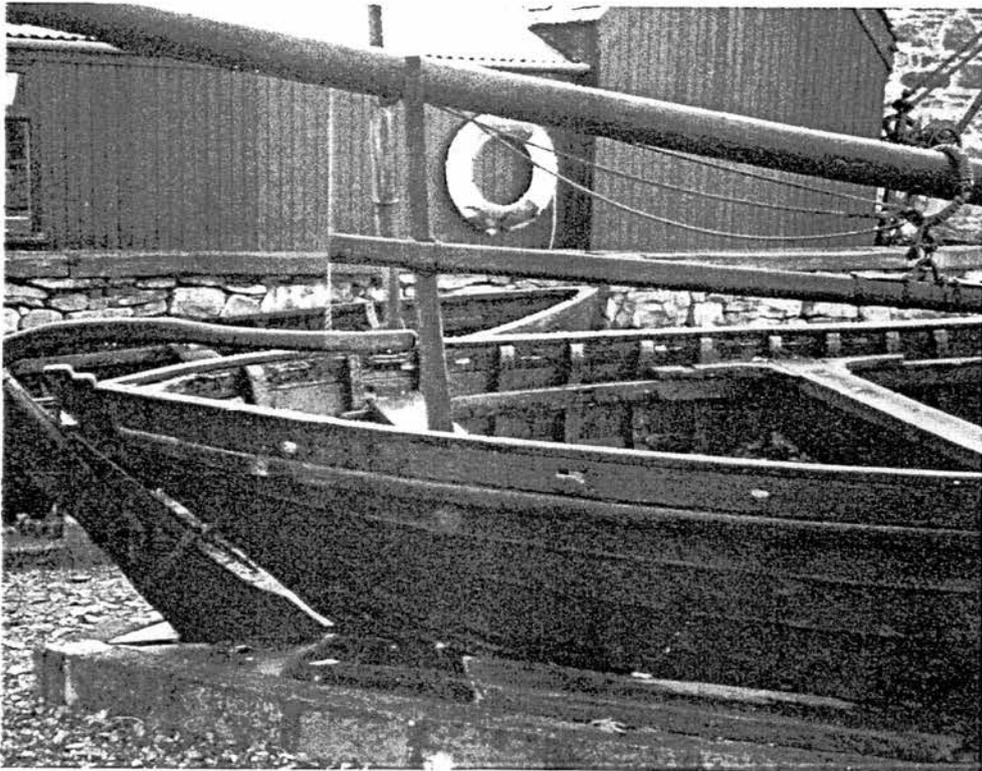


Fig 76

5

LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY CRAFT

We have throughout this paper been considering fishing craft that were forerunners to the Lochfyne skiffs operating over a hundred year period, even though, in some cases, they were not fishing in the Clyde waters. Before we consider the Lochfyne skiffs in detail, we shall need to review the vessels in use on the Scottish western coast both immediately prior to and during the period that the skiffs were in common use. We shall commence this study in the northwestern part of the coast.

GAIRLOCH

When Hugh Miller visited a boatyard in Gairloch in the first half of the nineteenth century, he came across a Highland boatbuilder using moss steeped in tar to caulk his



Fig 77 JV/S/01 Badrachro, Gairloch (from a Valentine postcard)



Fig 78 JV/S/02 Flowerdale, Gairloch c.1910, where now a pier has been built (from a Valentine postcard)

vessel, the normal practice in these parts since time immemorial.⁶⁶ The local vessel in use was known as the *Bata Ghearrloch* ('bata' from the Norse for boat) which was an open vessel with a single lug sail with a length within the 15-20 feet range. Isabel Grant recounted the observations of two boatbuilders Mr. Sutherland and Mr. Mackenzie of Pennefeiler in *Highland Folk Ways* first published in 1961. Their information tells us:

...the old typical boats had upright stems and raked sterns and the whole boat was built with a slant, the stern being much deeper than the stem. The frames were made of ash steamed into shape and the sides of planks of larch. In the old days the Skye boats were generally tarred but the upper parts of the Bernera boats were painted in bright colours. In the north the taste was shown in the painting of the names of the boats, which were often named after the skipper's wife....the sails of the Skye boats, like those described by Mr. MacDonald [Lewis], were a lug and a jib. In the days of prosperity of the West Highland fisheries, local boat-builders lived all along the coast of the Islands. Now they are few in number and they make more varied craft.⁶⁷

Several examples of these small West Highland boats do exist, one particular group of boat-builders in Ullapool having recently restored two or three vessels that fit the description given by the Skye boat-builders forty years ago.

The *Queen Mary*, UL138, was built in 1910 by Murdo and Donald MacDonald of Alligin, Loch Torridon for John Mackenzie of Gairloch. He intended fishing out of Badachro, which is across the loch from Gairloch (see photo JV/S/01 for similar craft at Badachro). Although displaying characteristics of the Loch Fyne boats, she is different in a number of ways. At 31ft overall and 22ft on the keel, she is smaller than the typical skiff of that era, and is clinker-built, with all the elm and larch used in her construction coming from the Ben-damph Forest that is situated on the southern end of Loch Torridon. She remains as a static exhibit outside the Gairloch Heritage Centre (see MS/S/01 & 02). Two sister vessels were built by the MacDonald brothers – *Lady Marjorie* and *Isabella*, the latter subsequently going to Raasay. Wrecks of such craft are pictured in Gairloch in

⁶⁶ Miller, 1869:284. John MacAulay, boatbuilder from Harris, recounted how he used moss steeped in Stockholm Tar when an apprentice in the early 1960s, during a recent personal communication.

"FLOWER OF POLBAIN"

(SCOTTISH FIFIE - 15 FT. LONG)

KEEL WITH RIBS 1 1/2" x 2" x 12"

CLARK 1 1/2" x 2" x 12"

DOWN RIGGED MASTING SYSTEM

BOOM WITH RIGGING SYSTEM

LENGTH OVERALL 15 FT.

LENGTH BEAM 2 1/2 FT.

DECK AREA 15 FT. x 2 1/2 FT.

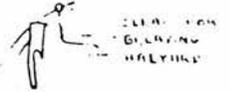
PLAN CORRECT FROM PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN AT
ON THE 10th OF NOVEMBER 1912

SCALE 24:1 (1/4" = 1')

NOTE ON

PROCEDURE WHEN TACKLING

WHEN TACKLING WITH THE JIBING MAST
THE YARK IS LOOSED FROM THE END OF
THE BOOM. THE TACK IS THEN TAKEN
THE BOOM IS THEN THE BOOM IS
THAT IS LOOSED FROM THE BOOM AND
THE BOOM IS THEN THE BOOM IS
NOW WINDWARD SIDE. THE SHEET IS
UNWIND AND THE SHEET IS
NOW THROUGH THE BOOM AND
THE BOOM IS THEN THE BOOM IS



PAINTING OF HULL

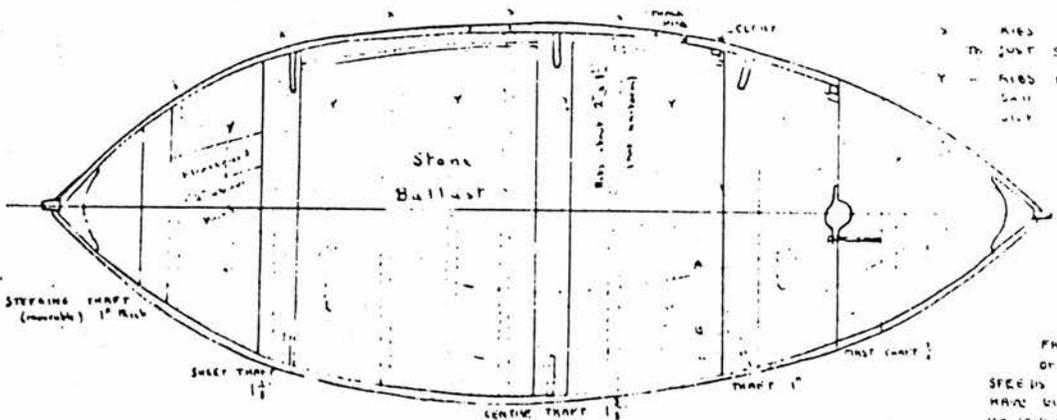
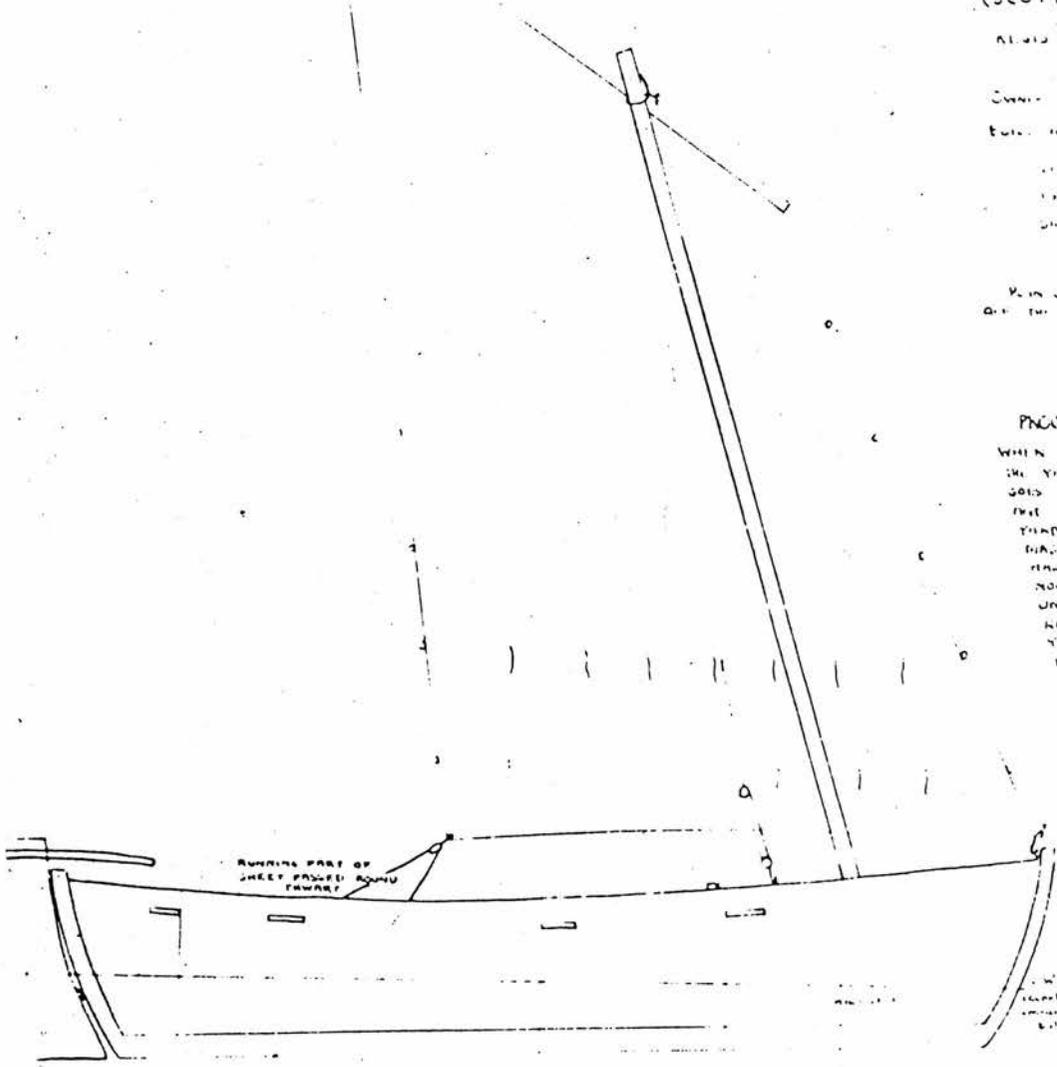
RED - BROWN VARNISH

WHITE - GUNNERS

BLUE - BOARDS

THIRD'S HOUSE

THE HULL IS PAINTED
WITH THE FOLLOWING
COLORS



X - RIBS EXTENDING FROM GUNNERS
TO JUST SHORT OF WHEEL
Y - RIBS EXTENDING FROM GUNNERS
TO JUST SHORT OF WHEEL

4 PLANKS FROM GUNNERS
PLANKING 1" THICK
OTHER PLANKS 1 1/2" x 2"
RIBS MOSTLY 2" x 1 1/2"
WELL 2"

THIS TYPE IS PROBABLY THE
FINEST TYPE OF SHALLOP FISHING BOAT
OF THE KIND IN EXISTENCE. IT IS
SPEEDY & RIGID. THROUGH THE YEARS
HAVE BEEN IMPROVED. THE BOAT
HOWEVER IS NOT SUITED TO HEAVY
WINDS. THE BOAT IS THE
OF THE BOAT.

COPYRIGHT

THIS PLAN MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED
WITHOUT PERMISSION

F.T. WAYNE

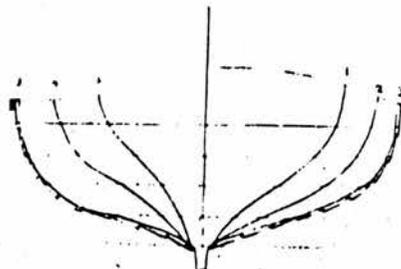


Fig 80 Plan of Flower of Polbain, 15ft fifie, drawn by F.T.Wayne (undated)



Fig 81 UN/S/02 Plockton from an unknown postcard



Fig 82 UN/S/03 Dornie Ferry and boat, Loch Long, from an unknown postcard

the early twentieth century (JV/S/02). Another view of Badachro shows redundant West Coast boats and larger East Coast fife-types.⁶⁸

In Loch Broom, the favoured boat for the herring fishing in the late nineteenth century was the 'Campbeltown- or Lochfyne-built skiff of about 25ft.' A number appear to have been introduced year on year, superceding the older boats that were kept for agricultural and kelp work. However, in 1896 there were only six such craft that had been purchased by local crews, which appears to contradict the earlier supposition that the type were adopted 'year on year'.⁶⁹

However, contrasting these local boats, it must be said that boats were brought over from the East Coast. As an illustration, the small fife *Bounty*, UL217, was built at Gamrie Bay, Aberdeenshire in 1880 and fished out of Loch Broom. She measured 23feet 9 inches in overall length by 8feet 5inch on the beam and was rigged with one dipping lugsail of approximately 225 square feet. No more details are known.⁷⁰

SKYE, LOCHALSH AND PLOCKTON AREA

Scant evidence allows us a hazy picture of craft in use in this wide area, although Daniell supplied views of Lochs Hourn and Duich. A view of Armadale in 1895 shows a

⁶⁷ Grant, 1995:274-5.

⁶⁸ Uncles, 1999:68.

⁶⁹ F.B.R. 1895:197 & F.B.R. 1896:189.

⁷⁰ She was measured by F.T. Wayne in August 1933 while she lay at Old Dorney Harbour, Loch Broom. Her keel length was noted as being 22 feet. The drawing is now in the collection of the Science Museum in London.

Lochfyne-type skiff anchored in the bay, although no registration numbers are visible.⁷¹ On the other hand, another view of Kyleakin shows a similar boat with a registration number that is, unfortunately, indecipherable.⁷² The view of Plockton also shows the same type of craft (UN/S/02). The ferryboat between Ardelve and Dornie, depicted in picture UN/S/03, shows a typical Highland boat with raked sternpost and stem, low freeboard and little sheer.

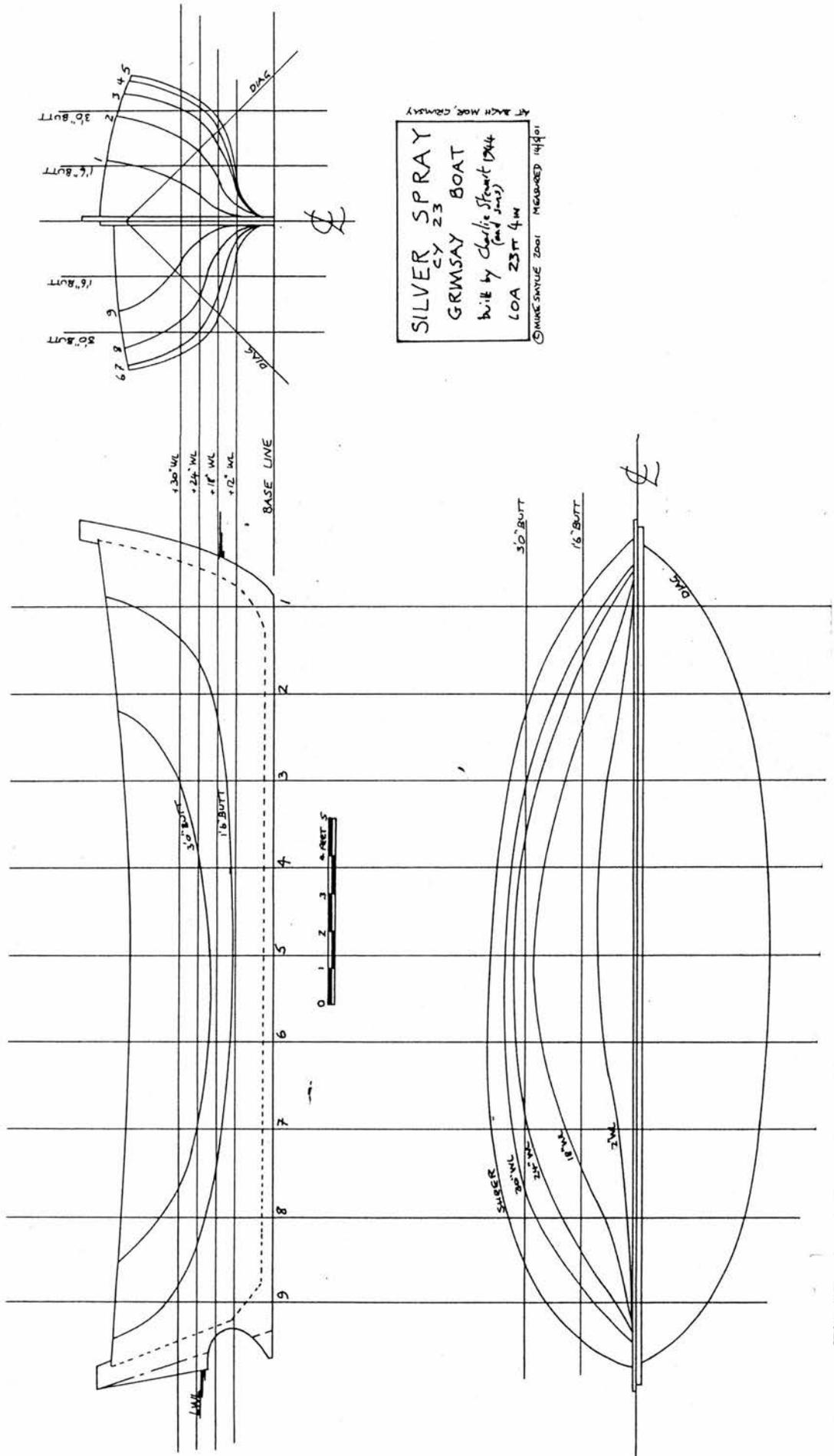
GRIMSAY

The small island of Grimsay nestles between North Uist and Benbecula in the Outer Hebrides, and upon this tiny isle a peculiar type of lobster boat developed in the nineteenth century. Its uniqueness arose from the fact that, from available evidence, it appears that the boatbuilder initially responsible emigrated to the island from the Argyllshire mainland, probably from Appin, north of Oban. That the boats from the south influenced him in his work is obvious when one compares them with other northern types.

Charles Stewart, that boatbuilder, moved to Lochmaddy, North Uist in about 1802, coming to work as a carpenter on a nearby manse. According to the parish records he married Margaret MacDonald, and sometime before 1811 he moved to Grimsay as his first son, Domhnall Ruadh, was born there that year. Thus began a family tradition of boatbuilding that lasted until 1994 when the last of the full-time builders, Aonghas

⁷¹ Uncles, 1995:91.

⁷² Ibid: 79.



AT K&H MAR. GRIMSAY
 \$
 SILVER SPRAY
 CY 23 BOAT
 built by Charlie Stewart 1944
 (and sons)
 LOA 23' 4"
 ©MIKE SMYLYE 2001 MEASURED 11/10/01

Fig 83 Lines plan of Grimsay lobster boat Silver Spray, CY23, by Mike Smylye in 2001

Thearlaich, died. His brother, Uilleam Thearlaich, although today aged 78, has, over recent years, contributed the understanding of this family tradition by overseeing the building of a new Grimsay boat. This, then, 'is the oldest continuing boatbuilding tradition in Scotland'.⁷³

The boat that evolved over the generations was directed solely at the local lobster fishing. The fishermen set their pots mainly around the Monach Isles that lie some five miles to the west of North Uist and to reach this area they have to sail out through a narrow piece of water that separates the islands called the North Ford. Its western entrance leads out into the Atlantic Ocean where treacherous seas can build up. Thus a boat has to be able to navigate safely through these waters in both directions, in other words to be able to handle a beat into the swell and to behave in a following sea on the return home. It also has to behave well in both the exposed Atlantic waters around the islands and the shallow sounds between the islands.⁷⁴

The early boats were clinker-built, double-enders, locally called *eathar*, and these were 18-28ft long. Smaller transom-sterned boats, called *geola* (Gaelic for 'yawl'), were built for transporting people and goods around the island, but the writer believes that these developed in the twentieth century as motors were fitted to the boats.

The double-ended boats display a distinct likeness to the southwest Scottish boats. The sternpost rakes to give a delicately shaped exit from the water, with an upright stem and fine entry. Maximum beam is well aft of amidships and the sections show a degree of

⁷³ Interview on 16/5/01 by Lara-Ann Proctor with Mary Norton, page 8. She also notes that this tradition has previously gone unnoticed by past academics documenting Britain's working boats.

⁷⁴ Most of the information herewith comes from *Never in a Broken Sea* by Mary Norton, although information was collected by the author during four days of measuring eight of these craft in May 2001 and conversations with William Stewart and Mary Norton of the Grimsay Boat Project. These boats remain largely unwritten about, although their full documentation is on-going.

rise of floor. However, as no boats have survived that date from the nineteenth century, comparisons can only be made with contemporary craft. The oldest in existence was built in the 1910s and remains in museum care.

BARRA

The Barra men were renowned for sailing their small boats over to the mainland, carrying their fish as far as Glasgow. Several boats and crews were lost in this pursuit. The boats, according to Edward MacQueen, had five crew in the late eighteenth century, with some 20 to 30 boats, taking 1000-1500 ling per vessel.⁷⁵ However, these were later reported as 22ft boats rigged with a single dipping lugsail and had come from the East Coast.⁷⁶ Presumably this was sometime just prior or subsequent to the development of Castle Bay as a major herring port in the 1870s. It was noted that these 16-20ft boats cost £1 per foot as freight, equivalent to the barrel space they took up on the ships. The instant growth of the trade is illustrated by the fact that, in 1875, there were 15-18 steamers carrying the salted herring from the island and the surroundings to the Liverpool market, taking 24 hours to reach the destination.⁷⁷ By 1900 there were 500 sail boats working from Castle Bay, with some 32 curing stations supplying, in the main, the Russian market.⁷⁸ Photographic evidence supports the view that most of the craft were imported, although it is known that local builders did build some on similar lines. MacInnes notes

⁷⁵ OSA, vol XIII: 335-6.

⁷⁶ Smylie, 1999:52.

⁷⁷ Letter from Rothesay Fishery's Officer to B. F. Primrose, secretary to Fishery's Board, after Holdsworth's *Deep-Sea Fishing and Fishing Boats*, dated 1875. SRO AF 37/176

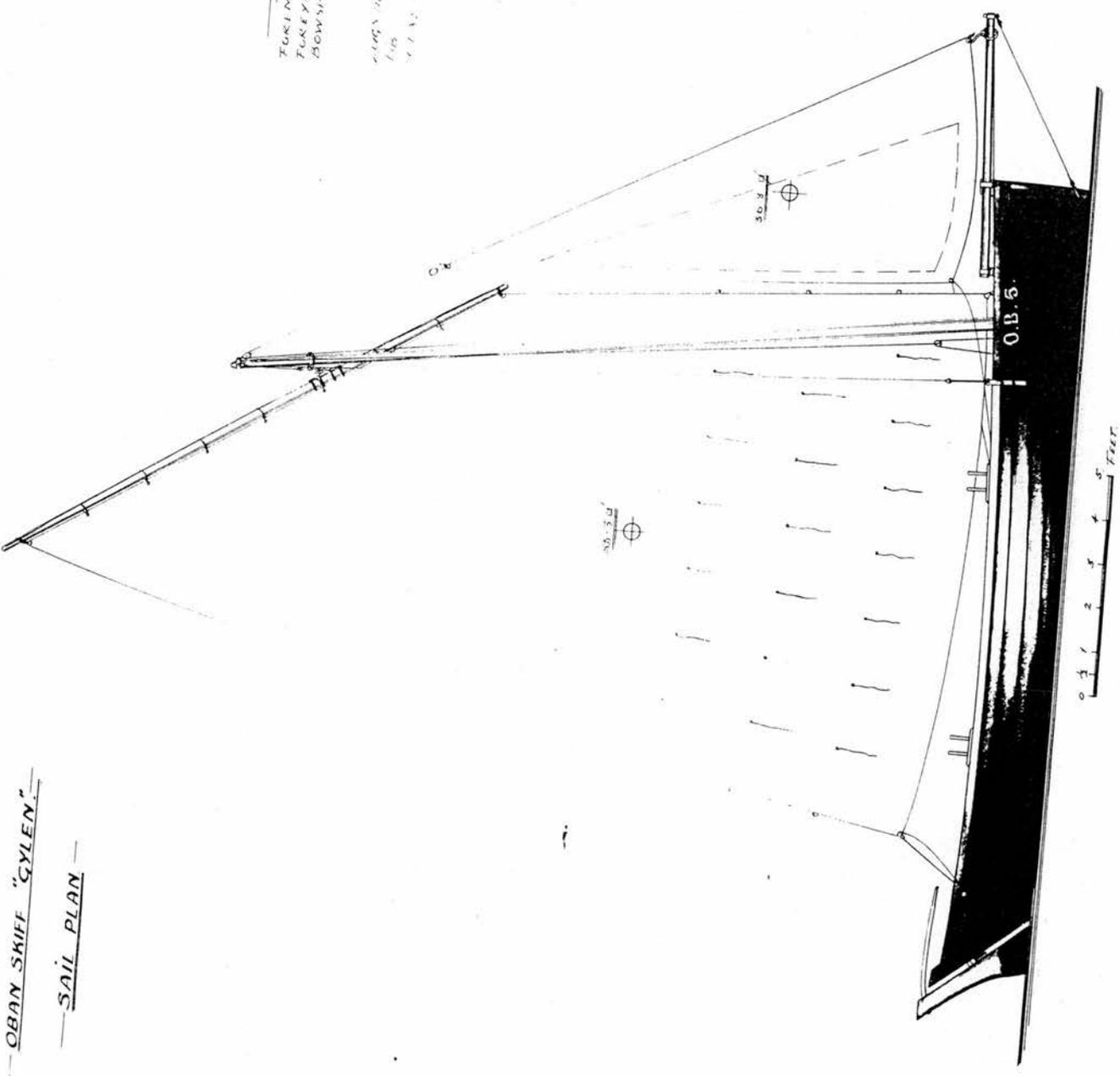
⁷⁸ Most of this information comes from an, as yet, unpublished manuscript of the author's entitled *The Trail of the Red Herring*, recalling ten years of research into fishing boats and their crews throughout Europe.

OBAN SKIFF "GYLEN"

SAIL PLAN

SIPAK DIMENSIONS
 FOREMAST 1 0 4 19' 0" DIA 3 1/2" x 1/2"
 MAINMAST 1 1 4 12' 9" DIA 2 1/2" x 1/2"
 MIZENMAST 1 1 4 6' 0" DIA 2 1/2" x 1/2"

SAIL AREAS
 MAINSAIL 155.5 sq. ft.
 MIZEN 36.4 sq. ft.
 TOTAL SAIL AREA 192.1 sq. ft.



Livingston, Okla. 1911

Fig 85 Sail plan of Oban skiff G. 1.

one old clinker-built Zulu called *Rival* in Eriskay, which the old men recalled coming from Islay.⁷⁹

OBAN

The Oban skiff *Gylen*, OB5, was built by MacDonald of Portbeg, Oban for A. McAllister of Oban about 1886 and is deemed typical of a skiff of the locality of the era. She was clinker-built, measuring 18ft 4in in overall length, 16ft 6in keel length and 5ft 11in in beam. Rigged with one standing lug and a small jib set on a short bowsprit, she was documented by Philip Oke on behalf of the Coastal Craft Committee of the Society for Nautical Research. She is entirely open, with four thwarts, the mast being stepped against the forward thwart. The peak of the lug is high, resembling the Loch Fyne craft although she is perhaps more pear-shaped in the stern than the latter. McKee notes that the circular gunwale aft is apparent in other boats of the Firth of Lorne.⁸⁰ Again, like the *Queen Mary*, her maximum beam was well aft and her lines display a fuller shape than boats from the Clyde.⁸¹

ARDRISHAIG

Before concentrating on the Loch Fyne herring skiffs, mention must be made at this point of the line skiffs typical to the loch. The clinker-built skiff *Snowdrop*, TT177, was built by Archibald Munro of Ardrishaig for Dan McLachlan, also of Ardrishaig, in

⁷⁹ MacInnes, 1997:83.

⁸⁰ McKee, 1983:207.

ARDRISHAIG - Loch Fyne. W. SCOTLAND.

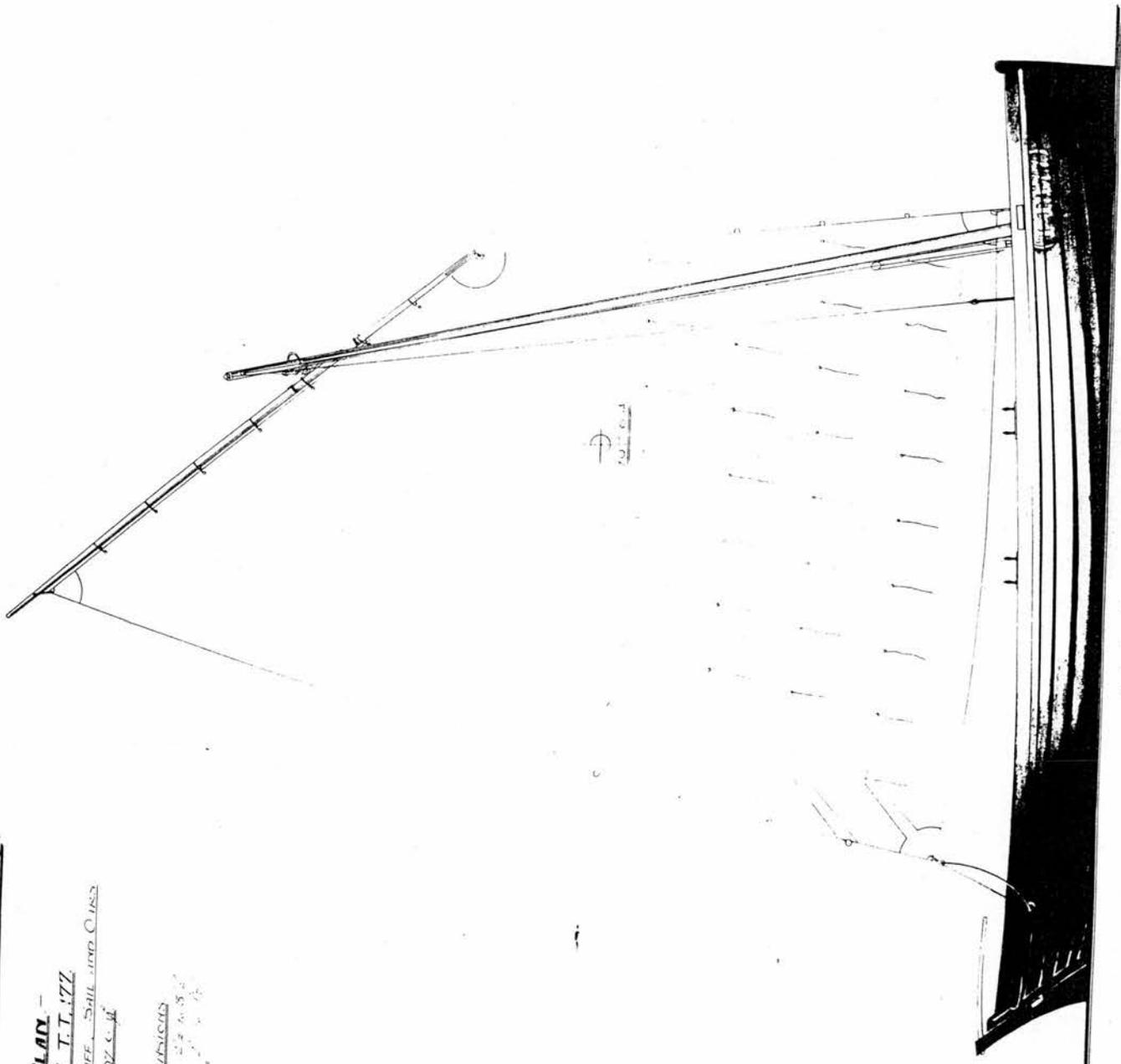
SAIL PLAN -

'SNOWDROP' T.T. 172

LOCH FYNE LINE SKIFF, SAIL AND CURS

SAIL - USED 192 C.M.

	SEYS, DIMENSIONS	
<u>MAST</u>	104	210 DIA 2 2/3" x 5"
<u>YALG</u>	104	18" x 18" DIA 2 2/3" x 5"



Scale 3/4" = 1 foot
 P. J. O'Keefe
 1925

Fig 86 Sail plan of Loch Fyne line skiff Snowdrop, TT177, by P J O'Ke at Ardrishaig in 1925 (S...)

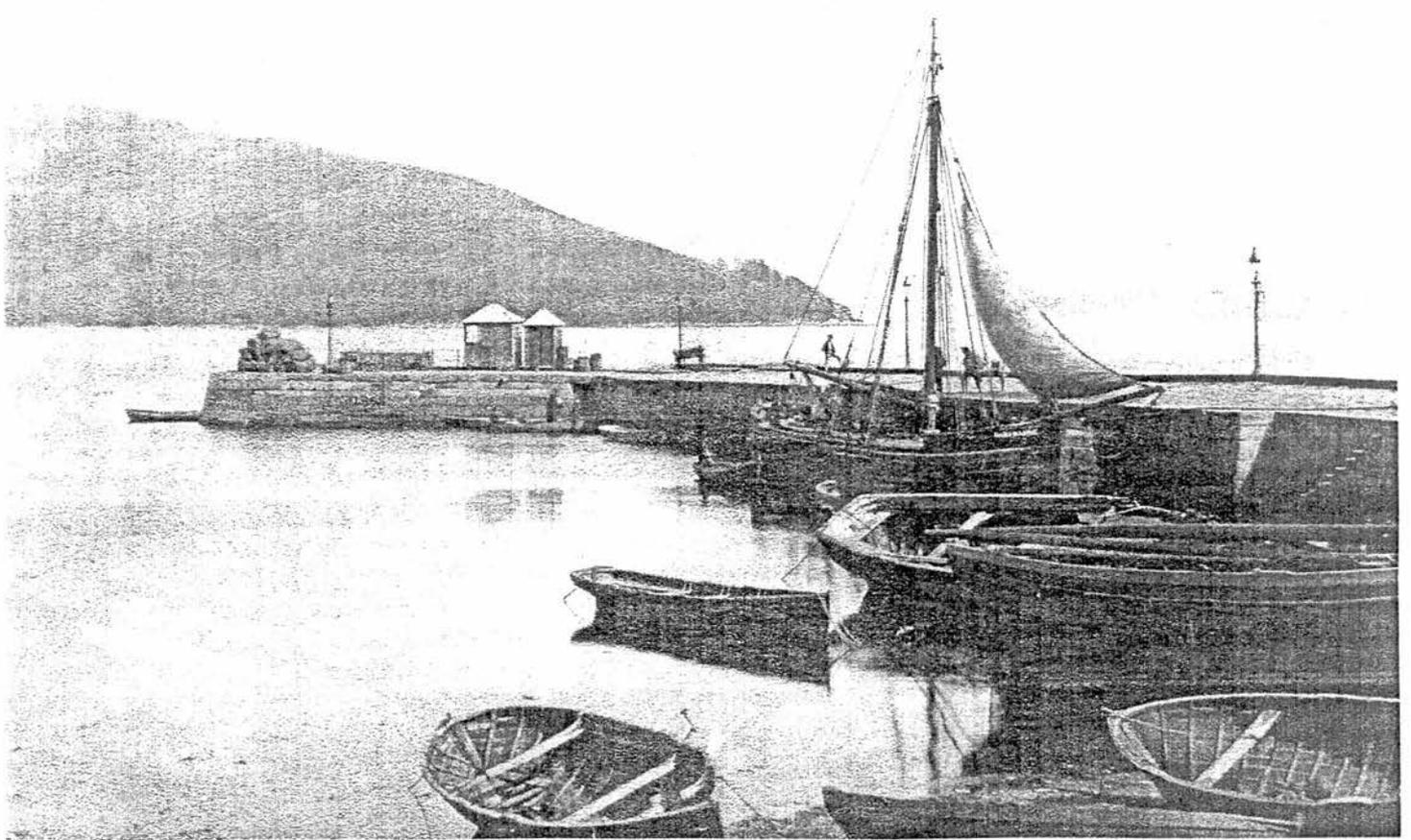


Fig 87 UN/S/08 Inveraray harbour from an unknown postcard



Fig 88 MS/S/03 Skiff built by McDonalds of Alligin and lying there in 2002

1907 and is 22ft 6in overall on a 19ft 9in keel with a beam of 6ft 5in. However, she has a hollower stern than the Oban skiff and the standing lug is not so highly peaked. Again the mast is stepped against the forward thwart, there being 5 thwarts in total. There is a minimal rise of floor in the sections.⁸²

Hamilton makes the distinction between skiffs and lineboats, of which he says there were 60-70 working drift-nets and some ring-nets from Ardrishaig. It will be remembered that he noted that Ayrshire fishermen had come here to collect bait for their long-lines as there were abundant supplies of mussels on the sandy shore. They later moved into the village and this, he says, was at the beginning of the herring fishery becoming a basic industry. When not herring fishing – he also notes that some fishermen both worked drift- and ring- nets – the fishermen worked their lines. Presumably, then, the fishermen owned both a skiff and a lineboat.⁸³ The main builders in the village – prolific for its small size – were Walker, Jas McLean, subsequently taken over by Archibald and Donald Munro, Archibald McCallum and Robert Fyfe. Donald Munro moved to Inveraray and, later, to Blairmore, where he built many motorised Lochfyne skiffs.

In a view of Inveraray, dated 1871, several line skiffs are pulled up in the foreground (UN/S/08). Whether these are used for herring fishing or the line fishing, or indeed both, is unclear, although the larger half-decked smack lying over to starboard in front of the Gabbert alongside the quay appears to be a drift-net boat.

⁸¹ Sail plan and Lines plan are in the Science Museum. See also Smylie, 1999:55.

⁸² Sail plan and Lines plan in Science Museum, London.

The trawl skiffs, as we've seen, were probably originally simple open wherries once used for the line or drift-net fishery. They were, according to Mitchell, 'propelled by four oarsmen' although other evidence seems to suggest two crews aboard.⁸⁴ They were lightly built and swift to avoid detection during the years that the use of the ring-net was prohibited. However, a lugsail was adopted, as we've seen probably from the influence of the Ayrshire fishers, and the available iconography supports this.

About the 17th June 1870 there were 150 trawl-nets operating on the loch and 81 drift-nets. Yet by the end of that July there were 364 drift-nets and only 102 trawls.⁸⁵ It seems the efforts of the drift-net fishermen were more profitable than those using the trawl. This does suggest that some of the ring-netters had reverted back to using their drift-nets, and the presumption is that they adapted their trawl skiffs for this purpose, as it seems unlikely that they would be able to afford to purchase another boat. Costs simply of keeping a boat were increasing all the time. Since 1868 it was mandatory for all boats to be properly licenced with the letters and numbers clearly painted on the side, and lights had to be displayed as already mentioned. Indeed, in 1872, the skipper and one crew-member of a Wick-registered boat were arrested and charged with culpable homicide after two other crew-members had been drowned. The boat, drift-netting at night off Noss Head, had been run down by the steamship *Tuskar*. The crew-member tried was asleep while on watch and the boat had no lights. They were found guilty and imprisoned for a year. Yet their loss was much greater with no compensation for the sinking of the boat,

⁸³ Hamilton, 1986:7.

⁸⁴ Mitchell, 1908:88

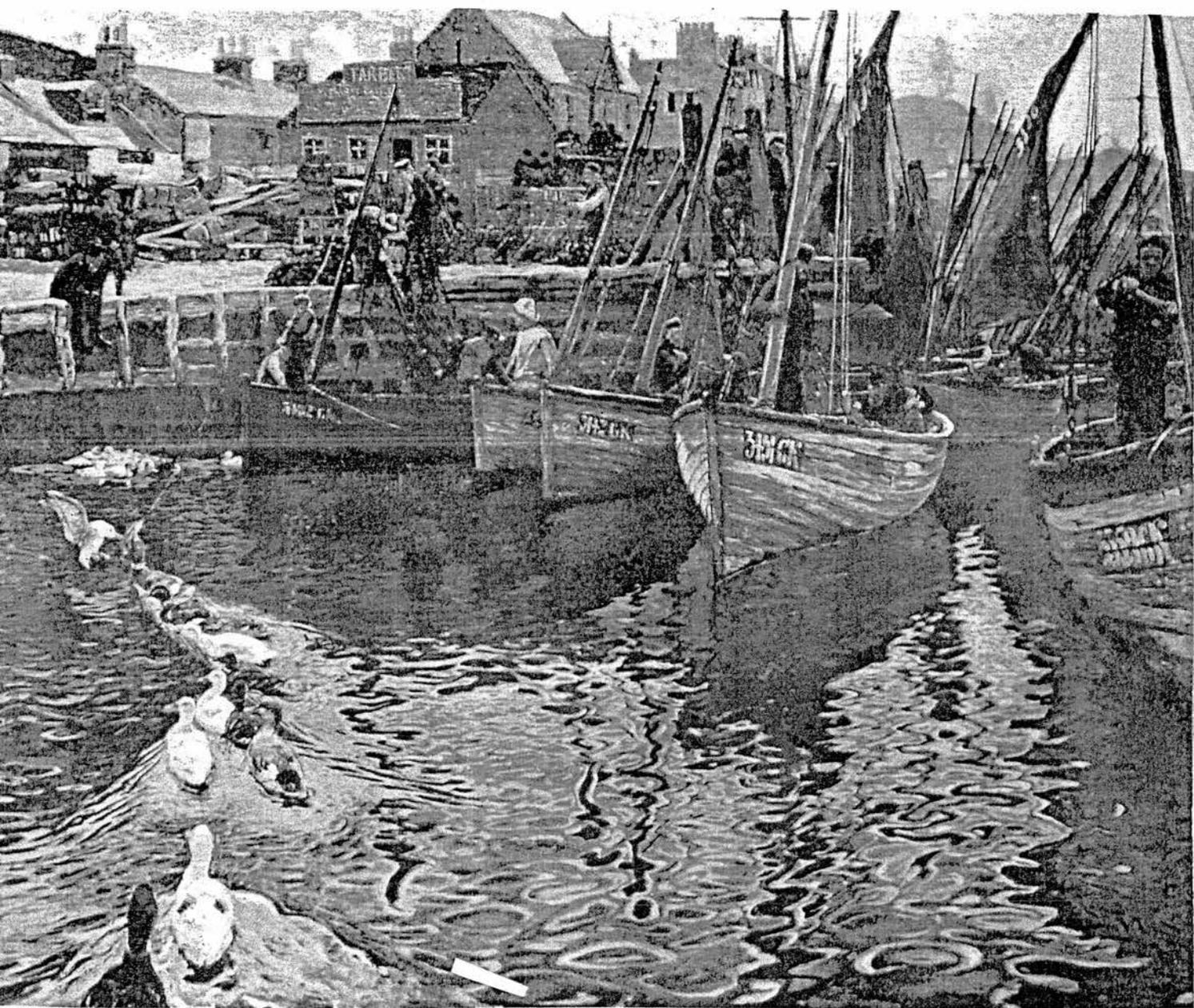


Fig 89 DM/S/01 Painting of Tarbert Harbour, Loch Fyne, by David Murray ARA

Fig 90

UN/S/01 Unknown painting of trawl skiff at Tarbert (undated pre-1884)



Fig 91 UN/S/09 Trawl skiff and 2 smacks at Campbeltown New Quay c.1890

two crew dead and a season's fishing missed.⁸⁶ Such was the necessity of displaying lights.

David Murray's painting of Tarbert harbour gives a lovely idea of the varnished hulls for which the Lochfyne boats were renowned (DM/S/01). They are all clinker-built skiffs with the raked mast being stepped well forward to give plenty of working room to haul the net aboard. The fisherman on the right is using a sweep to row the vessel out of the harbour. On the left-hand side a ring-net is being taken aboard. Sails are tanned – the tanning and barking shed still survives in Tarbert today as a shop – into a deep red colour and none of the boats seem to have a foresail. The entry into the water is extremely fine, especially on the skiff 3451GK, and stems are upright.

The early skiffs varied in length from 20 - 25 feet and some 6 feet in the beam.⁸⁷ Mitchell suggests the earliest were 23 feet long in the keel, increasing to 25 feet within ten years, the cost rising from £19 to £40.⁸⁸ That some later added a bowsprit and a jib is seen on the drawing of a skiff at Tarbert. The *Pelican* of Tarbert was registered as having a lugsail and jib.⁸⁹ This is clearly visible in the drawing by an unknown artist of a skiff with two fishermen (UN/S/01). The tuck at the sternpost is obvious and the sternpost doesn't yet have the extreme rake of the later half-decked skiffs. Each skiff has one ring-net, 90 fathoms long and 18 fathoms deep, and boats work in pairs with a neighbour boat.⁹⁰ Martin gives a full description of the trawl skiffs.⁹¹

⁸⁵ F.B.R. 1871:4

⁸⁶ F.B.R. 1873:6

⁸⁷ SRO, AF 37/20 and AF 37/159 relating to skiffs seized for illegal fishing.

⁸⁸ Mitchell, 1908:88-9.

⁸⁹ Register of Fishing Boats, Inveraray district, vol 2,2, first registered in 1869, the year that compulsory registration of fishing boats was introduced.

⁹⁰ Cameron, 1990:64.

⁹¹ Martin, 1981:59-60.

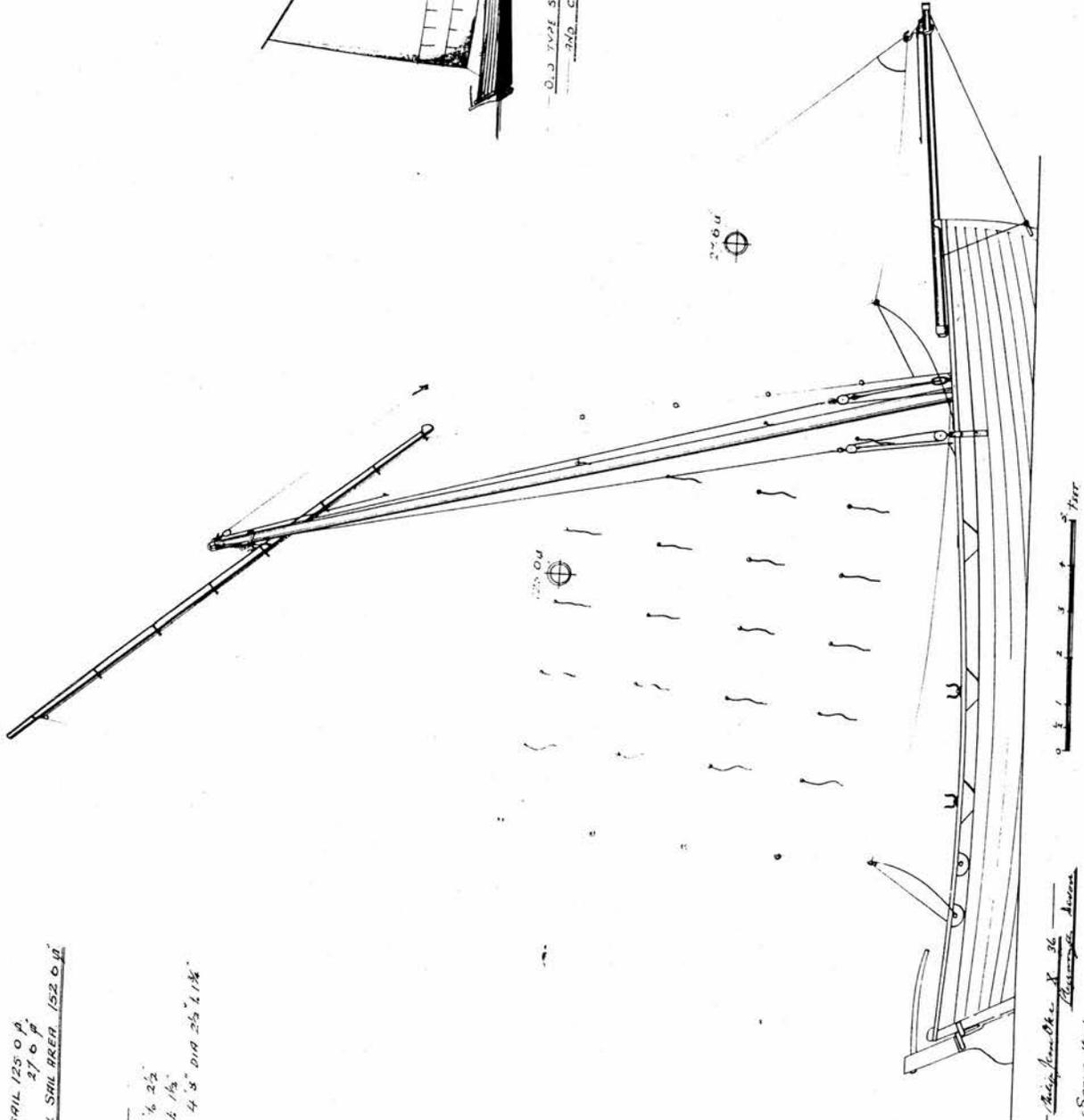
SAIL PLAN
LARGS LINE SKIFF

SAIL AREAS

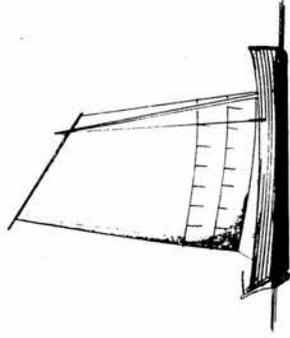
LUGSAIL 125 0 sq.
 JIB 27 0 sq.
 TOTAL SAIL AREA 152 0 sq.

SPAR DIMENSIONS

MAST L.O.A. 18' 0" DIA 3 5/8" x 2 1/2"
 LUGSAIL 11' 3" DIA 2" x 1 1/2"
 BOWSPRIT L.O.A. 7' 5" DIA 4" x 4" DIA 2 1/2" x 1 1/8"



Chicago from Oke on 8/26
 through the museum
 Scale 1/4"



D.D. TYPE SQUANTHERED LUG (No Jib)
 AND COLOUR SCHEME

Fig 92 Sail plan of Largs line skiff drawn by P.J.Oke in 1936 (Science Museum)

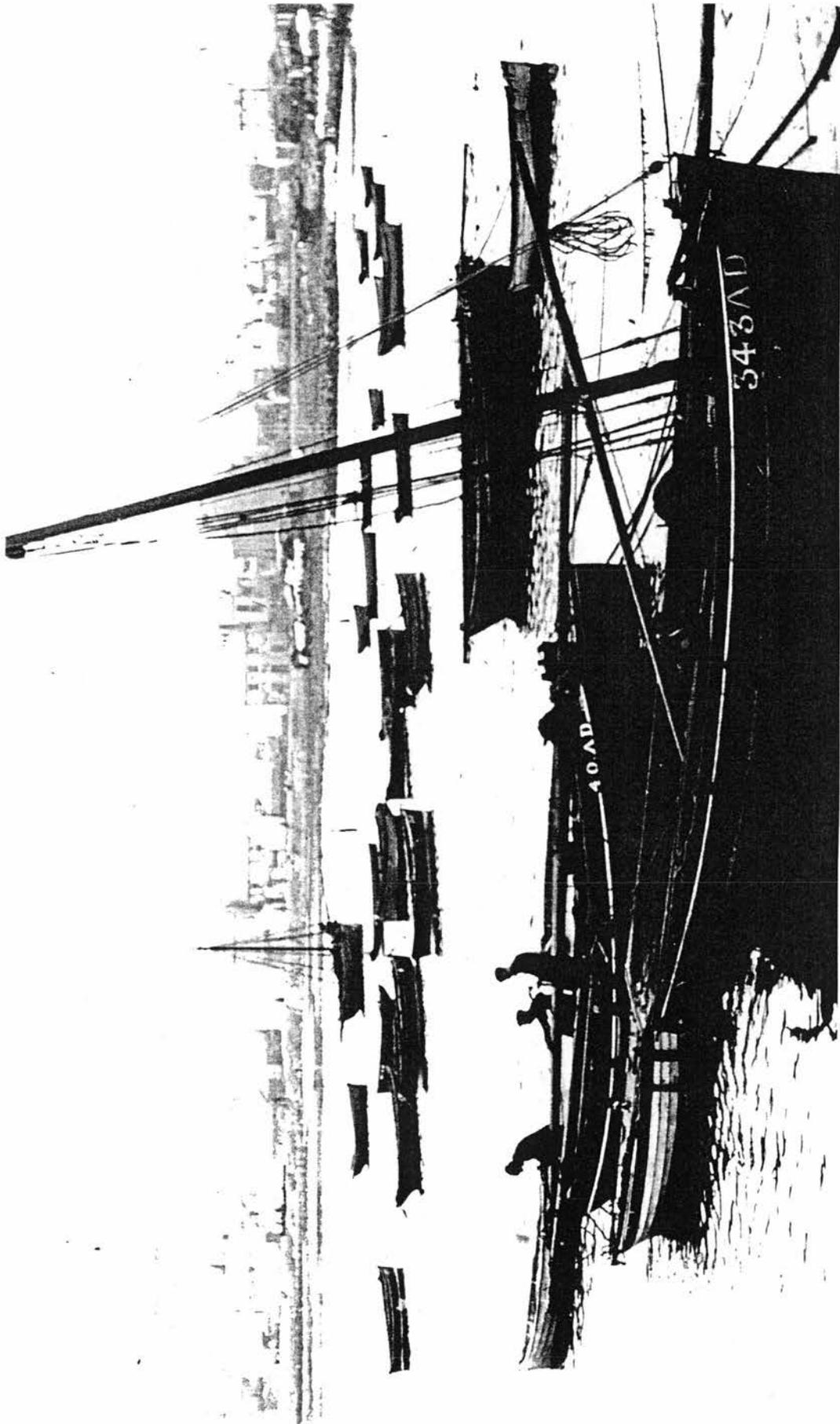


Fig 93 UN/S/10 Transom-sterned lug-rigged vessel at Troon

A trawl skiff lies in Campbeltown harbour in the late 1880s, proof that their use extended outside Loch Fyne (UN/S/09). Either side lies a bigger half-decked skiff and a smack. The trawl skiff, exceptionally, has a small mizzen with a sail bent on.

LARGS

The clinker-built Largs line skiff drawn by Oke in 1936 displays an altogether different shape to the previous examples. Built by Hugh Boag of Fairlie in 1894 for Robert Bruce of Ardrishaig, she measures 17ft 11in by 5ft 1in on a 16ft keel. Oke shows a high peaked lug, although he notes that earlier lugs were not so high. This boat is far more pointed in the stern than the Loch Fyne built boats, and this reflects the general tendency on the Ayrshire coast. There is hardly any rise of floor in the sections.

The boat in the foreground at Troon, in UN/S/10, is a transom-sterned lug-rigged boat, unusual, yet a transition between hull shape and rig. A smack is in the background. with a few nabbies and smaller skiffs moored.

GIRVAN

Oke's Girvan skiff was the clinker-built *Maggie Campbell*, built in Girvan about 1890. However, when he measured her in 1936 she had moved to Portpatrick under the ownership of Mr. Hunter, and had been renamed as *Jean Morgan*, BA472. At 22ft 10in x 6ft 11in beam (19ft 10in keel), she was bigger than her Largs counterpart for working

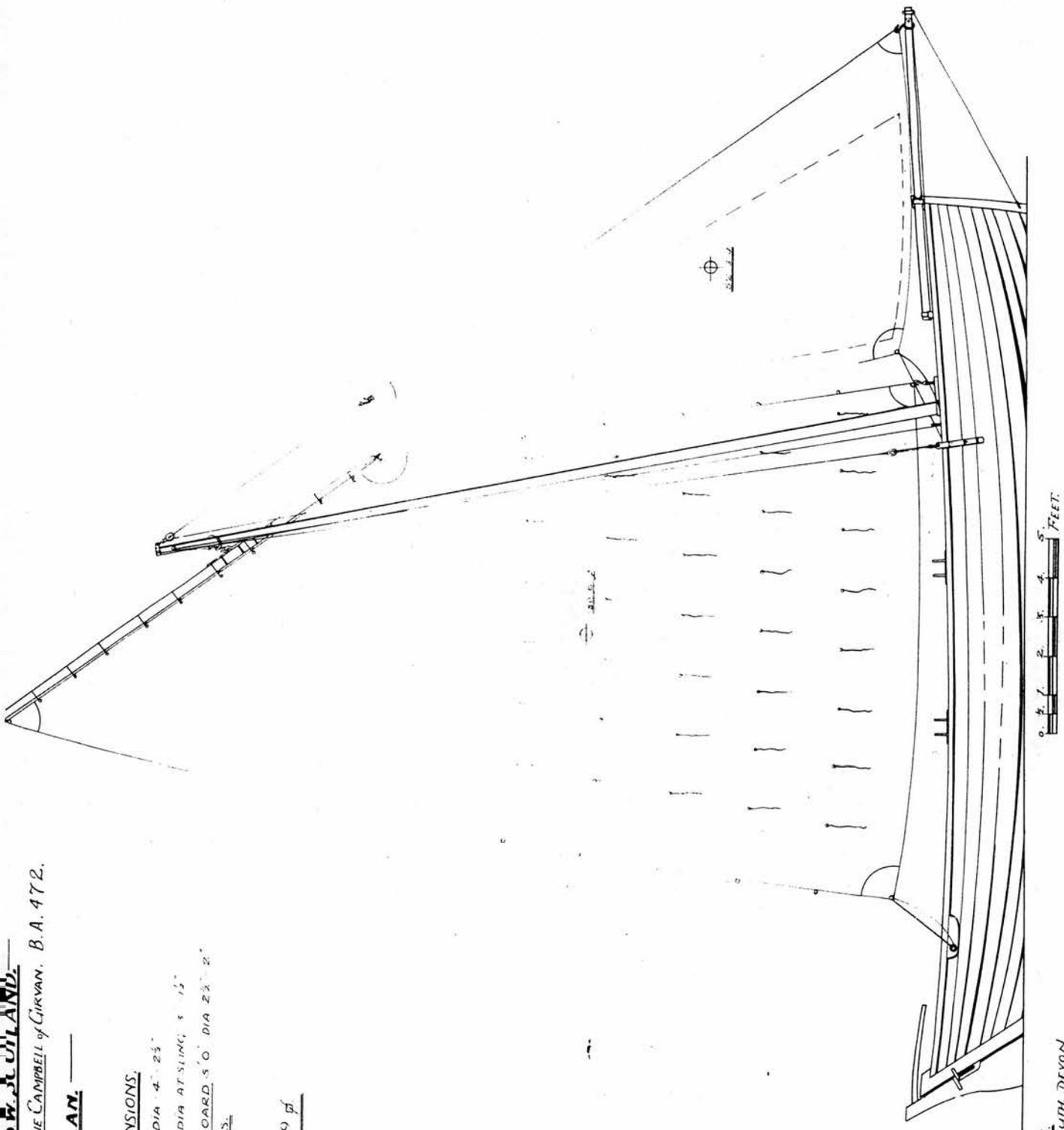
SAIL PLAN.

SPAR DIMENSIONS.

FOREMAST. L.O.A. 22'-23" DIA 4" 2 1/2"
 FOREYARD. 12'-13" DIA AT SLING & 1 1/2"
 BOWSPRIT. L.O.A. 8'0" OUTBOARD 5'0" DIA 2 1/2" 2"

SAIL AREAS.

FORESAIL. 180 6 sq ft
 JIB (BYG). 52 3 sq ft
 TOTAL SAIL AREA. 232 9 sq ft



Philip James Oke. VIII 36.
 Scale. 1/4" = 1 ft.
 EXETER DEVON

Fig 94 Sail plan of Girvan skiff Jean Morgan, ex-Maggie Campbell, BA472, by P.J.Oke, 1936 (Science Museum)

further down the Clyde. Like the Largs skiff she was more pointed in the stern and was rigged with a high peaked standing lug and small foresail on a bowsprit. She has a substantial rise of floor, which would be necessary for working the more exposed waters. Again she is totally open.

Girvan can be said to be the rightful home of the nabby, the great-line boats, 24-28ft long, which had evolved from the smaller lineboats as described above.⁹² They later were adapted for drift-netting in the late nineteenth century and ring-netting in the early twentieth. They were pointed more than the Lochfyne boats, as seen in comparing the small boats, and had a short foredeck ahead of the mast. They were once described as 'one of the prettiest, smartest and handiest forms of sea boat to be found'. These boats obviously impressed the fishers of Loch Fyne. It was an improvement on their earlier craft that were said to be so small that they were 'not possible to go any distance to look for herrings in boats of this description'.⁹³

A typical nabby was 23-27ft of keel and listed in the register books as being open boats, with a lugsail and jib and for 'nets and lines'. There are simply dozens of them in the registers. The *Follow Me* is deemed typical. Built at Girvan in 1880, she was 32.2ft overall on a 26.5ft keel with a 9.6ft beam. She was first registered as 372AR and later BA154 – Ballantrae being made a Port of Registry in 1902. Size increased in the twentieth century – the *Annie*, built by John Thomson in 1916, was 44.4ft overall on a 37ft keel, and had a Gleniffer 18-22hp motor installed, yet again she was for 'nets and lines'. It is at this point where it becomes impossible to distinguish between the more

⁹² Czerkawska, 1975:19.

⁹³ Smylie, 1999:54.

rounded Lochfyne skiffs and the pointed nabbies. Indeed, with many Lochfyne boats coming from the Ayrshire coast, in all probability there was no difference by that time.

There's one final factor that has not been discussed throughout this paper but should be: the ascendancy of the lug sail in these waters. We've seen how the earlier wherry rig was passed over for the smack-rig, and how spritsails were used in certain areas, and how the Ayrshire fishers introduced the lug into Loch Fyne, but not how they arrived with the rig in the first place.

The likely answer to this lies in the population movement that was so often responsible for the interchange of innovation amongst fishing communities. The fishermen of Newton-upon-Ayr, described as 'the most particular class of inhabitant' were descendants of a colony from Pitsligo, arriving in Ayrshire about 1785.⁹⁴

New Pitsligo today is 11 miles inland from Fraserburgh. That town was, in 1683, reported as having an artificial harbour with a depth of ten feet on neap tides. Widening of the harbour was begun in 1761, although not much was achieved in the first few years of the work. At about the same time boatbuilding was beginning to be established.⁹⁵

Fishing was concentrated at the west of the burgh at Broadsea, and the boats they used were 'about twenty feet long, crewed by five or six men, and had absolutely no decking whatsoever'. In 1800 there were seven boats and two 'yoals' based in Broadsea. Line fishing for haddock and cod was the preferred method as it seems the huge shoals of herring didn't arrive here until about 1800.⁹⁶ As well as Fraserburgh, to the north lay the villages of Macduff, Gardenstown, Pennan and Roseheartly. The same type of boat prevailed in all these settlements, working the sma'lines at that time, and these were, it

⁹⁴ NSA vol V:95.

⁹⁵ Bill MacDonald gives a full history of the port and its boats in his two books – see bibliography.

SAIL PLAN.

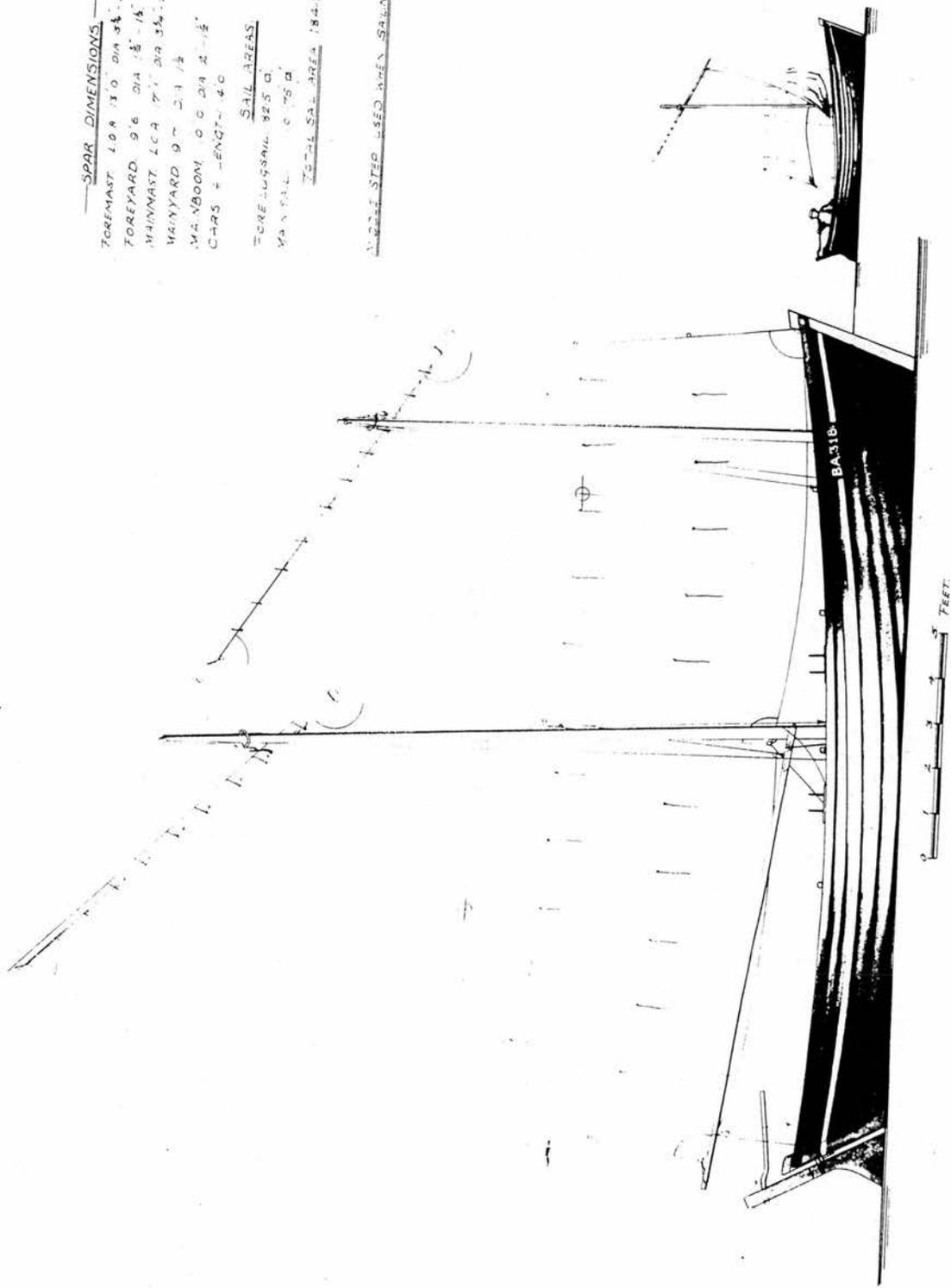
SPAR DIMENSIONS

FOREMAST 10 1/2 DIA 24' 2 1/2"
 FOREYARD 9' 6" DIA 1 1/2' 1 1/2"
 MAINMAST 10 1/2 DIA 24' 2 1/2"
 MAINYARD 9' 6" DIA 1 1/2'
 MAINBOOM 10 0 DIA 2 1/2'
 CARS 4 - ENGT. 4' 6"

SAIL AREAS

FORE LOYSAIL 825 sq
 MAIN SAILED 1075 sq
 TOTAL SAIL AREA 18425 sq

VERGE SPED USED WHEN SAILING FREE



— *Philip James Oke, VIII 36* —
 — *Pyramon* —

SCALE 3/4" = 1 FOOT

Fig 95 Sail plan of Portpatrick line boat *Three Brothers*, BA318, drawn by P.J.Oke in 1936 (Science Museum)

seems evident, lug-rigged. Thus it is suggested that these Pitsligo fishers introduced the rig into Ayrshire after settling there, perhaps even bringing examples with them. Whether the boats they adopted on the Clyde were influenced by the scaffies is unknown. However, there doesn't seem to be much of a similarity between the early scaffies and the nabbies, except the obvious characteristics which, it is felt, are more of a coincidence rather than an influence brought by these fishers. On the other hand, it cannot be dismissed out of hand, simply because there is no evidence.

PORTPATRICK

The Portpatrick line boat *Brothers*, BA318, was built by MacDowell of Portpatrick in 1898 for local fisherman Thomas Muir. Clinker-built and measuring 19ft 3in by 6ft 8in in beam (16ft 4in keel), she was rigged with two masts, unlike the other Clyde craft, with a dipping lug on the foremast and a standing on the main. Her stem and sternpost are straight and raking, and the stern pointed, although not as extremely as the Largs skiff. Oke suggests that only one mast is stepped in a position midway between the positioning of the two masts when the boat is sailing free.

⁹⁶ Summers, 1988:54.

SCOTLAND - DUMFRIES - SHINE -
ANNAN WATERFOOT.

SAIL PLAN.

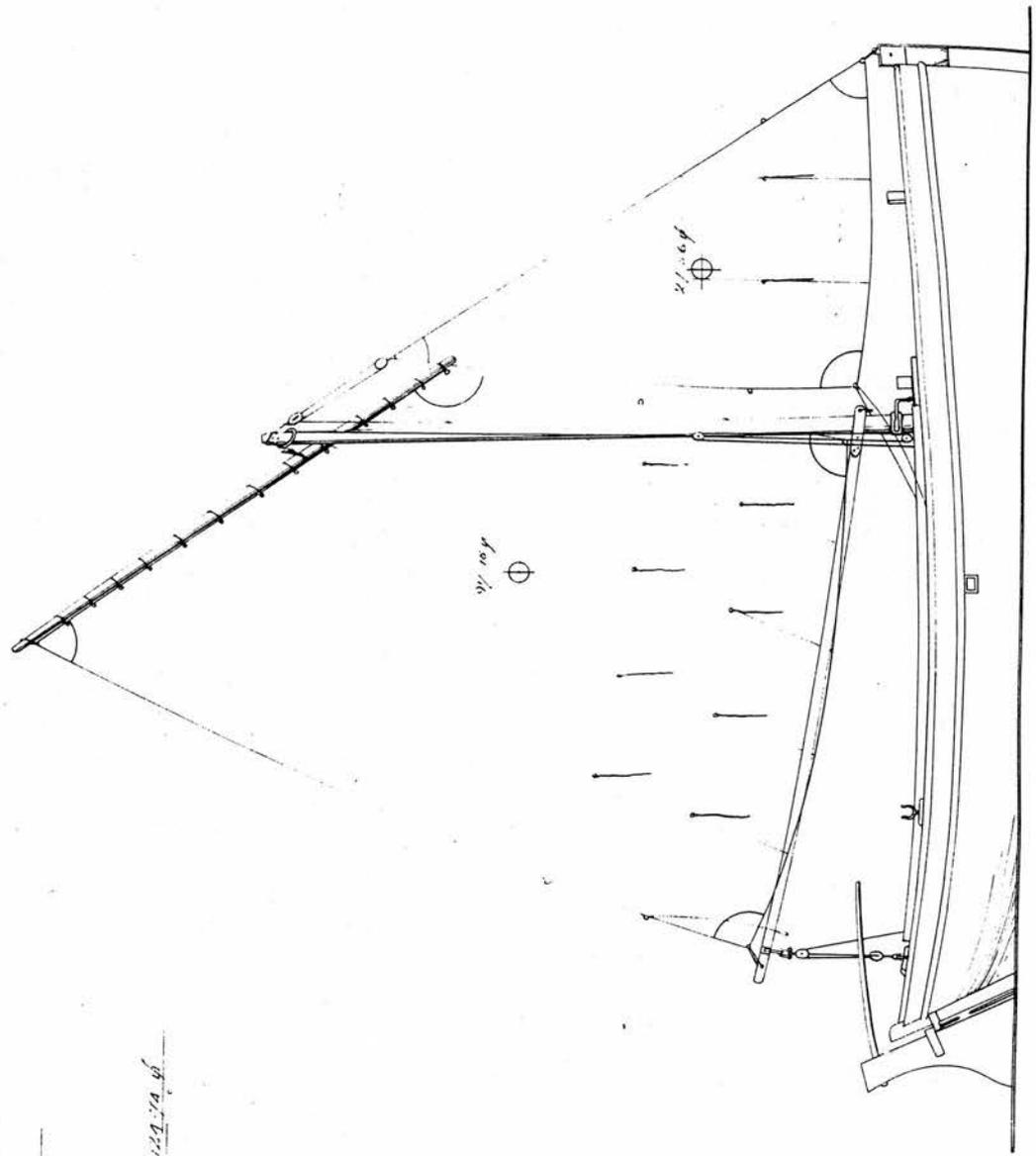
SOLWAY FIRTH WHAMMEL NET BOAT. "DORA"
(Designed for SAILING NETTING TO REGISTRATION MARKS)

SPAR DIMENSIONS

MAST	L.O.A.	15' 0"	DIA	4 1/2" to 3"
LUGYARD		10' 0"		1 1/2" to 2"
BOOM		11' 4"		2" to 1 1/2"

SAIL AREAS

FORESAIL	27.56 sq
LUGSAIL	97.18 sq
TOTAL SAIL AREA	124.74 sq



SCALE 16:1

Designed from Oke X 56
Raymond, Broom

Fig 96 Sail plan of Solway Firth Whammel Net boat *Dora*, drawn by P.J.Oke (Science Museum)

ANNAN

The Solway Firth whammel-net boat *Dora* was included in Oke's documentation of the southwest of Scotland and is worthy of a mention. Here the double-ender is carvel-built although she was built by James Wilson in 1900 at Annan. The lines are full and the keel is rockered, probably influenced by the Lancashire nobbies. The fishing community of Annan stems from four fishermen coming from Morecambe in 1854. The keel was cast iron, bolted on, to protect against chafing on the coarse sand of the local beaches.⁹⁷ *Dora* measured 19ft 3in by 6ft 3in on a 17ft 8in keel. She was rigged with a standing lug and jib set on the stem, the mast being stepped over a third of the length back from the stem.

Finally, in the 1865 Report by the Commissioners for the British Fisheries, it was noted that the fishing in Ayrshire and Ballantrae had been unusually good with herring being sold as bait when not required for human consumption. In Inveraray, whereas 1862 was deemed a superb fishing year, the landings in 1865 were twice that of the previous year but 'not equal to one half of the great fishing of 1862'.

The same report has an apt description of the transition that was rapidly taking place at this time on the western coast, indeed upon the coasts of Scotland as a whole, and this serves as an apt introduction to the next section that deals exclusively with the emergence of the Lochfyne skiffs:

Everywhere the Boats are improving, and science as well as ingenuity, is now brought to their construction. In some places the composite system of building – framework of iron, planking of wood – which has been recently introduced for first-class ships, has been applied with success to Boats upon the Coasts of Scotland. Boats entirely decked over, divided below into compartments for nets and fish and fitted on deck with hatches, are taking the place of the old open Boat, and even where the Boats are left open, the forepart

⁹⁷ Smylie, 1999:64-5. Plans in Science Museum.

is closed in to give shelter to the crews and provide for them sleeping-places. These improvements enable the Scotch Fishermen to make longer voyages and to go to fishing grounds at a greater distance off the coast, than they ever formerly attempted.⁹⁸

Through the consideration of these different boat types we can begin to build up a picture of how boats in the Loch Fyne area developed over a period of time. Furthermore we can understand how the movement of people from one geographical area to another resulted in a change of attitude to boat design such as occurred in Grimsay. Fishermen in many instances, by the very nature of their work, travel distances and come into contact with others in the same profession with different ideas, although, as Martin noted, the language barrier often limited this exchange of ideas. Nonetheless, that influences affecting their choice of boat type were brought into Loch Fyne and the Clyde from outside areas where similar boats were in use, seems clear. This also seems to support the assertion from the documented evidence that the lug rig was introduced into Loch Fyne by the Ayrshire fishermen, who, in turn, brought it over from the East Coast.

In summary, several factors appear to have contributed to the emergence of the Lochfyne skiff. If we start at the beginning, we see smugglers-turned-fishermen working wherries which later adopted the smack rig to suit fishing. Double-ended vessels were then reverted to (assuming that the Norway skiffs were in use much earlier) and the lug-rig introduced in the early 1820s. Whether a new type of hull was brought in at the same time is unclear, but the personal interpretation is that the Loch Fyne fishers probably didn't adopt the Ayrshire vessel. This would account for the differences between the Lochfyne skiffs and the nabbies, which were apparent later on. They may have taken on board subtle changes to their double-enders but nothing particularly dramatic.

⁹⁸ Sea Fisheries Report, Parliamentary Papers, BL 1866 [3596], vol XVII, pp 2-3.

Within a few years the fishermen of the south of Loch Fyne were operating ring-nets, for which they needed a handy boat. Various changes were made to their vessels to suit this new mode of fishing. The keel was sloped upwards to allow sailing in confined waters, especially close inshore. This was particularly necessary during the years of the prohibition of the use of the ring-net. The mast was stepped well forward to ensure plenty of deck space for working the net. This, in turn, led to the raking back of the mast. The trawl skiff that subsequently emerged was perfect for the job. It only had one set back. Having no accommodation for the fishermen, it was not effective for fishing away from home for long periods, something they began to demand. A vessel of the same shape and sea capabilities was needed, but one with a foredeck under which the fishermen could live for extended periods.

FIVE

THE LOCHFYNE SKIFFS

On Boxing Day, 1883, Hugh Carmichael informed the Napier Commission that 'we have got them larger now; this year or two back some have been getting what they call decks and they can live on them now. We consider them quite large enough at twenty-four to twenty-six feet to be handled with oars to pull the trawl instead of sail'.¹ He was, of course, referring to the type of vessel used for the ring-net, and he added that drift-nets were almost given up.

His reference to 'this year or two' tends to support present day interpretations. This is that the first Lochfyne skiffs, in contrast to the smaller trawl skiffs, arrived in Campbeltown in 1882. Martin tells us that these two skiffs, *Alpha*, CN85, and *Beta*, CN84, were launched in Girvan in the spring of that year for Dalintober fishermen Edward McGeachy.² However, over the last few years, the author of this dissertation has been collecting details of Lochfyne skiffs from the Registers of Fishing Boats throughout the Clyde. The only boats with those names, first registered in 1882, are the *Alpha*, CN185, and *Beta*, CN186. Presumably these are the two vessels referred to by Martin.

Unfortunately there are no surviving records of these first two vessels except for their entries in the Registers. *Alpha* was sold to Ardrishaig where she was registered as 276AG, and then, about 1900, to Rothesay, after which nothing is known. The other's registration was cancelled in 1895, after, supposedly, a successful career. The assumption is, therefore, that after ten years fishing, these two pioneering vessels were deemed outdated in comparison to the craft being built over ten years after their introduction,

¹ Cameron, 1986:64.

² J. McIntosh, Carradale, 3 June 1958, recorded by E.R. Cregeen, and D. McSporran, 30 April 1974, as quoted by Martin, 1981:76.

thereby suggesting the early skiffs were more akin to the older trawl skiffs than the new generation of Lochfyne skiffs.³

From these Registers it is impossible to determine whether a boat is half-decked or not as they make no distinction. The keel length is the only information that provides any clue, as the assumption is that if a boat has a keel length of 25ft or more, then the vessel is most likely to be half-decked. This, though, is by no means foolproof, although we already seen that the maximum keel length of a trawl skiff in later years was 25ft. But, if Carmichael, speaking in late 1883, was correct in his words that they first appeared ‘within the last two years’, it does seem likely that *Alpha* and *Beta*, introduced some 20 months earlier, were the first of the new type that became known as Lochfyne skiffs. It is always possible that there were earlier deck skiffs, but in all actuality it is probable that evidence will not be forthcoming to prove this either way.

However what is clear is that the introduction of the ‘new type’ of skiff was welcomed amongst the fishing communities of Campbeltown, Carradale and Tarbert. Those to the north of the latter – Ardrishaig and Inveraray – were probably slightly hesitant to begin with, but these fishermen soon adopted the bigger skiffs into their fleet. The skiffs themselves were instantly recognisable due, not so much to their size but to the greater area of foredeck being covered over.⁴ Although the early trawl skiffs were entirely open, some had been built in the late 1870s with tiny foredecks giving space below. These were, however, not spacious enough to sleep within, a tarpaulin being thrown over the mid-section to allow sleeping aboard. The new skiffs were, in fact, simply an extension of the previous idea and were not a totally new concept. The arrival

³ See ‘Register of Lochfyne skiffs’ compiled by Smylie and unpublished.

⁴ Martin, 1981:76.

in 1882 represented the tangible transition from the old to new, but otherwise was not particularly innovative.

Some of the older skiffs had their foredeck extended, allowing bunks to be fitted in. Martin notes that some open trawl skiffs went as far as having foredecks added, associated with the addition of one or more top strakes, 'producing a dumpy type of vessel, later referred to by Ayrshire fishermen as the 'Penny Bank''.⁵ However, why this was not done prior to 1882 seems unclear. The obvious modification would have been to create a sleeping quarter aboard if at all possible. Previous to this, the fishermen, in their need to sail further distances in pursuit of the herring, had either camped ashore or adapted the larger smacks that were redundant from a fishing point of view. These smacks followed the fleet and the fishermen lived aboard them when not fishing. Earlier references to 'Arran wherries' probably were, in some cases, smacks with a basic cuddy forward.

Martin supplies us with plenty of evidence of the fishermen camping ashore. However the vast majority of this he has collected orally over the period of his research (1974-1981) and he cites only two documented evidences of its practice upon the Kintyre shore.⁶ But there seems absolutely no doubt of its existence and it follows that the same fishermen would welcome the freedom of having vessels capable of housing them.

The introduction of the Lochfyne skiff coincided with an increase of the fortunes of the herring fishing for the Campbeltown fishers which might explain why it was in fact there, and not Tarbert where the ring-net was inaugurated, where the first decked skiff was introduced. For, over the last decade, the fortunes of the Loch Fyne fishers had

⁵ J.T.Crindle, 29 April 1976, as quoted in Martin, 1981:76.

⁶ Martin, 1981:61-5.

decreased while the landings from the Campbeltown District had increased substantially. 1880 was the best year on record so far.⁷ Whereas those fishermen operating ring-nets in Loch Fyne had to resort to the drift-nets, the use of the trawl outside the loch was rewarding. One particular shoal of herring, the largest seen by the elder fishermen of the time, entered Kilbrannan Sound in 1882 and eight skiffs were filled, carrying away 320 cran. Trawl boats made on average £190-250 that season, although it is reported that two boats from Tarbert realised £2365 in one instance.⁸

A number of skiffs were built in the period immediately after the two Girvan boats arrived. In the Campbeltown fleet, *Mairi Bhan*, 205CN, and *Fairyfield*, 316CN, also arrived from Girvan, and were first registered in 1882. A few others are listed as being built that year but with no details of their builder.

However, it is obvious by glancing through the list of skiffs that there was, in the space of a couple of years, a sudden boom in their building. Martin who mentions that numerous part-decked skiffs were built between 1882 and 1885 and cites the *Star*, 261CN, as being launched in 1884 supports this. She was 25ft on the keel so was typical of those early skiffs.⁹

The majority of the Campbeltown fleet originated from the town in those early formative years, Lachie Lang being the principal boatbuilder there. However there were other boatbuilders supplying the market. One of these was James Fyfe of Port Bannatyne, near Rothesay, who appears to have immediately began a building programme, producing one vessel a year at first, all for the Campbeltown fleet. These were: *Nelly*, 1882; *Chreagliath*, 1882; *Rolling Wave*, 1883; *Peep-O-Day*, 1884; *Friends*, 1884 and *Cousins*,

⁷ F.B.R. for years 1870-1880 give the yield of herrings.

⁸ F.B.R. 1882: xxix.

1884. Then there seems to have been a lull for a few years before he commenced once more in 1888, producing a substantial number over the next decade.

Fyfe of Fairlie built their first skiff in 1882 for the Campbeltown fleet. *Amy*, 363CN, was 30.5 ft overall on a 25ft keel and this skiff moved to Ardrishaig in 1897. He built the *Nain* in 1886.

The extensive Fyfe family had other members in the boatbuilding business. Dan Fyfe worked at Tarbert and brother Robert at Ardrishaig, both of whom began building skiffs in the 1890s. However their outputs were low in comparison to the Munros and MacLean of Ardrishaig. Dickie, Leitch, Henderson and McTavish, all of Tarbert, complete the list of Loch Fyne builders, all producing significant numbers of boats throughout the period from about 1880 to 1900. Henderson employed one assistant, producing one skiff annually whilst McTavish employed four carpenters.¹⁰

Whereas Lachie Lang was the most prolific builder in Campbeltown initially, John Wardrop was listed as a boatbuilder in the 1891 census, and he built the *Hartington* in 1883. But the most famous of Campbeltown builders, perhaps even the most widely acclaimed throughout the Clyde, was Robert Wylie. Although he didn't begin building on his own account until 1893, when he launched the 27ft keel *Minnie Blair*, he was responsible for many of their technical developments and innovations in design, much of his knowledge coming from his keenness as a yachtsman, crewing upon many of the larger racing yachts of the Clyde.

Pictorial evidence tells us that the early skiffs were clinker-built. The *Mary*, 247CN, was built by Lang, and was first registered in 1884. She was registered as being

⁹ Martin, 1981:76.

¹⁰ Ibid:77.

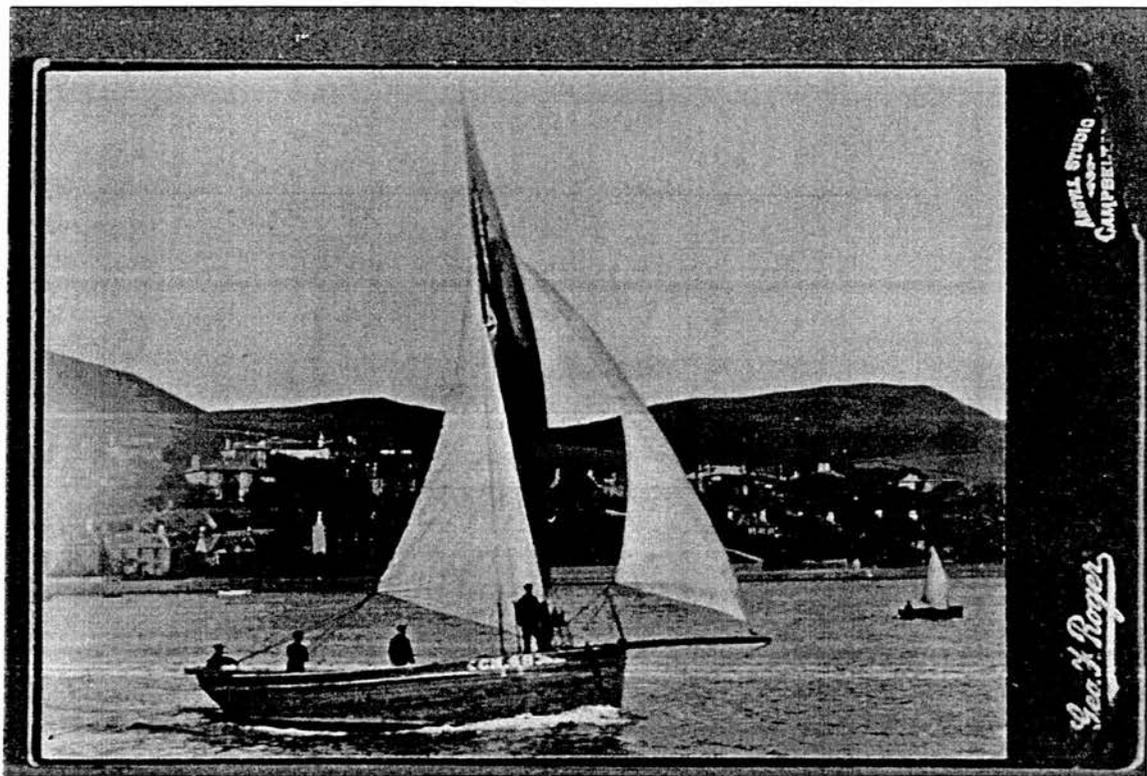


Fig 97 MS/S/04 *Good Hope*, skippered by Hugh MacLean, in regatta rig. Built in 1906 by D. Munro of Inveraray, she was sold to Stranraer in 1934

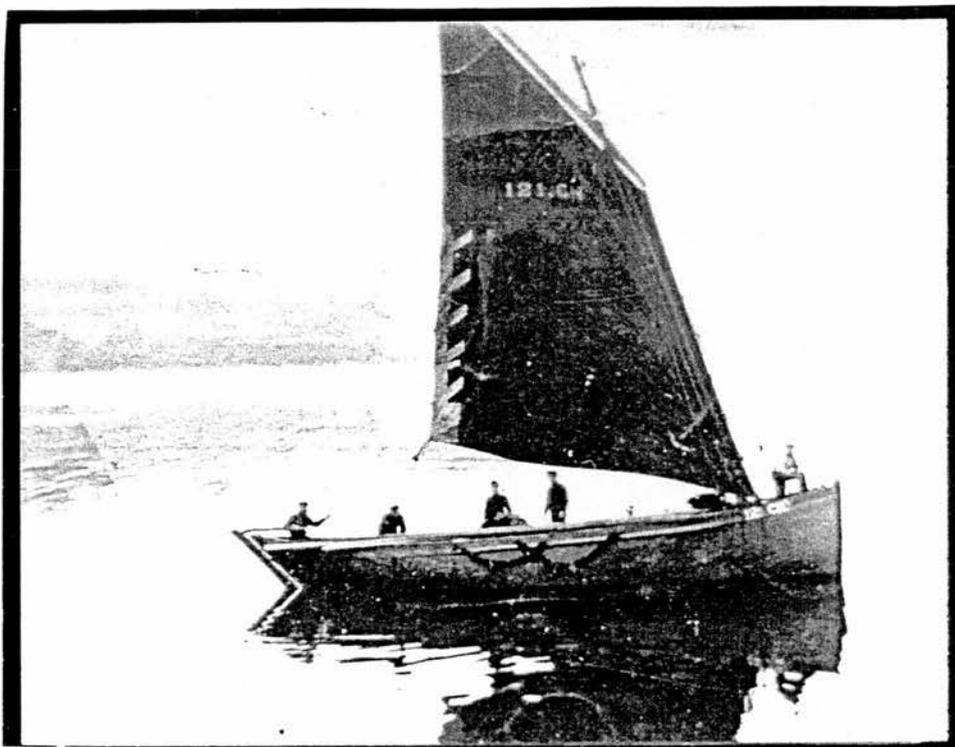


Fig 98 MS/S/07 Gilchrist skiff *Mary McLemman*, built in Ardrossan in 1901, under sail

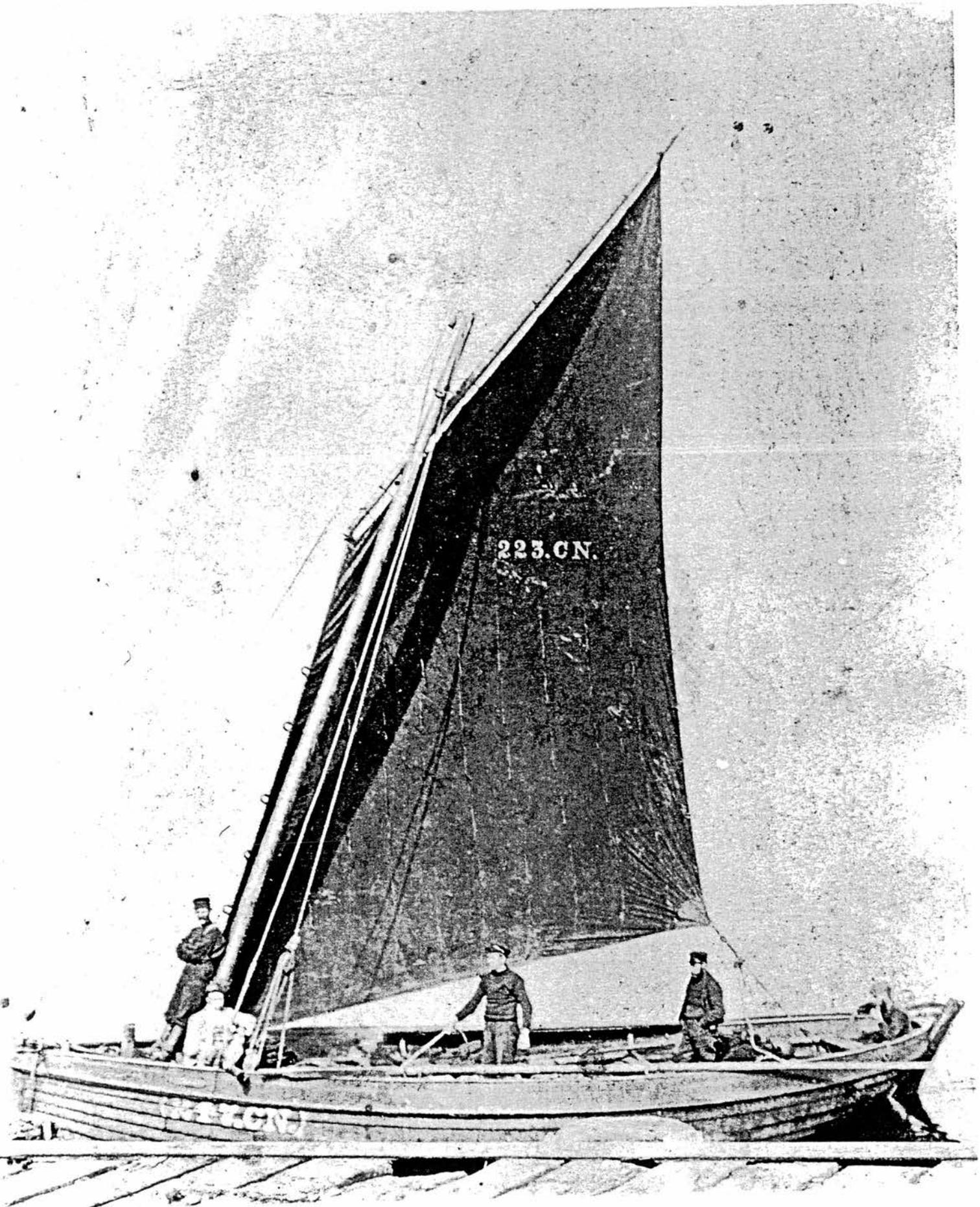


Fig 99 MS/S/05 *Mary*, 247CN, a clinker-built skiff built by Lachie Lang in 1884

31ft long x 26.5ft of keel x 9ft 3in beam. She is photographed with a typical standing lugsail with the registration 223CN, a sail belonging to another of Lang's skiffs, the *Welcome Home*, built in 1885 (MS/S/05)

From this photograph of *Mary*, one of the first of an early skiff, we can see that she has the characteristic half-decked skiff shape. The sternpost is heavily raked and the stem is upright, perhaps having some negative rake. The length of the foredeck is indiscernible but presumably extends aft of the mast. This typically rakes backward and is stayed from the bow. This characteristic rake enabled the mast to be stepped as far forward as necessary to allow the crew a greater working area for hauling the net, always over the port side. It was normal practice, when at this stage of the operation, for the crew of the neighbour boat to climb aboard to assist.

Carvel construction seems to have been first introduced into skiff building just prior to the end of the nineteenth century (MS/S/07). The actual year and which boat built by whom will probably never be known. However, by comparing the many photographic images available with the Registers of Fishing Boats, it is clearly obvious that by 1900 frame-first boats were well established. Builders such as Robert Wylie and the Munro brothers were pioneers in this field, with some of the well-known skiffs appearing in the first few years of the century.

These boats generally became renowned because of their speed and thus their ability to win the annual regatta (MS/S/04). *Sweet Home*, CN248, was Wylie-built in 1903 as was *Frigate Bird*, CN678, while *Good Hope*, CN68, was built by Donald Munro, of Inveraray, in 1906 and *Annunciata*, CN116, by Archibald Munro in Ardrishaig in

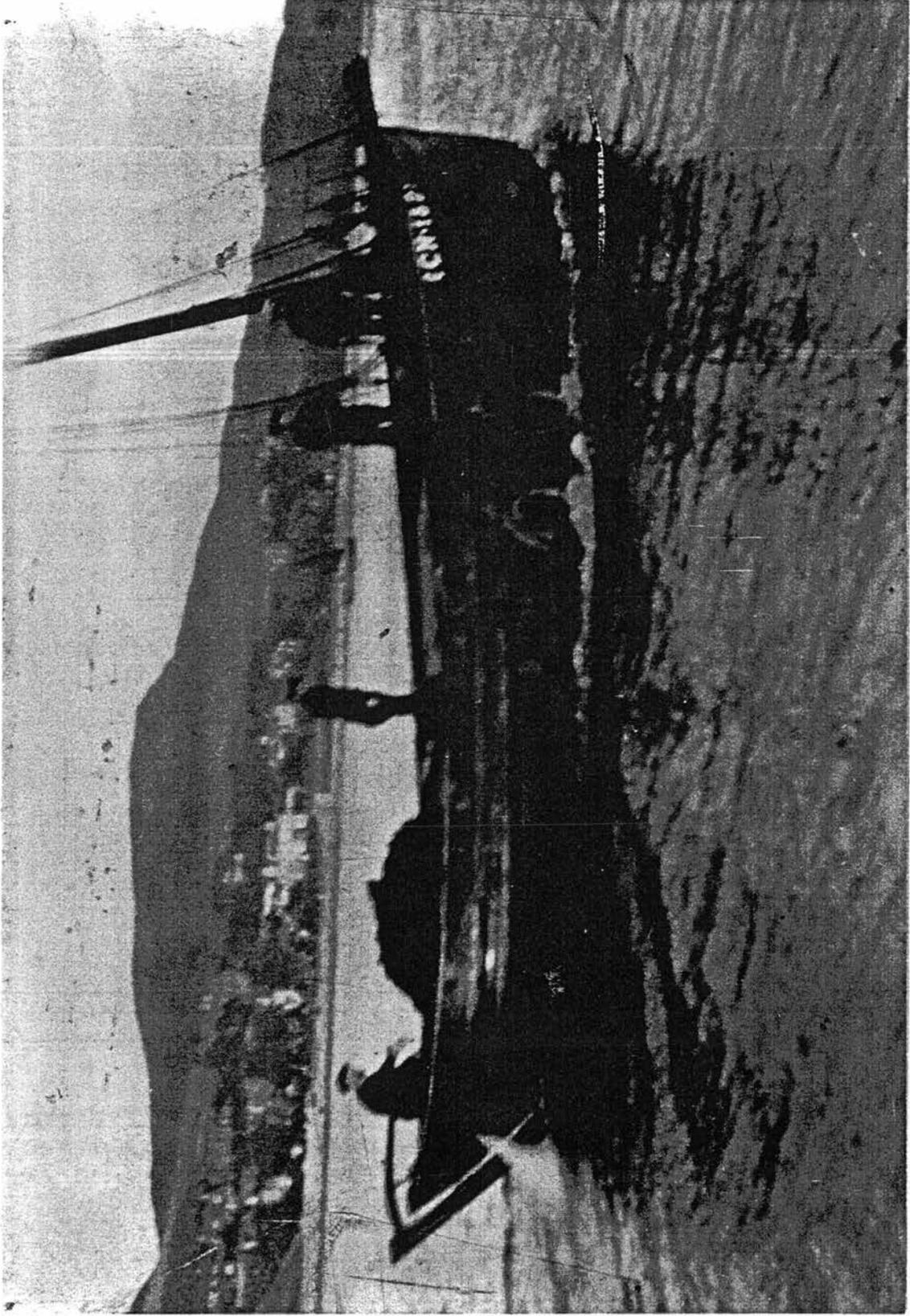


Fig 100 MS/S/06 *Perseverance*, CN152, just after her launch in 1912. She belonged to the author
author 199/1990-1995

1901. All were carvel-built, all 26-27ft in the keel, and all were successful boats at the fishing and when racing.

Wylie's yard at the top of the New Quay in Campbeltown survived until the last boat was built there in 1936, two years after his death, when it was demolished to make way for the Social Security Office. His first fishing boat, as already mentioned, seems to have been the *Minnie Blair* in 1893. But here we must exercise caution. For often the Registers do not have a builder named for a particular vessel and thus we cannot therefore assume our lists are complete. So when we discover that Wylie built one boat in 1893, another in 1894, one in 1896, two in 1899, four in 1901, one in 1902, two in 1903, three in 1904, two in 1906, one in each of 1908, 1912 and 1913 and finally two in 1914, we cannot assume this to be a full account of his early building. The 1912 vessel was the *Perseverance*, CN152, for Archie Mathieson (MS/S/06), launched with a Kelvin 13.15hp motor. The last boat built by his son was the fully decked ring-netter *Gratitude*, launched in 1936.

So what are the general characteristics of a skiff that separate it from other boats? Firstly there's the shape of the hull. The double-ended hull had a sternpost, which was well raked but not to the extreme of the East Coast scaffies and Zulus. The reasoning behind this is said to be to reduce the keel length in relation to the overall length, because the original building cost was calculated on this length, as were any harbour costs incurred, although fishermen tended to have free use of facilities that were built using money from the Fishery Board for Scotland. The keel was long and sloping, giving a shallow forefoot and deep heel, perfect for manoeuvring under sail in the confines of the lochs when working the ring-net. Freeboard was low to ameliorate the hauling of the net

over the port side and the hulls were always oiled and later varnished. The mast, as we've seen, was stepped well forward, with a standing lugsail as favoured by the Clyde fishers. Having notches in the mast step on the keel and a corresponding tenon on the base of the mast so that the foot could be moved forward or back, the fishermen could alter the rake of the mast. When sailing downwind, a more upright position was preferred, but a higher degree of rake to balance the boat was needed for sailing into the wind, especially under brisk conditions.

Generally a skiff was divided into three compartments – the forecastle, the hold and the stern sheets. The first reached as far back as the first crossbeam called the 'break of the deck'. Below this was the bulkhead dividing the hold from the forecastle, which was entered through a sliding door on the starboard side. The hold reached back as far as the stern thwart, or pump beam as it was sometimes called, for the bilge pump was mounted upon it. A short bulkhead beneath the thwart separated the two compartments. The stern sheets reached right back to the stern of the vessel and were where the helmsman sat or stood and the net was stored. For hauling, a platform on the port side of the stern sheets allowed the fishermen to stand at a more suitable height. There was a short thwart in the stern sheets and another just aft of the break of deck. Long sweeps, or oars, characterised the rowing technique.

The forecastle consisted of two bunks either side, with two folding sleeping shelves above. Storage of food and clothing was forward of these while a stove was mounted against the after bulkhead. The boy, who slept on the floor, would keep this alight all the time the vessel was at sea, providing endless cups of tea for the crew.¹¹

¹¹ For more information on the layout and use of the skiffs see two chapters in: Martin, *The Ring-Net Fishermen*, or Smylie, 'The Ring-netters of Loch Fyne' in *The Boatman*, No 9, October 1993, pp58-67.



Fig 101 MS/S/08 *Clan Gordon* against pier at Rona Lighthouse c.1950

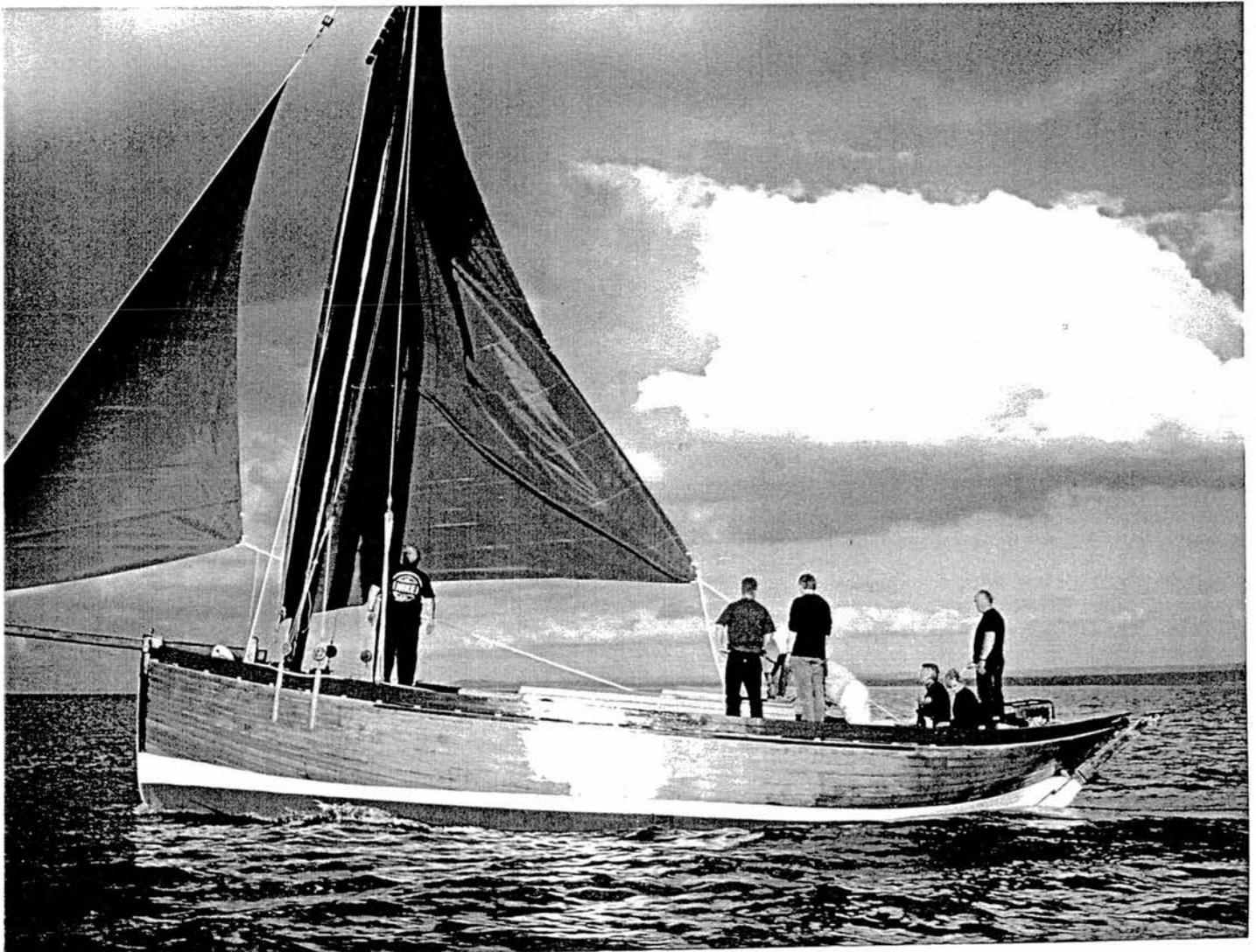


Fig 102 MS/S/08 *Clan Gordon* sailing in 1999

FURTHER AFIELD

We've already seen in chapter five how the design of the Lochfyne boats gained favour in the north in the 1890s. However, from available evidence, it seems that those built in the north were smaller versions such as the aforementioned *Queen Mary*. Others were ordered from the southern builders and taken north. One such vessel was the 1911-built *Clan Gordon*. She originated from Munro's of Ardrishaig and went north, owned by the Gordon family of Kishorn. In 1946 she was bought by a Mr. Watson of Gairloch who worked her until his death in 1958, at which time entered into service for the Northern Lighthouse Board as a tender for the Rona light (MS/S/08). At the time she had a Kelvin-Ricardo 4 cylinder petrol/paraffin engine and a canvas dodger in front of the tiller to offer a minimal degree of shelter for the helmsman before a pill-box wheelhouse was added sometime after.¹² Today she retains her varnished hull and standing lug rig and is one of only three known Lochfyne skiffs still sailing (MS/S/09). The other two, *Sireadh*, TT150, and *Fairy Queen*, CN196, were both built away from the Clyde, the former at James Miller & Sons of St Monance in 1923 and the latter at Nobles of Fraserburgh in 1926. *Sireadh* (Gaelic for 'quest') was immortalised in a poem by George Campbell Hay entitled 'Seeker, Reaper'¹³. Recent information has suggested another Lochfyne skiff afloat, converted as a yacht in Northern Ireland, but as yet this is unconfirmed.

¹² Pers. Comm. with Charlie MacLeod of Portree, Skye who skippered her 1958-64. His brother was crew. The Northern Lighthouse Board sold the vessel in 1964 because of her deteriorating state. She was sold to a Portree fisherman who sold her on a few months later to Aberdeen. After a succession of owners, she appeared in Tayport before being found by her present owner in a shed inland of Brechin in 1988. She has been subsequently substantially rebuilt and retains her Kelvin J4.

¹³ See Hay, 1948:34 for the full poem. Hay was fishing aboard the skiff *Liberator* in the 1930s observing the *Sireadh* as she sailed by. *Sireadh* was based in Minard.

SIX

THE ADVENT OF MOTOR POWER

Twenty-five years after the introduction of the Lochfyne skiff into the Campbeltown and Loch Fyne fleets the first motorised skiff arrived, proving ultimately to be the factor leading to their phasing out within a generation. Internal combustion engines in fishing vessels had first been experimented with in Denmark in 1900 with the fitting of a unit into a seine-net smack's small boat. In Britain it was a year later, in Lowestoft, that the aptly named *Pioneer*, LT368, had a four-cylinder engine installed.¹

Martin tells us that the introduction of a 7-9 hp Kelvin petrol/paraffin engine into the Lochfyne skiff *Brothers*, CN97, in 1907 was not only the first on the west coast, but resulted in the final development of the trawl-fishing. The boat, built by John Thomson of Ardrossan, was owned by Robert Robertson, described by Martin as the pioneer of modern ring-netting.²

The following year, 1908, saw ten boats having motors. The *Lady Carrick Buchanan*, CN38, of Carradale, had a Thornycroft 7½hp unit installed by Robert Wylie in September.³ The same month saw a motor being fitted into the skiff *Ellen*, CN97, owned by Duncan Wilkinson. The boat was taken to Hunter's Quay, Dunoon, where the resident engineer Mr Litster fitted a Kelvin 7-9hp engine.

The cost of such an installation was £70, inclusive of the £20 installation charge and half of this was payable immediately with the rest being paid over the following year.⁴ This accounted for under a quarter of the gross earnings of a vessel in one season.⁵ That the units were regarded as successful is suggested by the increase in the numbers of skiffs adapted. By the end of 1910 there were 81 boats motor-powered on the West Coast

¹ Hawkins, 1984:9.

² Martin, 1981:205.

³ Hawkins, 1984:28.

⁴ A Campbell, service manager, Kelvin Diesels Ltd, in a letter as quoted in Martin, 1981:205.

of Scotland.⁶ Two years later there were 72 installations in Campbeltown with only 10 sail boats. Those remaining 10 sailing skiffs were paired with motored skiffs that towed the skiffs when necessary. The cost of the installation was thus borne by two boats.⁷

The motor units were installed so that the propeller shaft emerged through the starboard side of the hull. The sternposts were considered not strong enough to be bored on many older skiffs, and the rake of this sternpost further made it awkward to install the engine on the centre line. Furthermore, fishermen preferred this arrangement which ensured the propeller did not foul the net which was always hauled over the port side.⁸ However, with some new boats being fitted with engines initially, the sternpost was beefed up to accommodate the shaft. One such vessel was the 1912-built *Perseverance*, CN152, which was built by Robert Wylie for Archie Mathieson. She was fitted with a 7-9hp Kelvin – she had three Kelvins during her life up to only months before she was sunk in late 1995 – and she neighboured with the *Ellen*.⁹

However, it was not purely the fact that the hulls of the skiffs were found to be unsuitable for engines that caused their demise. As the trawl skiffs worked in deeper water than was previously possible, they needed longer ropes and space aboard became restricted. The foredeck was extended further aft to incorporate an external shelter. But

⁵ F.B.R. 1895:202. Gross earnings for that season were on average £400 with the largest earnings being £700. Figures for 1912 reveal an average of £360 per sail boat.

⁶ F.B.R. 1910: xi.

⁷ Ibid. 1912: xiv-xvi.

⁸ In most other parts of Scotland, where a side engine is fitted, it was always positioned on the starboard side for better handling of the boat. A clockwise rotating propeller always causes tendency for the boat to steer to starboard and this is lessened by fitting the motor to starboard. However, in the case of the skiffs, it is believed that the hauling of the net over the port side was the primary reason for positioning the engine, and possibly the latter reason was secondary.

⁹ This vessel was owned by the author between 1990 and 1995 and was the subject of much research during this period.



Fig 103 SA/S/01 Loch Fyne skiff at Kilchattan Bay, Bute from the old pier

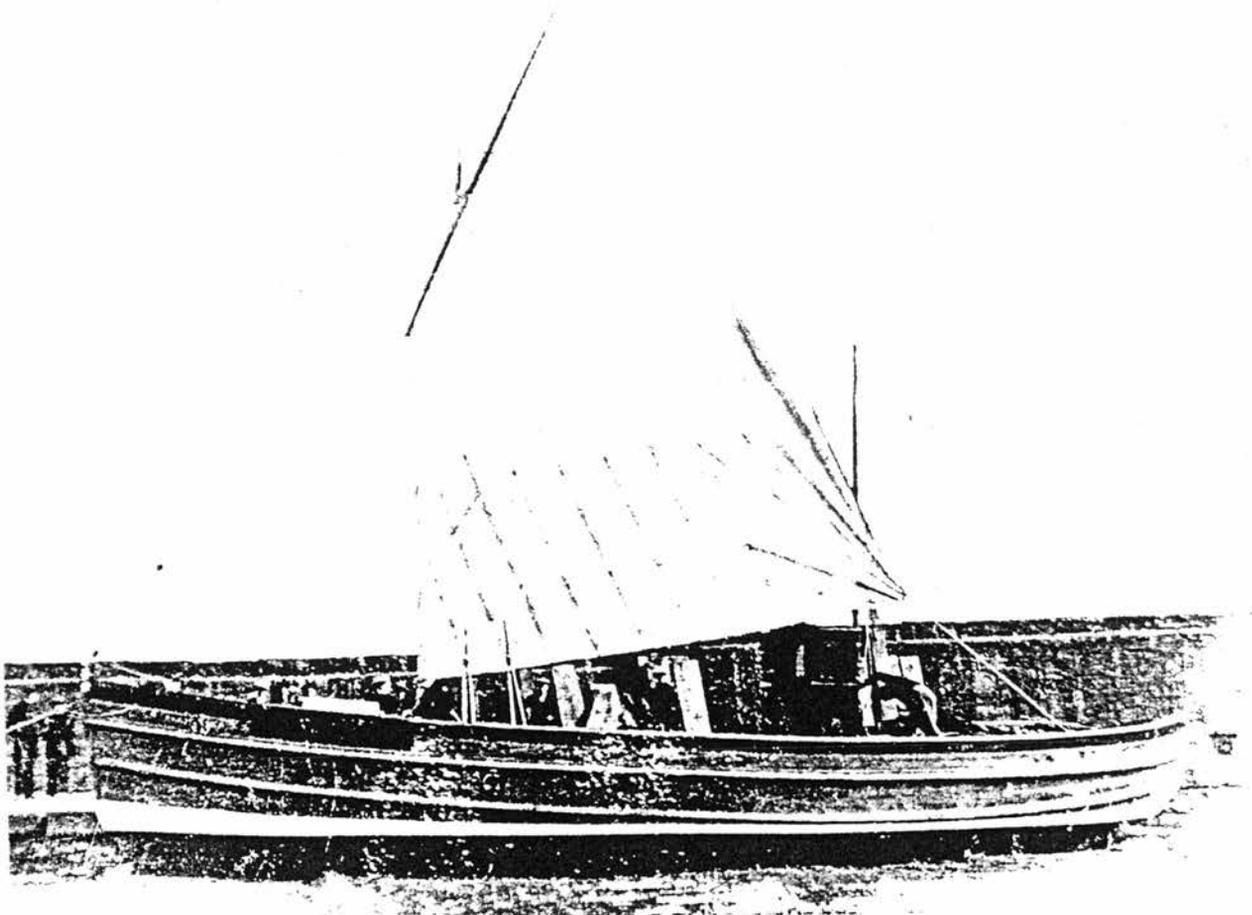


Fig 104 MS/S/10 Ring-netter *Falcon* soon after her launch in 1922

the main problem was one of overall length. The skiffs were simply not big enough.

However, the onset of war in 1914 delayed further modernisation.

In 1919, once fishing resumed on the scale of the pre-war years, the catches were poor. Fishermen declined to invest money in new boats which were badly needed after many had been allowed to deteriorate during the years of hostility. To alleviate the problem the Fishery Board invited tenders from boatbuilders for the construction of a 'model Lochfyne skiff', but these tenders were far too high to attract the fishermen's interest.¹⁰

It was Robert Robertson, the man who first engined his skiff in 1907, who again set the pace of the next generation of fishing boats. He had travelled in Norway and had been impressed with the boats he had seen there. Returning to Campbeltown, he employed the Glasgow naval architect W.G.McBride to design a vessel with a canoe stern based on the Norwegian types. This was subsequently submitted to J.Miller & Sons of St Monans, Fife, for tender and an order for two such vessels placed.

The two resultant vessels arrived in Campbeltown in 1922 and were utterly unlike the skiffs (MS/S/10). They retained their double-ended hull but there the similarity ended. They had a canoe stern and a rounded stem with a very rounded forefoot. The keel sloped up towards the bow only a few inches. However, in many respects, they can be said to be a thorough development of the skiffs in that the hull was designed in a similar way to facilitate the use of the ring-net. The accommodation with six bunks and a stove was again in the front end and the engine in the stern, running a propeller through a central shaft. The rudder was externally hung on a shoe that was an extension of the keel. For the first time, though, a pillbox wheelhouse was fitted to provide shelter for the helmsman,

with the steering being by means of a wheel. Again the freeboard was low for working the net over the port side. Sizes in 1945 were about 45 feet, reaching over 60 feet twenty-five years later.¹¹

Timmermann identifies similar craft working in the German Baltic under power. The 'ringwaden' is a sort of seine-net, first introduced into the commercial deepsea fisheries by the Danes, and is similar to the ring-net. The vessel needed to be light and handy, and the double-ended form with rockered keel and cutaway forefoot appears to have evolved from the basic Norwegian/Swedish tradition. The surmise is that the Clyde boats and the Baltic boats evolved through having a similar demand at work and that there was no contact between the two separate fisher groups.¹²

This hull shape remained the basic form of the ring-netter throughout the next fifty years, right up to the last one being built, the *Alliance*, CN187, in 1974. Although modifications and alterations were made, the essence of the vessels remained fundamentally the same. In the words of Angus Martin: 'What they all had in common, these apparently disparate boat-types, was a suitability for certain operational conditions'.

However, it's worth noting that some Lochfyne skiffs were also adopted (and others originally built) for leisure purposes and several examples still remain. The yacht *May* was built on skiff lines by Alexander Robertson of Sandbank in 1902, perhaps the earliest of the yacht builds, and she sailed across the Atlantic.¹³ The *Sireadh*, built for fishing, was converted to pleasure and was sailed to the Canary Islands in the 1980s. The *Perseverance*, once converted, sailed from Norway along the Northern European coast,

¹⁰ Martin, 1981:211.

¹¹ Noble, 1978:6.

¹² Timmermann, 1962:36-7.

¹³ Williams, 1989:195.

down as far as Portugal. And many more undoubtedly achieved notoriety in the eyes of their roving owners. For theirs was a pedigree of capability, strength and seaworthiness. Ironically, though, all three were ketch-rigged when undertaking these voyages.

Hodgson described the final form of the ring-net boat thus:

The ring-netters are picturesque little craft about 48 to 50 feet in length, rather beamy and low in the water amidships. They are carvel built and varnished, and have a small wheelhouse well aft, a smallish engine-room, an adequate fish-room and comfortable living quarters forward of the fish-room. They are perfectly manoeuvrable, can almost turn in their own length and can be completely controlled from the wheel-house. They carry a small belt-driven winch immediately in front of the wheel-house, and their crew consists of five men. There is a large fleet of these vessels in Scotland, and they can be seen at any of the Firth of Forth ports and also up and down the whole of the west coast. It is usual for them to work in pairs when herring fishing, but singly when they go seining for white fish at the end of the herring season.¹⁴

This, in a way, reflects the irony. For, although this paper has attempted to show that the design of the West Coast boats evolved from different, mainly west coast, influences and not from East Coast boats, it seems that in the twentieth century the reverse was true. It was in fact the fishers of the East Coast that came to the west, to the areas where ring-netting gained ascendancy over all other fisheries, and imported the design of these West Coast boats back to the east. And from these early canoe-sterned vessels came the influence that lies behind the whole of the British fleet after 1945 – the cruiser sterned vessel that has become ubiquitous until recent years. It is accepted that, other than Alexander Noble of Girvan (who himself came from the east) the majority of boats were built on the East Coast at the yards of builders such as Millers, Weatherhead of Cockenzie, Nobles of Fraserburgh, Reekie of Anstruther and Herd & Mackenzie of Buckie.¹⁵ For it seems that the many Clyde yards, earlier responsible for hundreds of the skiffs, were unable to build the new-age vessels, due either to size constraints or simply

¹⁴ Hodgson, 1957:37.

¹⁵ Noble, 1978:51

having gone out of business. Yet the design was fundamentally from West Coast origins, firmly established from a tradition, as we've seen, reaching back, well into the nineteenth century. While the straight-stempost motor fifie developed after the advent of motorisation, and then the cruiser stern MFV, helped by the introduced of the Admiralty-designed type in the Second World War, after the war, the design of the canoe-sterned ringers developed to a perfected catching machine whose form didn't change. The sadness is, as this is written, these beautiful vessels are disappearing fast and the last of the type built on the West Coast, the *Westerlea* (now *Huntress*), is about to be scrapped under the European Union decommissioning scheme, ending a tradition of innovation, development and skill reaching back over more than two hundred years.

SEVEN

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

From the onset, the main intention in this dissertation was to question the previous assumptions of various writers that the origins of the Lochfyne skiffs lie upon the East Coast of Scotland. Too easily do some of these writers pass off this comment without any real evidence to support it. Indeed, we've seen on a few occasions how one writer uncritically accepts the word of another – not as plagiarism mind – but more by way of casual remarks.

The main thrust of the argument in this dissertation lies in both the background of the mode of fishing in Loch Fyne and the types of craft in use in the previous 100 years. Thus the adoption of the ring-net in the 1830s, its covert use in the 1850s and 1860s, and its final legalisation in 1867, played as much in the emergence of the Lochfyne skiffs as did the traditional element of boat design and innovation from outside.

The traditionalism part came from the wherries that were previously in use. Although the existence of these wherries as a particular type of boat has been questioned in the past, it now seems clear that there was such a vessel. For sure, these were rigged with the 'wherry rig' – a schooner rig in reality although often with two masts of a similar length – but what does seem clear is that there's some uniformity in hull shape and size. Ignoring the large wherries such as the Skerries wherries, although there is evidence that some of these fished as well, it is specifically the smaller boats in the range of about 20 to 30 feet, of about 6 tons that are relevant to the Lochfyne skiffs.

These wherries were handy little craft and suited the task for which they were developed – i.e. smuggling. They were fast and small, suited to escaping detection by the Revenue men, yet were sufficiently buoyant to carry enough illicit goods to make the risks involved worthwhile. The wherry *Peggy* is presumed to have been fairly typical of

this type. But in 1765 the English Crown took over responsibility for import duties and more resources were directed to stamping out smuggling (something that has never, will never, be achieved in totality). After this date those who had made a meagre living from smuggling turned their attentions towards fishing (a change that is sometimes referred to as reinvestment). It was, after all, only 20 years or so after 1765 that bounties were introduced on barrels of herring landed which might have enticed some. Thus the wherry was itself introduced to fishing. A word of warning though. Presumably fishing had long been practised throughout the Clyde area prior this. The supposition here is that the effort was more exclusively directed to fishing. Salt, primarily for fish curing, continued to be smuggled into Loch Fyne from Ireland in small open boats – wherry-rigged, clinker-built vessels of 4¾ tons.¹

The question here is ‘how effective would the wherry be for fishing?’ Some say it was suited to the line fishery, and we know that both Loch Fyne and the East Coast of the Clyde were areas where lines were worked. It has also been said that they were good for drift-netting as one of the masts could be lowered when lying to the nets. A single-masted smack was considered as unwieldy with its one heavy mast. And the fact is that wherries were mentioned on various occasions in the context of fishing.

Two possibilities arise. Firstly, as some have said in the past, the wherry is a misnomer and those writers who referred to it meant any old vessel. Or – they really were fishing craft. All the evidence seems to point to the latter. Furthermore, we’ve also seen how the line skiffs of Loch Fyne have certain resemblances to these wherries. What does seem clear, though, is that the wherry, with its transom stern, had a short fishing career on Loch Fyne.

¹ Wilkins, 1992:116-117.

We know approximate dates for a few relevant facts. Reinvestment followed 1765 and bounties were introduced for barrelled herring in 1787 and the lug rig was introduced at sometime between then and the time of the NSA in the 1840s. Ring-netting, as a different mode of fishing for herring, started up in the 1830s and quickly gained ascendancy in the Tarbert area.

By 1840, according to Gray, the half-decker was being used by the bulk of the Clyde fleet. Considering the majority of the Loch Fyne drifting and lining fleet were open boats, the nabbies of the East Coast open, and early trawl skiffs open, the validity of this statement is extremely doubtful.

That the lug rig was from Ayrshire seems fairly certain. Whether or not these Ayrshire fishers had come over from the East Coast themselves, or indeed whether others had brought over the lug and they had copied it is not clear. This aspect of the investigation needs much more research.

At some point the Loch Fyne fishers adopted double-ended boats. It was most likely the case that some were in use about the loch as we know the inhabitants of the coast to the north, into the Highlands, were using double-ended Norway-type skiffs. However there is no evidence of these being imported directly from Norway into Loch Fyne.

For manoeuvring in confined waters, and to reduce the chance of pooping, we know the pointed stern is better than the transom. What seems likely, in that case, is that this all coincided with the introduction of the ring-netting. When being innovative, and these Tarbert fishers undoubtedly were, it is sometimes easier to start afresh rather than having the 'make-do' attitude. Thus these men instantly saw that they would need a

vessel to suit. For, instead of simply shooting a net and waiting, they had to manoeuvre the net around in a circle, enclosing the shoal. A smack-rigged vessel would be better than a two-masted wherry. A standing lug-rigged vessel would be even better, as would a double-ended hull. Thus evolved the trawl skiff.

The contention, then, is that it was most likely in the 1830s that the fishermen in the south of the loch adopted the pointed stern. Use of the lug rig might have coincided, or might have arisen a year or two later. In a sort of transitional period, they might have used a smack rig.

From the available evidence, the Lochfyne skiff, at its introduction into the Campbeltown fishing fleet in 1882, was simply a larger version of these previous trawl skiff. Its main characteristic that distinguished it from its predecessors was the forecastle that allowed the fishermen to sleep on board instead of camping ashore or bringing with them another vessel – usually a smack – for basic accommodation. This enabled them to be self-sufficient in their daily routine of fishing, and travel further afield. However there was a degree of improvement on the older skiffs in that the sternpost raked at a more extreme angle and the keel had a more pronounced drag. These changes merely increased its efficiency when fishing, and subtle modifications throughout its lifespan meant that two boats were rarely identical.

If there is any influence in the design then this must be attributed to the early trawl skiffs. However it is implied that this influence came directly through the tradition of those Norway skiffs in use on the west coast, and not from its adoption on the east coast, in the form of scaffies and fifies – and later the Zulus. The Zulus were superb herring luggers, representing the zenith in British fishing boat design, yet they evolved on

the East Coast in a different way. For the Loch Fyne boats to be labelled 'Zulu skiffs' is simply a misunderstanding of the time factors. The trawl skiffs developed in the 1830s, almost half a century before the Zulus.

Whether or not French, and to a lesser degree Spanish, craft played their part in influencing the fishers of Loch Fyne is not evident at this time. It is simply suggested that, given the likeness in the Breton sardine boats and the Loch Fyne boats, that it is possible that some mixing of traditions did occur. That the two communities of fisherfolk encountered each other is clear, so the possibility remains and cannot be overlooked. On the other hand, as has often been the case in boat evolution, similar forces have come to bear on different areas of the coastline that have resulted in the adoption of similar craft, the fifies and Cornish luggers being the best examples. Their similarity is not just pure coincidence. However, this element of the research is another that needs more work to be done in the future.

Herring fishing has been an important part of coastal life on and around Loch Fyne for centuries. It was possibly the earliest established commercial sea fishery in Scotland, due, in the main, to the superb quality of the fish and the proximity to the local and Glasgow markets for the fresh fish. Indeed, if some of the early evidence is accepted, it has been going on for over a thousand years. When the ring-net was introduced in the 1830s, the fishery was well established as an industry. Over the two next generations, these fishermen, experienced by tradition, produced one of the finest craft seen in British waters, ideal for their own conditions. Thus arrived the Lochfyne skiff, not perhaps the zenith in fishing boat design on a national scale as was the Zulu, but one that represented the best in their adaptation to their locality and to a particular type of fishing. These same

characteristics were later reflected in the motorised ringers that influenced the design of craft throughout the whole country, and probably further afield. Unfortunately the skiff's lifespan was short, due, in the main, to the advent of the internal combustion engine, and, to a lesser degree, the desire for larger craft. But that in no way diminishes its importance in the social and oral history of the area. It was both pretty to the eye and deadly effective in its work. It was relatively cheap to build and easy to maintain. It sailed well and was capable of being rowed in times of calm. It had space for five fishermen to live aboard for extended periods. It was, in the eyes of those that worked it, a perfected catching machine that fulfilled all its requirements until its usefulness was overtaken by new technology. That, surely, is as good an epitaph to any working boat as can be achieved.

APPENDICES

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Appendix 1 | List of Campbeltown luggers |
| Appendix 2 | Boatbuilders of the Clyde |
| Appendix 3 | Plans of Lochfyne skiffs |
| Appendix 4 | Author's plans of Lochfyne skiff (plans produced as part of a proposal to build a replica Lochfyne skiff) |
| Appendix 5 | Models of Lochfyne skiffs |
| Appendix 6 | Plans from Washington's Report of 1849 |

APPENDIX 1

CAMPBELTOWN LUGGERS

A number of luggers were used for fishing out of Campbeltown in the late nineteenth century, many being built in Cornwall. They were generally referred to as 'Campbeltown luggers'. Their introduction into the Clyde fleet stemmed from their use in the Kinsale mackerel fishery that attracted the Scottish fishermen in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Campbeltown fleet consisted of:

<i>Belina,</i>	CN80, built St Ives in 1876 and broken up in 1900
<i>Blue Jacket,</i>	CN28, first registered in 1878
<i>Blooming Flower,</i>	CN340, unseaworthy in 1898
<i>Cedar,</i>	CN85, first registered in 1870 undecked but decked over by 1875
<i>Eliza,</i>	CN21, built St Ives, was AD278 and sold to Dublin in 1892
<i>Enigma,</i>	CN60, built St Ives in 1874 and sold to Arklow in 1889
<i>Europa,</i>	CN216, built St Ives in 1872 and broken up in 1929
<i>Flora,</i>	CN15, built Ardrossan as 2 nd class lugger
<i>Frigate Bird,</i>	CN30, Built St Ives in 1875 and sold to Arklow in 1891
<i>Glenfield,</i>	CN43, sold to Ireland in 1890
<i>Happy Return,</i>	CN339,
<i>Harum Slarum,</i>	CN61, built St Ives and sold to Tralee in 1893
<i>Heather Bell,</i>	CN31, sold to Ireland 1893 but returned as CN242 and unseaworthy by 1897
<i>Mary & Agnes,</i>	CN93, built Carradale and sold to Tarbert in 1907
<i>Mistletoe,</i>	CN? built St Ives
<i>Nil Desperandum,</i>	CN51, built St Ives in 1875 and sold to Dublin 1891
<i>Oimara,</i>	CN26,
<i>Pass-By,</i>	CN46, built St Ives 1875
<i>Regent Bird,</i>	CN37, sold to Stornoway in 1895
<i>Victor,</i>	CN32, built St Ives in 1876 and sold to Arklow in 1885
<i>Water Bird,</i>	CN36, sold to Dublin in 1892

All except *Flora* and *Happy Return* were first-class vessels. Whether the use of these had any effect upon the fishermen and the rig of their skiffs is unclear.

Source: Angus Martin from Campbeltown Fishery Registers.

APPENDIX 2

BOATBUILDERS OF THE CLYDE & NEIGHBOURING REGIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR BUILDING LOCHFYNE SKIFFS

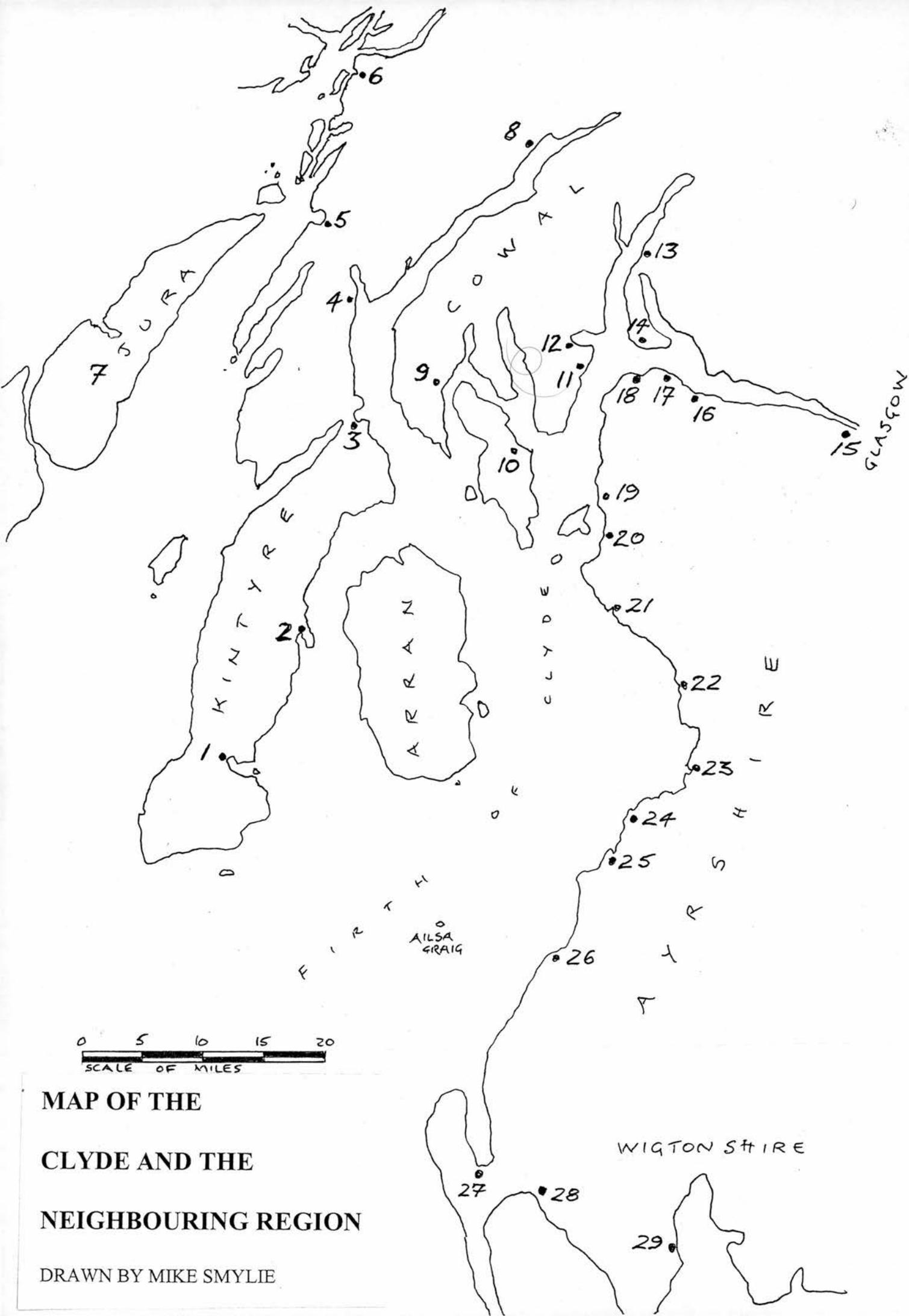
KEY TO MAP:

1. Campbeltown: Lachie Lang 1883
 John Wardrope 1883
 Robert Wylie 1893-1934?
2. Carradale: Matthew McDougal
 Donald Brown (Torrisdale) 1886
3. Tarbert: Alexander & Duncan McTavish 1881-c1900
 A. Henderson 1884-1905
 Dugald Henderson 1886-1905
 James Henderson 1886-1905
 Archibald Leitch 1885-1903
 Archibald Dickie 1904, became A.M Dickie & Sons in 1912
 W. McMillan 1913
 Thomas Fyfe 1902
4. Ardrishaig James McLean 1882-1889, taken over by Munro's below
 A. Munro 1892-1913
 R. Munro 1897
 William Munro 1908
 Robert Fyfe 1902-1909
 Archibald McCallum 1882-1887
 John McEwan 1888
 Walker
5. Crinan Ferry Angus McLachlan 1888
6. Oban Donald McDonald
7. Jura John McDougal
 Donald Rankin (Ardlussa)
8. Inveraray A. & D. Munro 1892-1908, moved to Blairmore 1908-1923
9. Tignabruich Archibald Smith 1905
10. Rochesay James Fyfe (Port Bannatyne) 1888-1923
 McLea, yard closed in 1880
 Ardmaleish
 Black
11. Dunoon Turner & Young
12. Holy Loch Morris & Lorimer 1912
 Ewing & George McGruer 1900-
13. Portincaple Walter Allison 1923
14. Kilcreggan Andrew McLaren 1900

- Archie McKellar 1908-?
15. Paisley Daniel Fyfe, moved to Tarbert between 1887 & 1903
 16. Port Glasgow James McKenzie 1894
 17. Greenock John McLeod 1881
Peter Hanson 1920
 18. Gourock John Barr
James Adam 1870s
 19. Largs John Ninian 1893
 20. Fairlie William Fyfe c1800-1902
J.Fyfe 1882
Hugh Boag, late 1860s-1893
 21. Ardrossan John Thomson 1899-1919
 22. Troon Ailsa Shipyard c.1890, moved to Girvan
 23. Ayr Archibald Boyd
 24. Dunure Eaglesome 1901
John Munro 1901
Hugh Edgar
William Harbison
 25. Maidens Culzean Shipbuilding & Engineering Co. c.1885, became Ailsa Shipyard
Davidson 1891
 26. Girvan Jas Kirkwood
McIntyre
 27. Stranraer Dan Fyfe
 28. Glenluce William Nicolson
 29. Garlieston Hugh Jarret
John McGreath

The dates refer to known times when skiffs were known to have been built at these places and do not necessarily refer to the opening and closing of the yards.

Compiled by Mike Smylie and updated September 2002.



**MAP OF THE
CLYDE AND THE
NEIGHBOURING REGION**

DRAWN BY MIKE SMYLIE

APPENDIX 3

PLANS OF LOCH FYNE SKIFFS

SAIL PLAN of *Bonnie Jean* drawn by P.J.Oke.

CONSTRUCTION PLAN of *Bonnie Jean* by P.J.Oke.

BUILDERS CONSTRUCTION PLAN of *Aye Ready* by D.Munro & Son, Blairmore.

LINES PLAN of typical Lochfyne skiff by D.Munro & Son, Blairmore.

SAIL PLAN of typical Lochfyne skiff by D.Munro & Son, Blairmore.

LINES PLAN OF *De Wet* taken from the builder's model by Alfred Mylne.

SAIL & DECK PLAN of *De Wet*.

LINES PLAN of auxiliary Lochfyne skiff from James Miller & Sons of St Monance by P.J.Oke.

SAIL PLAN.

Loch Fyne Skiff "Bonnie Jean".

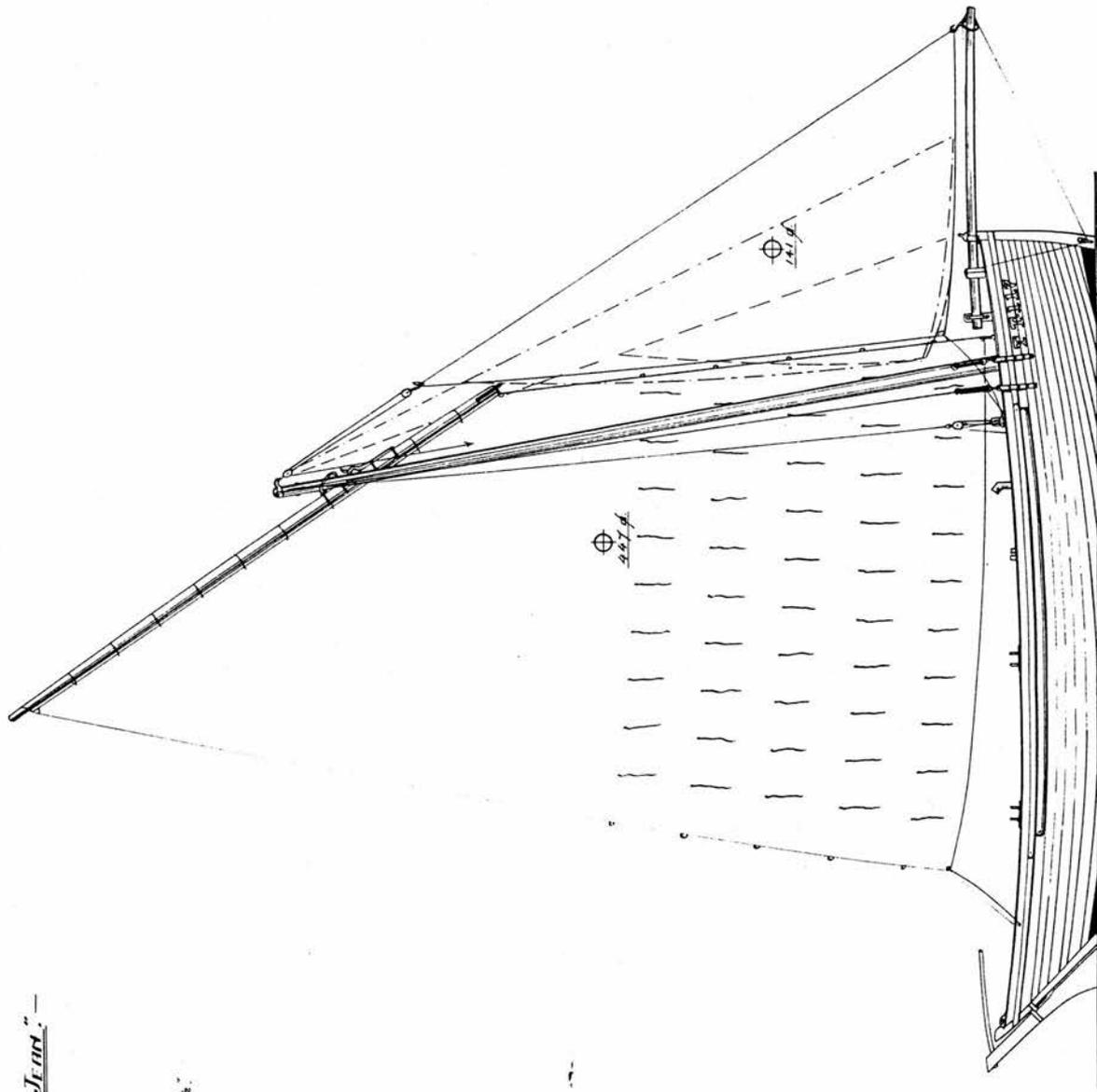
SPAR DIMENSIONS.

MAST 35' 2" DIA 3 1/2" x 8"
 YARD 24' 0" " 4" x 6"
 BOWSPRIT 1.0.11 13' 6" OUTRIB 9' 6" DIA 4" x 4 1/2"
 4 OARS 22 to 25 FT LONG

SAIL AREAS.

LOCSAIL 447 sq.
 BIG JOB 141 sq.
TOTAL SAIL AREA 588 sq.

HAUL 14,111 yards of
 3/16" line below 1/2"



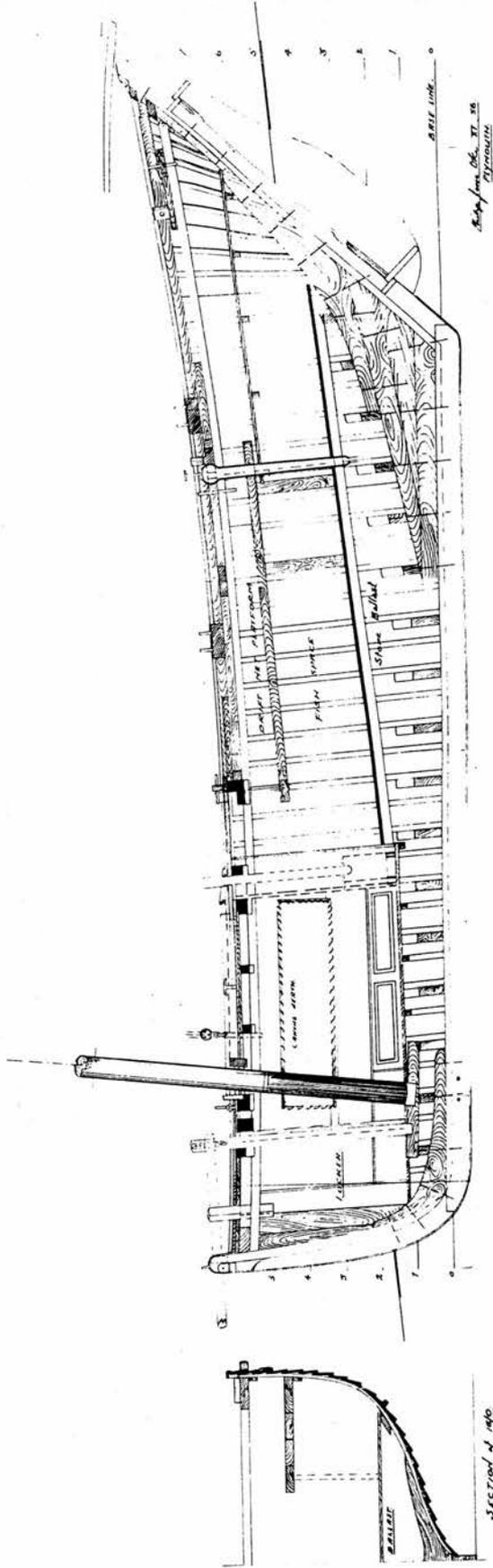
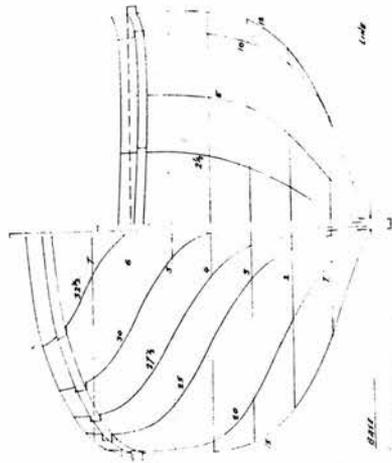
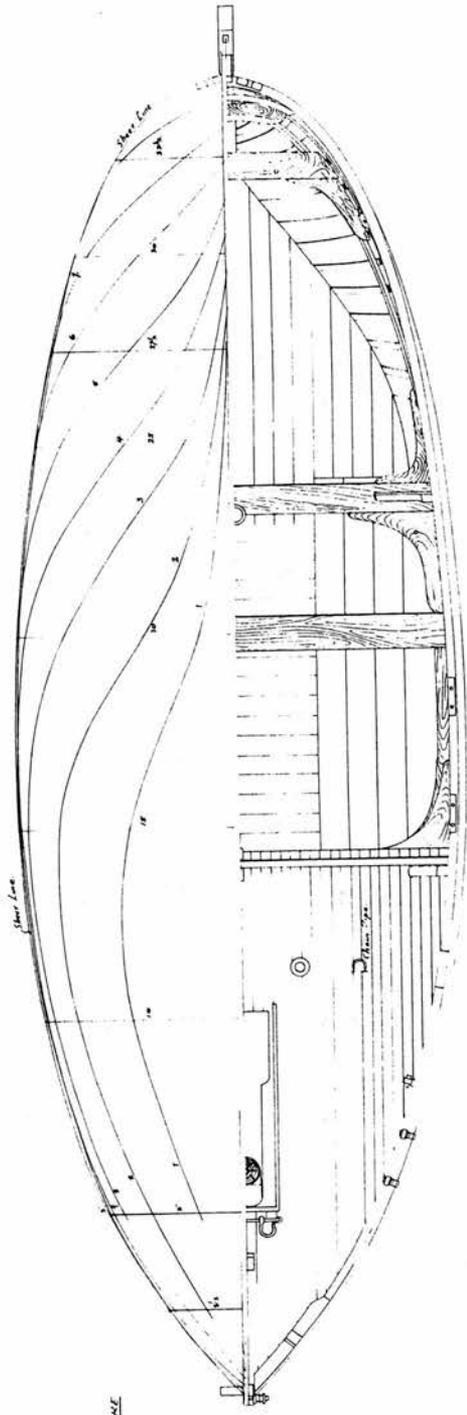
Scale 3/2" = 1'

Designed by P. J. Oke, 1936.
Plymouth, Oregon.

Sail plan of Lochfyne skiff *Bonnie Jean*, TT177, drawn by P. J. Oke in 1936 (Science Museum)

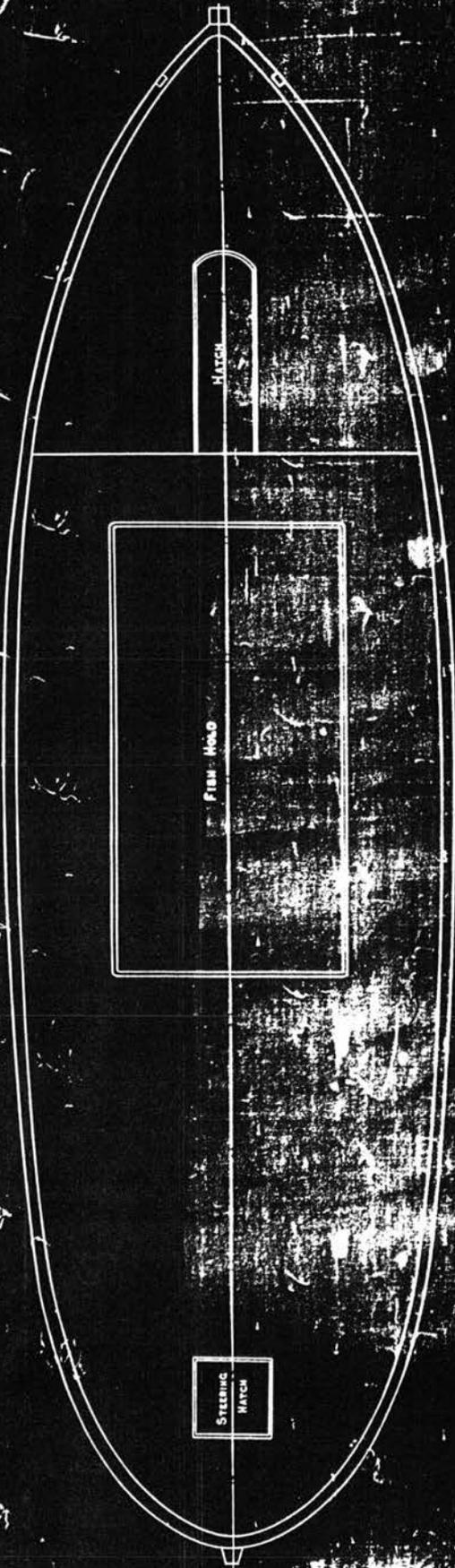
*WEST COAST OF SCOTLAND.
 ARBORISHIRISH.—LOCH FYNE.*

*LOCH FYNE SKIFF "Bonnie Jean," 11,177.
 L.O.B. 35'1" x 11'10" DEPTH INSIDE 6'3".
 BUILT BY HENDERSON OF TARBERT, LOCH FYNE.
 OWNER ROBERT BRUCE OF ARBORISHIRISH, ARGYLLSHIRE.*

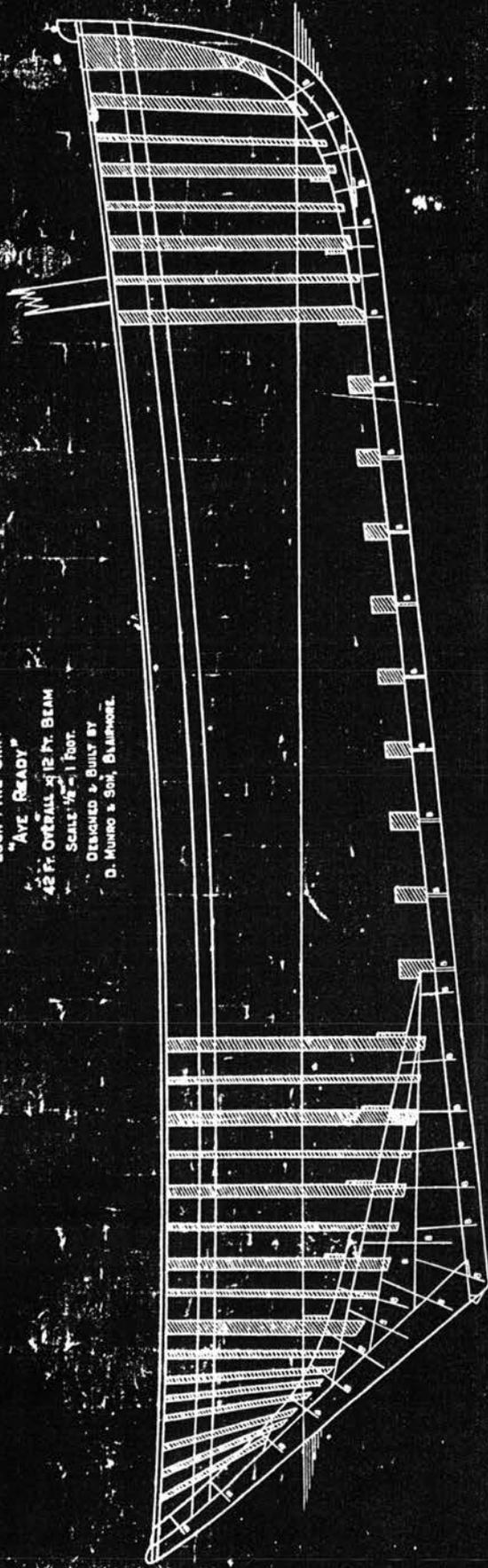


*Ship/Jan. 26. 37. 36
 TYNANT*

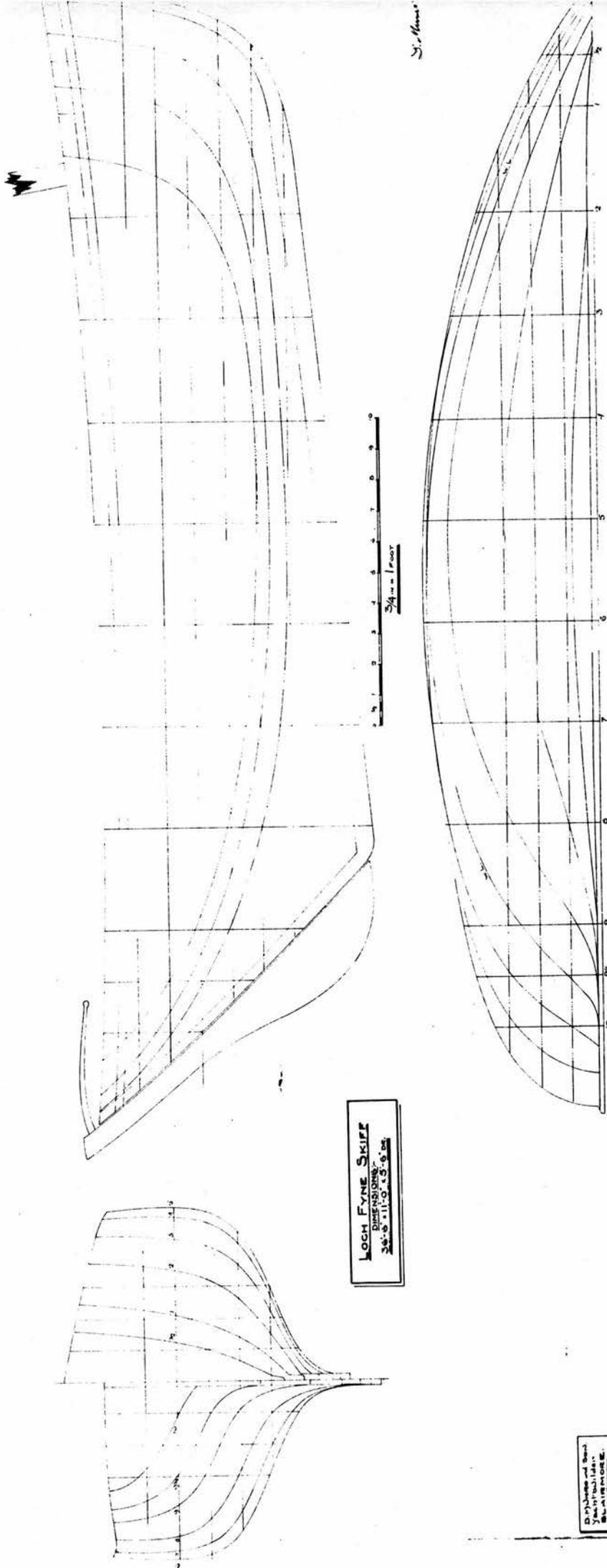
Construction plan of Lochfyne skiff *Bonnie Jean*, TT177, drawn by P.J.Oke in 1936 (Science Museum)



CONSTRUCTION PLAN OF
 LOCH FYNE SKIFF
 "AYE READY"
 42 FT. OVERALL x 12 FT. BEAM
 SCALE: 1/8" = 1 FOOT.
 DESIGNED & BUILT BY
 D. MUNRO & SON, BLAIRMORE.



Construction plan of Lochfyne skiff *Aye Ready*, designed and built by D. Munro & Son, Blairmore (source unknown)



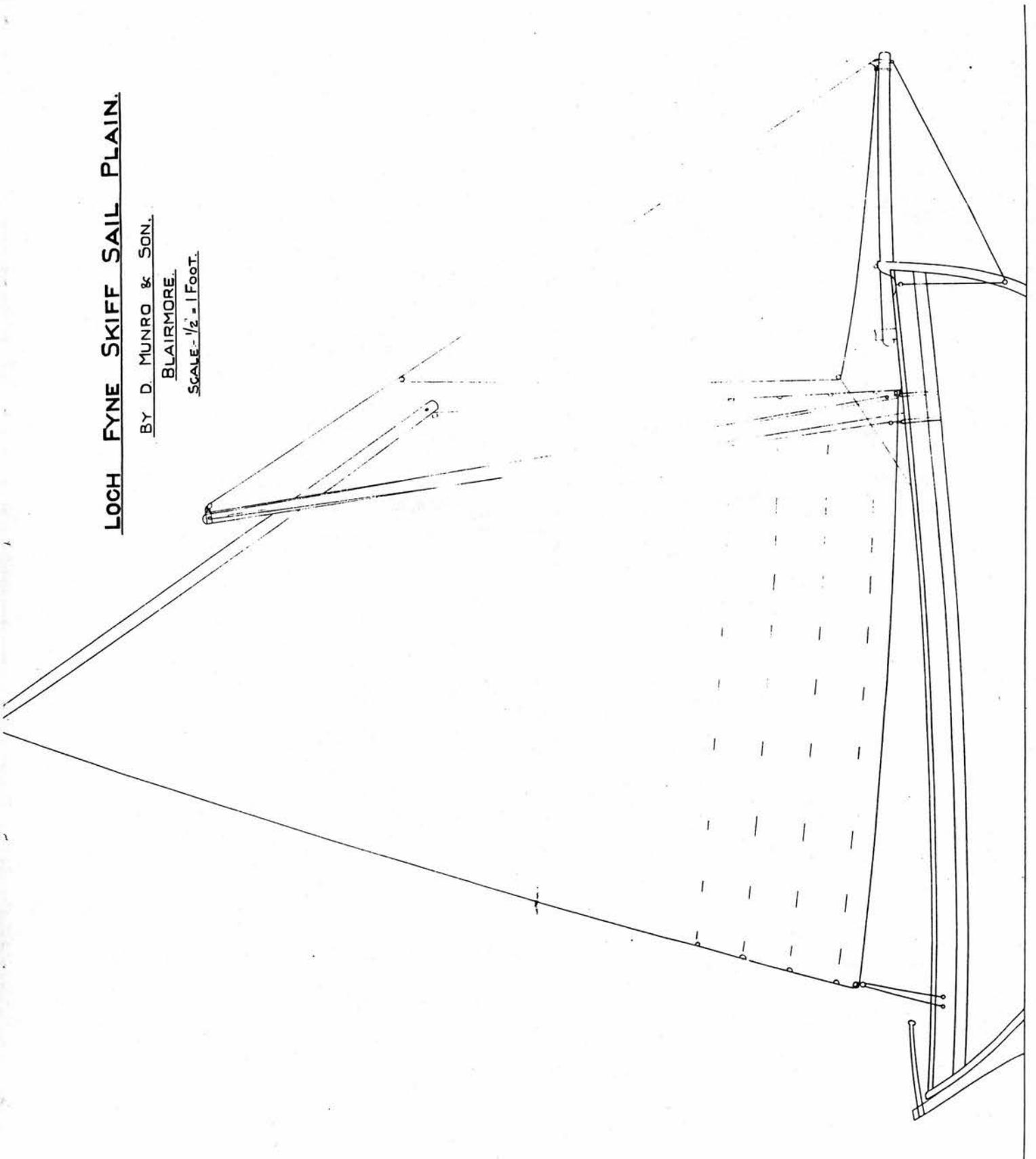
Lines plan of Lochfyne skiff by D. Munro & Son, Blairmore (Science Museum)

LOCH FYNE SKIFF SAIL PLAIN.

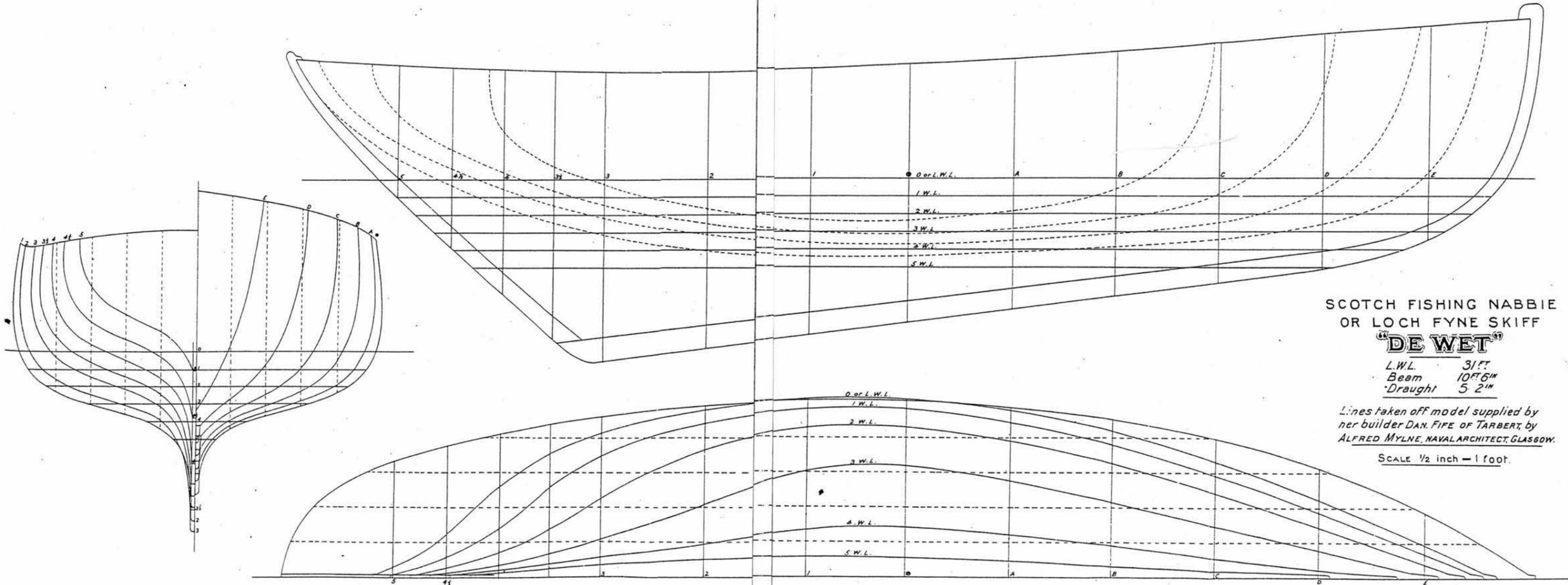
BY D. MUNRO & SON.

BLAIRMORE.

SCALE - 1/2" = 1 FOOT.



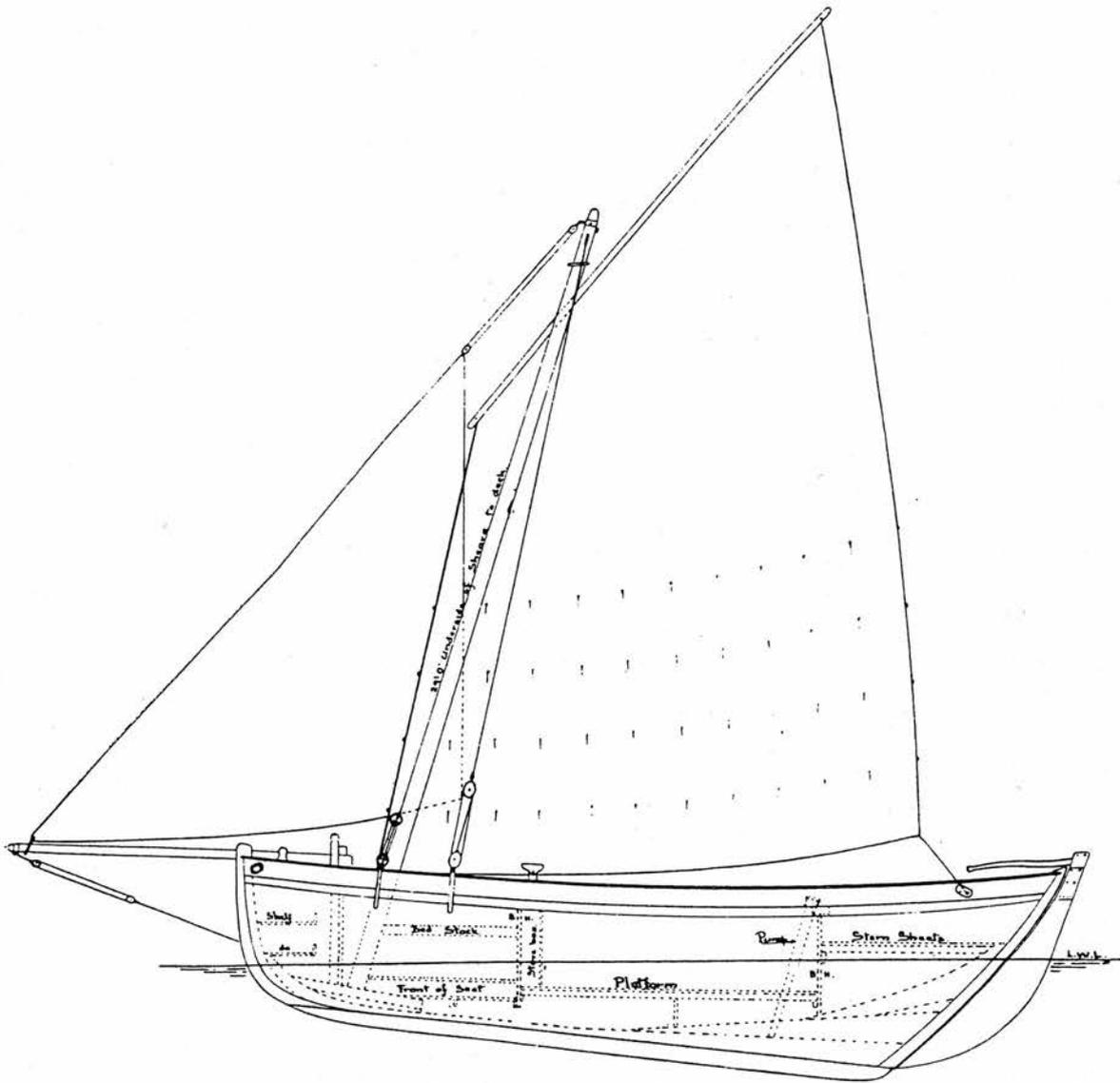
Sail plan of Lochfyne skiff by D. Munro & Son, Blairmore (source unknown)



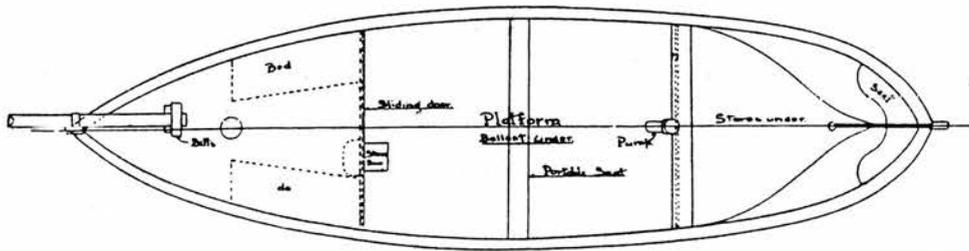
SCOTCH FISHING NABBIE
OR LOCH FYNE SKIFF
"DE WET"
L.W.L. 31 FT
Beam 10 FT 6 IN
Draught 5 2 IN

Lines taken off model supplied by
her builder DAN FIFE OF TARBERT, by
ALFRED MYLNE, NAVAL ARCHITECT, GLASGOW.
SCALE 1/2 inch = 1 foot.

Lines plan of Lochfyne skiff *De Wet* from Dixon Kemp's *A Manual of Yacht and Boat Sailing*, 9th edition, plate no.70



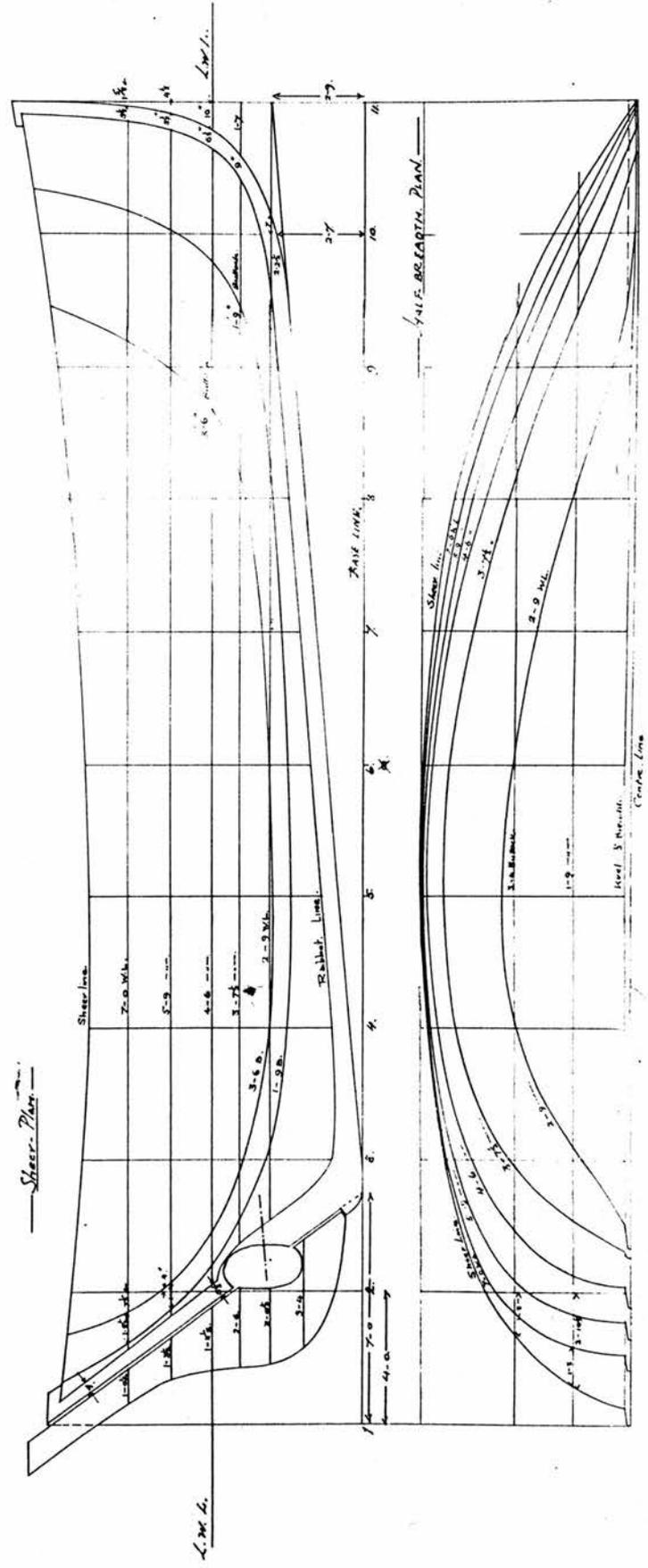
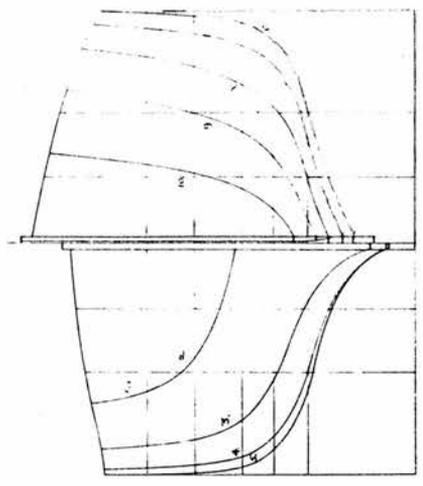
Scale $\frac{1}{4}$ in. = 1 ft.



Sail plan and deck plan of Lochfyne skiff *De Wet* (source unknown)

Design No. 272. 12/16/23.
 Humphreys & Co. 146 x 136 x 1/8 in.
 Mr. G. M. E. O'Connell. 112. Bath. St. Glasgow

1923
 Scale 1/4" = 1 foot
 Scaled by P. J. Oke.
 Plymouth 30.11.35



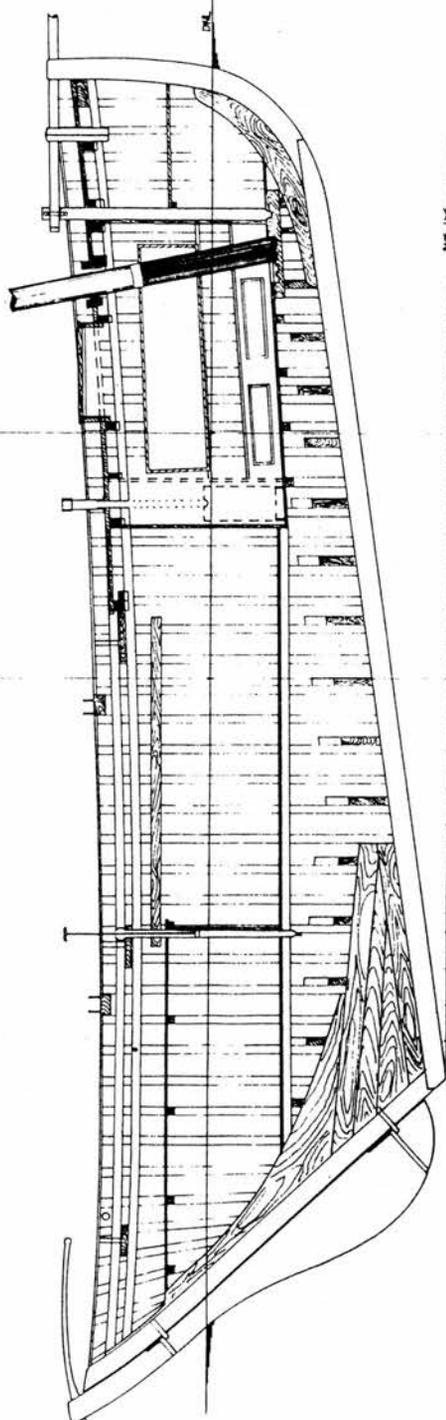
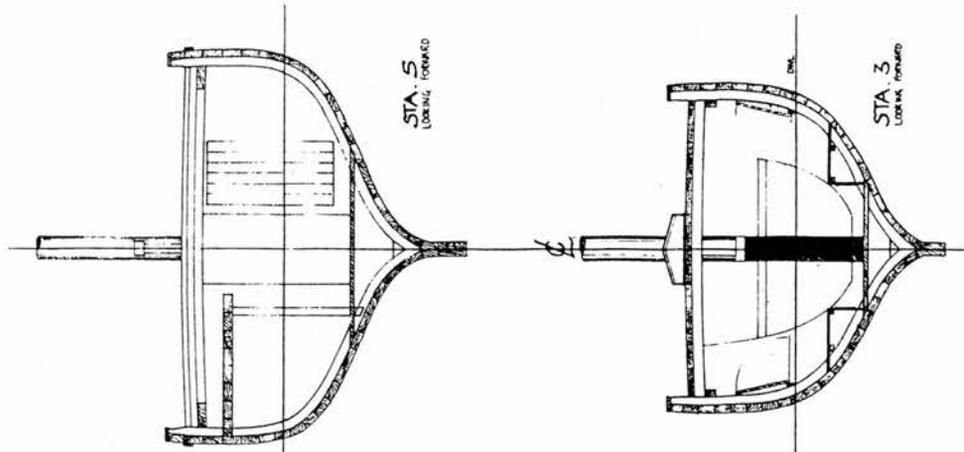
Lines plan of Lochfyne skiff from Millar's of St. M.

APPENDIX 4

PLANS OF LOCH FYNE SKIFFS BY THE AUTHOR

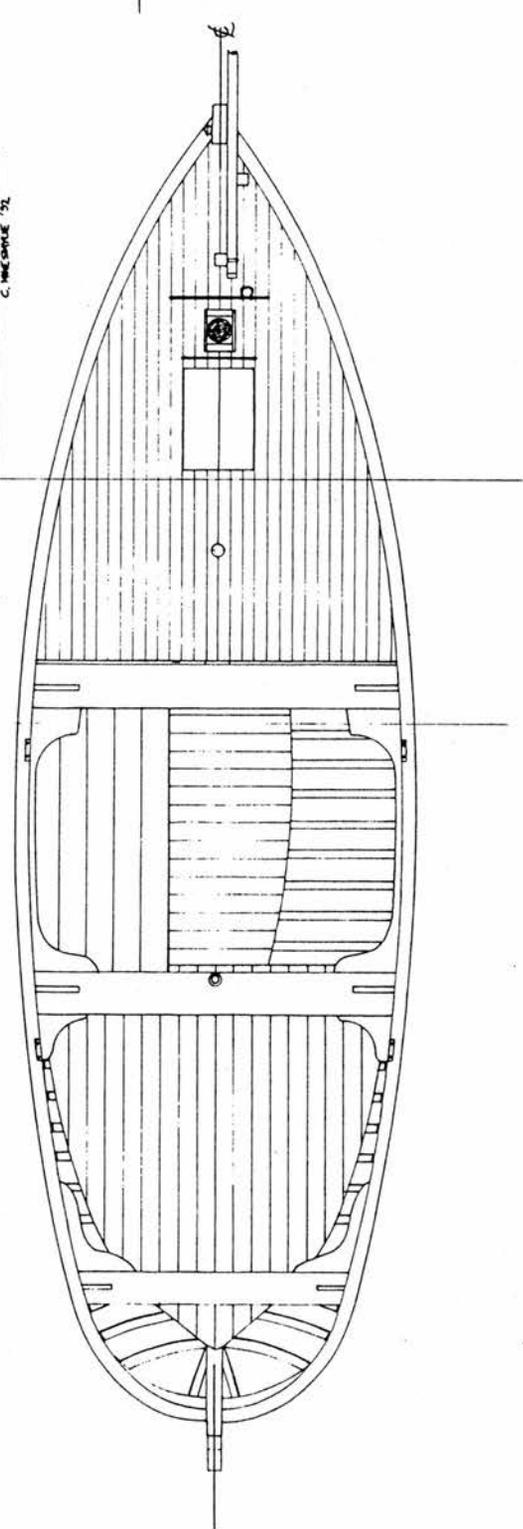
Plans drawn in 1992 for the proposed building of replica Lochfyne skiff *Kate & Mary*.

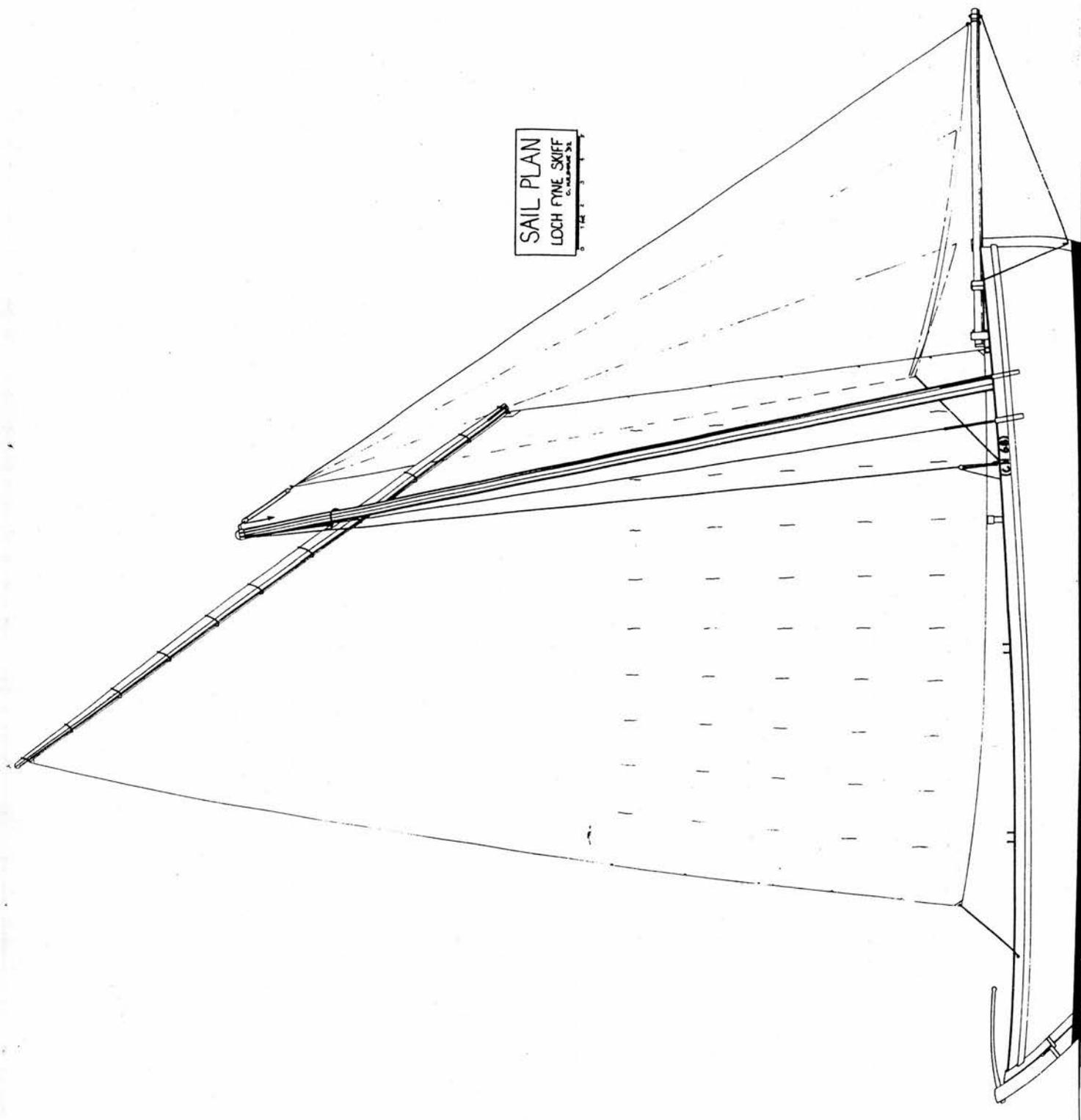
LINES PLAN
CONSTRUCTION PLAN
SAIL PLAN



CONSTRUCTION PLAN
LOCH FYNE SKIFF
C. MCGOWAN '92

LOA : 37' 0" LWL : 34' 0"
 HULL : 2 1/2" 2" 2"
 BEAM : 11' 0"
 DRAUGHT : 6' 0" 6"
 FRAMES : OAK 3" x 3"
 HULL : GUN 2" x 3"
 PLANKING : PITCH PINE 6" x 2"
 DECK : 2" x 3" 5" x 3" BEAMS
 STONE GULLOCK - HULL VARNISHED / BLACK UNDERWHITE





SAIL PLAN
LOCH FYNE SKIFF
0 1 2 3 4 5

Sail plan of Lochfyne skiff drawn by Mike Smylie in 1992

APPENDIX 5

MODELS OF LOCH FYNE SKIFFS

TOP LEFT: Model of the *Fairy Queen*, CN196, made by Mr. S. McGeachy and on display in the Campbeltown Town Museum. The *Fairy Queen* was built by Nobles of Fraserburgh in 1926 for James Robertson. At over 43ft long, she was one of the largest ever built. She survives today sailing on the West Coast of Ireland

Photo: Mike Smylie collection

TOP RIGHT: Model of the *Bonnie Jean*, TT117, made by Hamish Barber of Glasgow University and on display at the Scottish Fisheries Museum, Anstruther. Although she has TT177 painted on her, the fishing registers and contemporary photographs from 1936 (now in the National Maritime Museum) show her as TT117. The *Bonnie Jean* was built by Henderson of Tarbert in 1905 and first registered as TT47 before being sold to Ullapool and returning as TT117. She was measured by Philip Oke in 1936 while ashore at Ardrishaig, and removed from the fishing register in 1938.

Photo: Mike Smylie collection

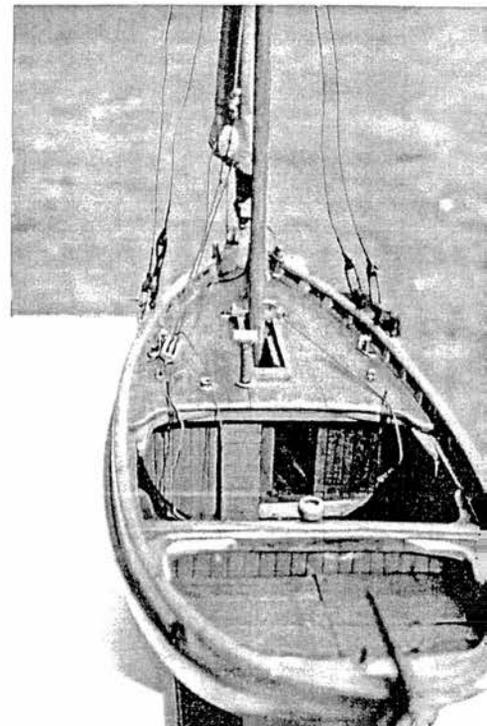
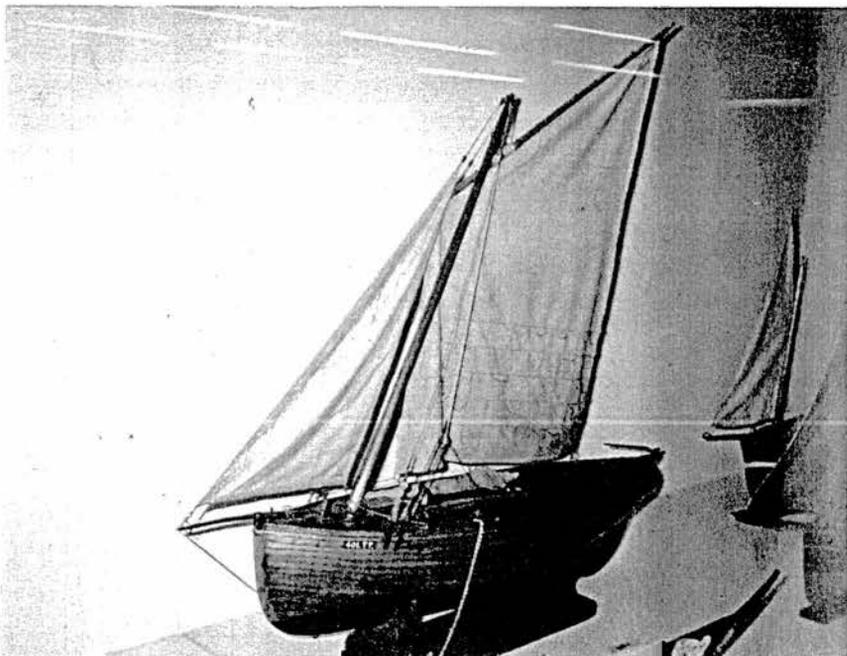
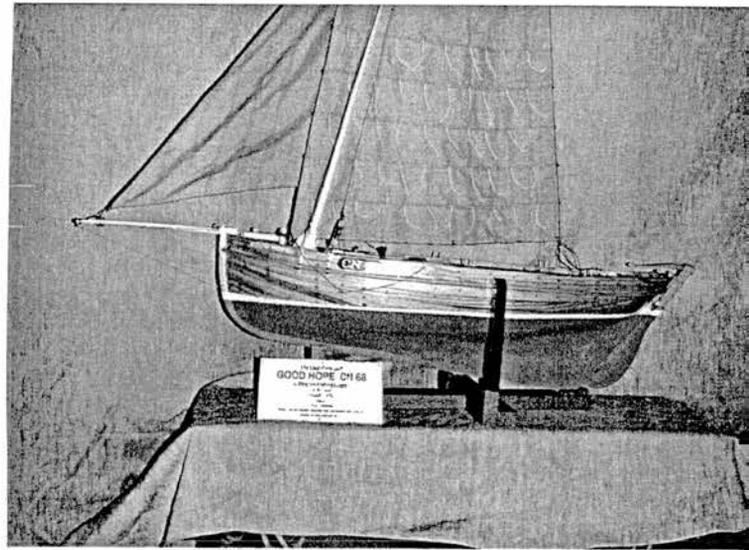
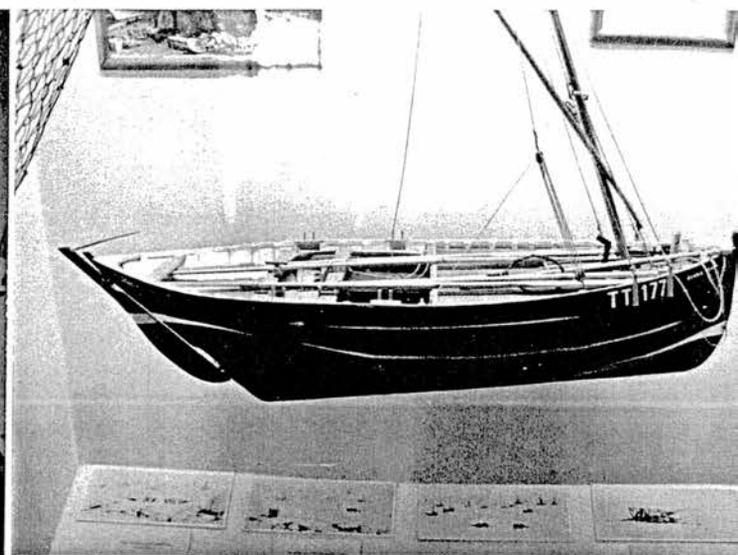
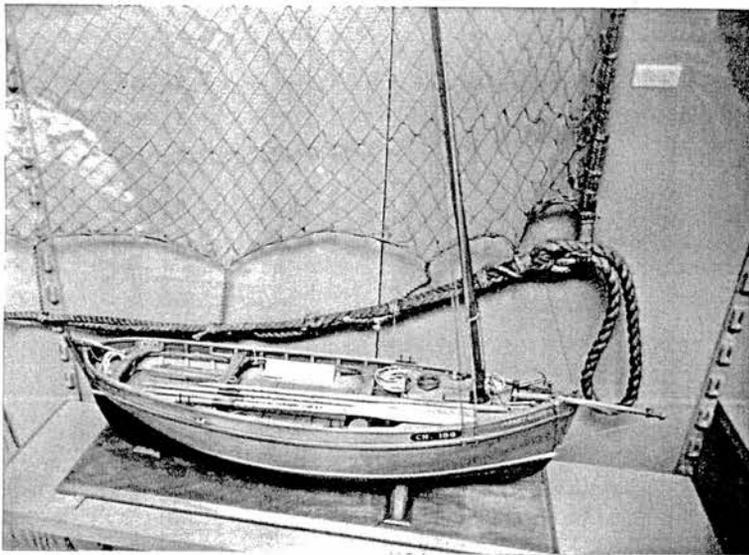
MIDDLE LEFT: Model of the *Bonnie Jean* in the Science Museum. It's worth noting that she was clinker-built as the 1936 photographs and Oke's drawings show, although this is unclear from these photos. Again the registration is wrong.

Photo: Science Museum, London

MIDDLE RIGHT: Model of the *Good Hope*, CN68. Made by David Blinkhorn for the author in 1996. The *Good Hope* was built by Duncan Munro of Inveraray in 1906 for Hugh MacLean and was sold to Ballantrae in 1934, whence she became BA12, and two years later was converted to a yacht.

BOTTOM LEFT: Model of the *Quickstep*, 401TT, in the Merseyside Maritime Museum, Liverpool. She is said to have been built by Dickies of Tarbert c.1900. However, it therefore seems unlikely that she had her registration numbers before the letters as regulations concerning this altered in the 1880s. Another source suggests she was built in 1888.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Model of a skiff bought in a Glasgow second-hand shop and transported to Germany 'some years ago'. Its present owner has recently acquired it, and is hoping to restore it to a proper rig. Its name and model-maker are unknown.

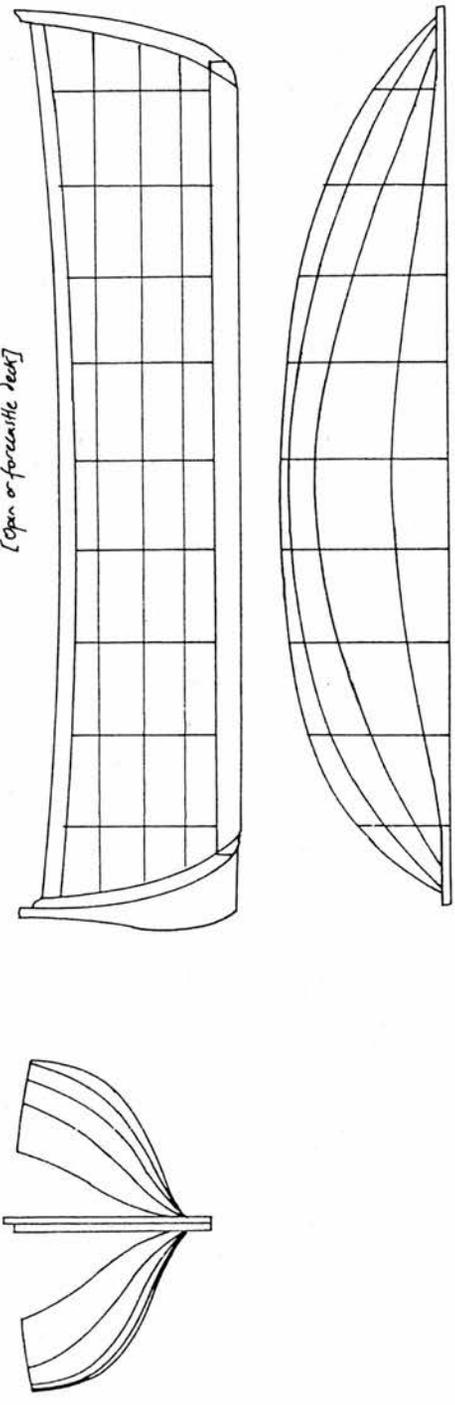


APPENDIX 6

PLANS FROM WASHINGTON'S REPORT OF 1849

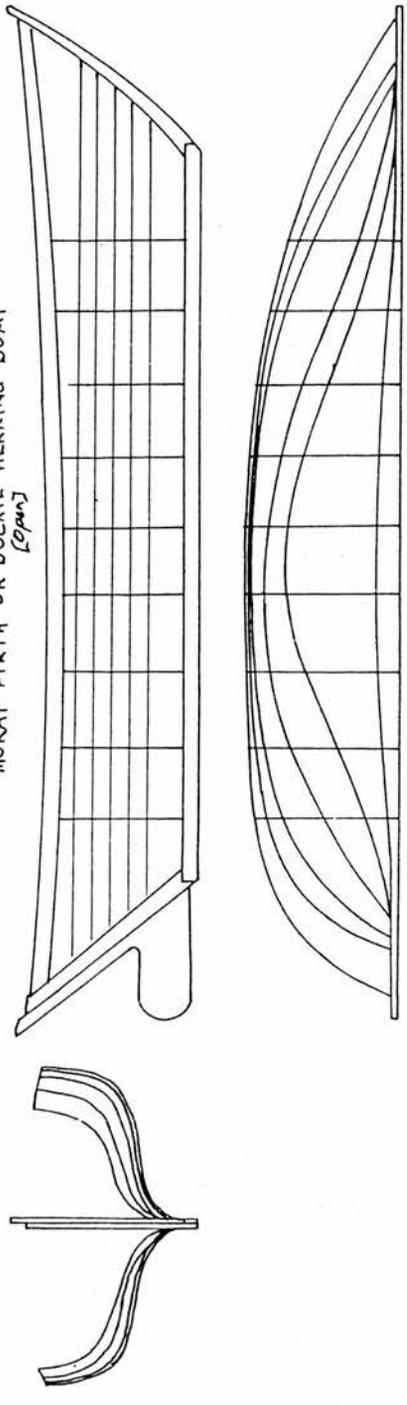
Fraserburgh and Buckie herring boats
Wick and Peterhead fishing boats
Newhaven and Aberdeen fishing boats
Yarmouth No. 1 and Hastings fishing luggers
Isle of Man boat and Lowestoft decked boat
Deal lugger and Yarmouth No.2 fishing boat
Galway and Kinsale hookers
Penzance and St Ives fishing boats
Drafts of Boats 1 & 2

FRASERBURGH HERRING BOAT
[Open or forecastle head]



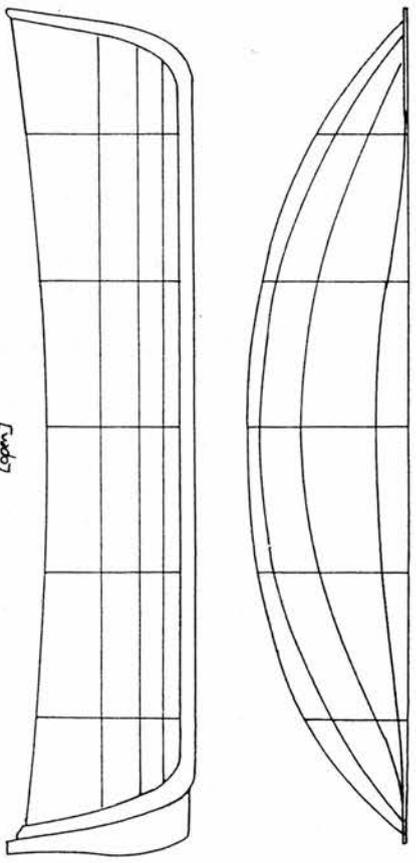
0 5 10 15 20 FEET 25 30 35

MORAY FIRTH OR BUCKIE HERRING BOAT
[Open]

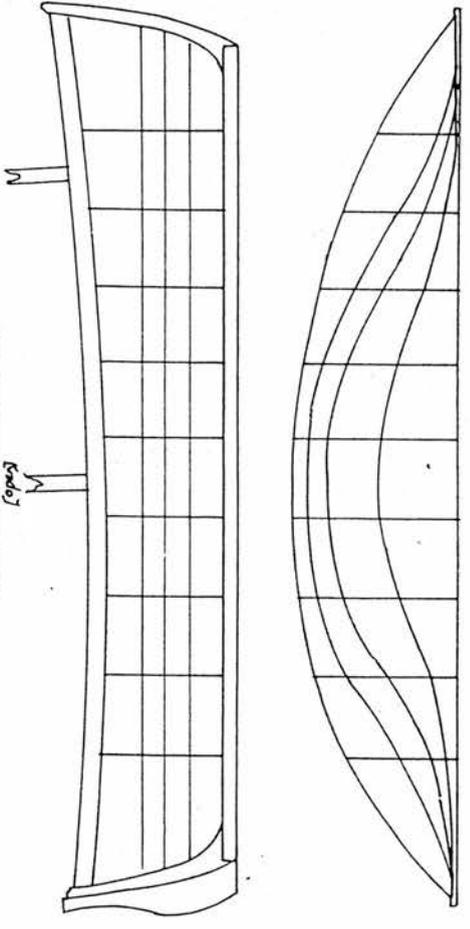


LINES PLANS FROM WASHINGTON'S REPORT
1849

WICK FISHING BOAT
(open)

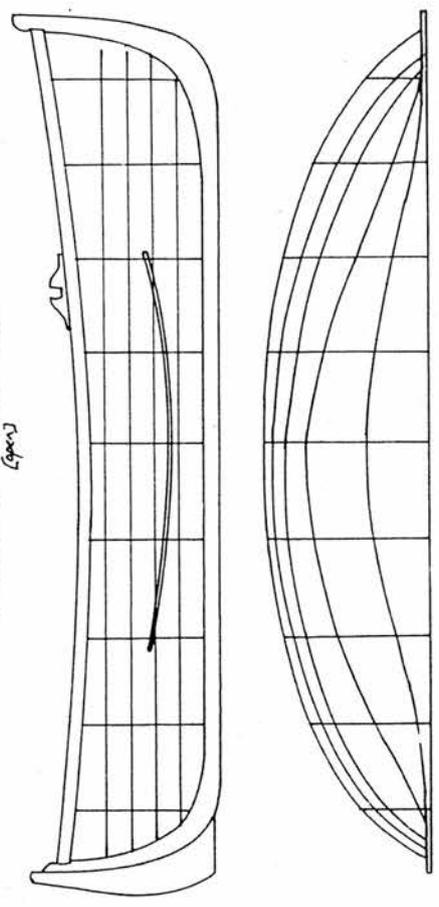


PETERHEAD FISHING BOAT
(open)



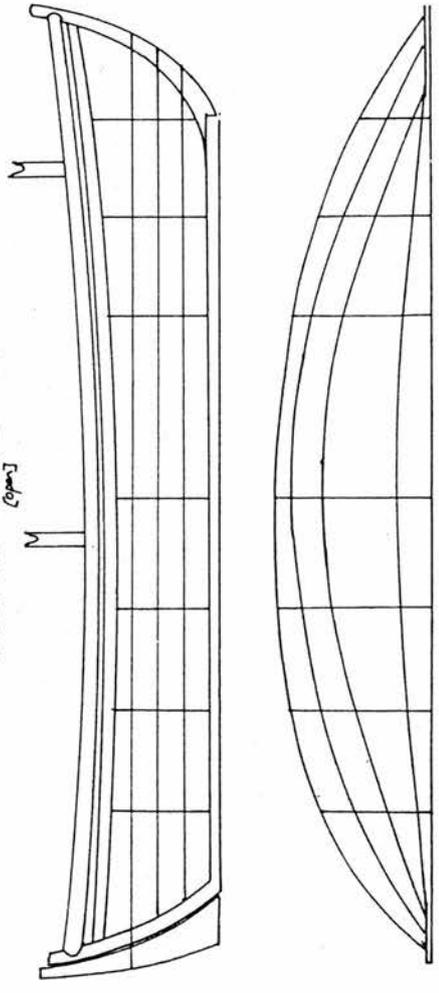
LINES PLANS FROM WASHINGTON'S REPORT
1849

NEWHAVEN FISHING BOAT
[open]



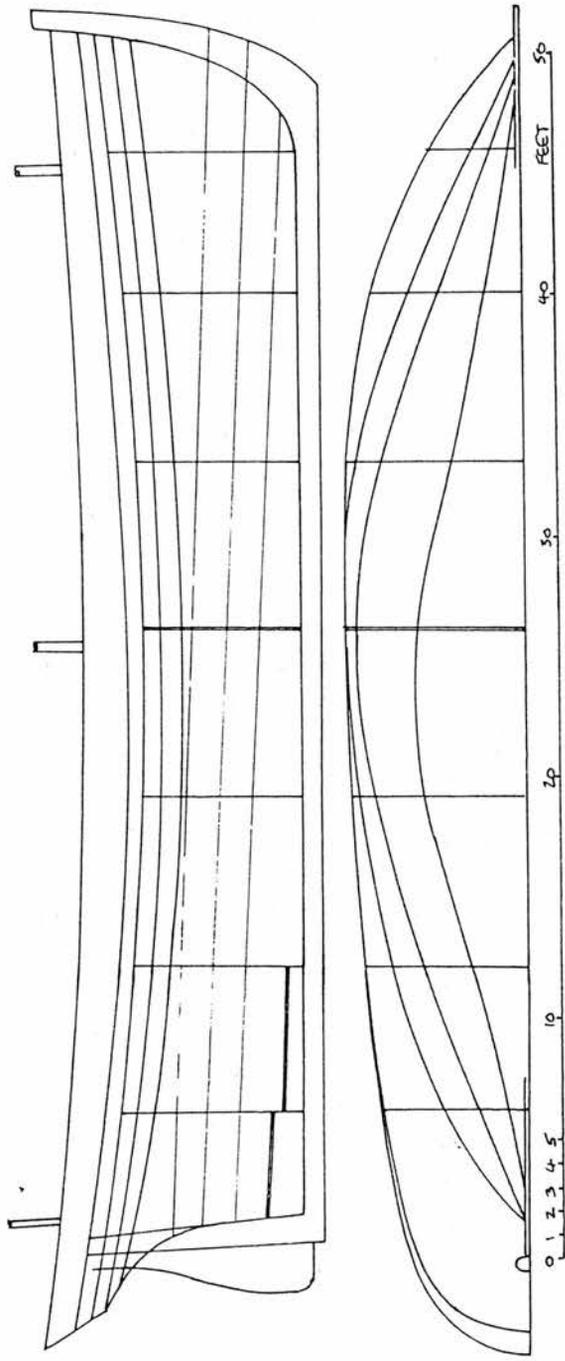
0 5 10 15 FEET 20 25 30

ABERDEEN FISHING BOAT
[open]

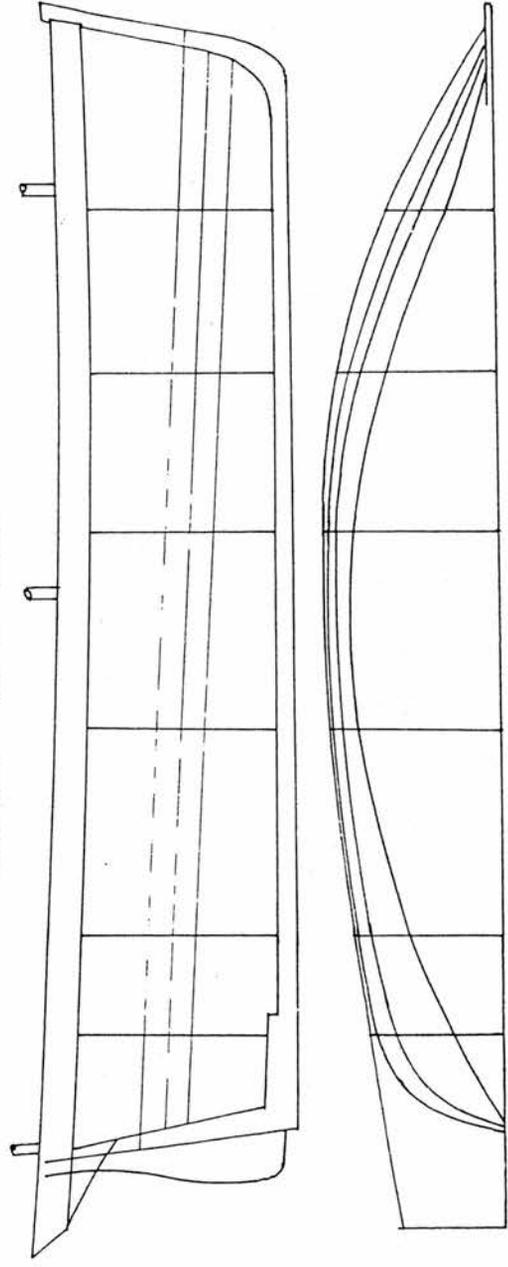


LINES PLANS FROM WASHINGTON'S REPORT
1849

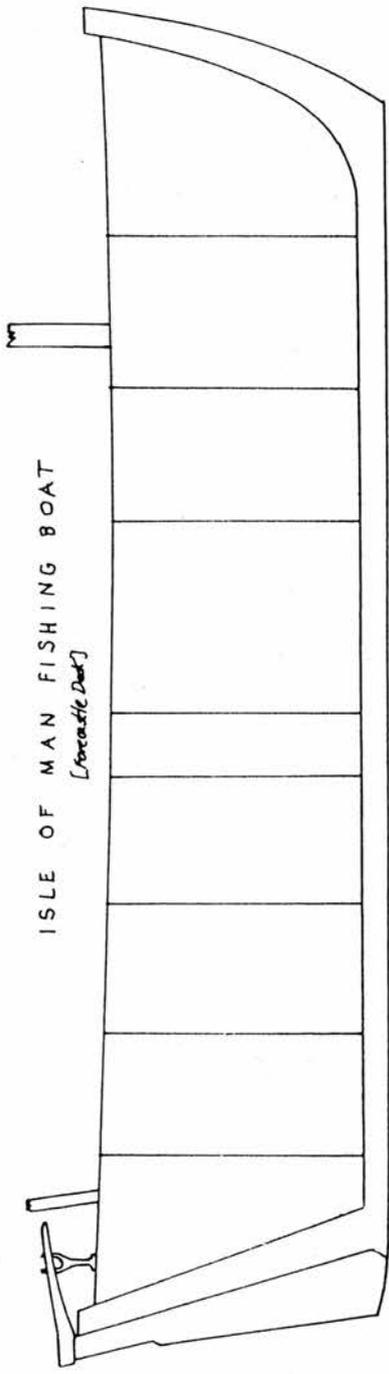
YARMOUTH FISHING LUGGER N° 1



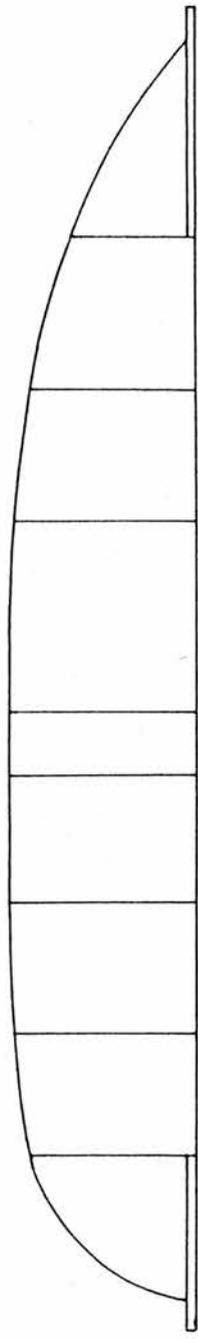
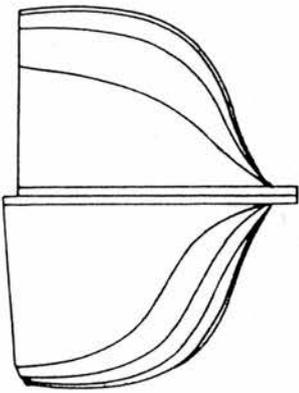
HASTINGS FISHING LUGGER



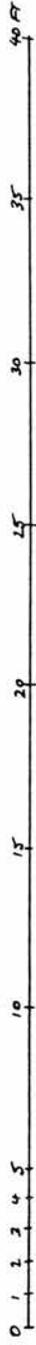
LINES PLANS FROM WASHINGTON'S REPORT
1849



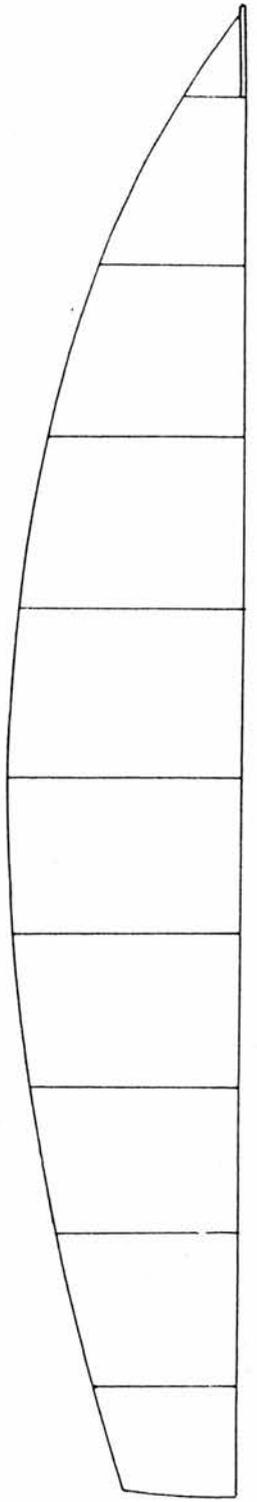
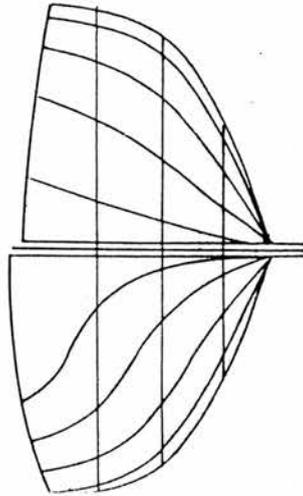
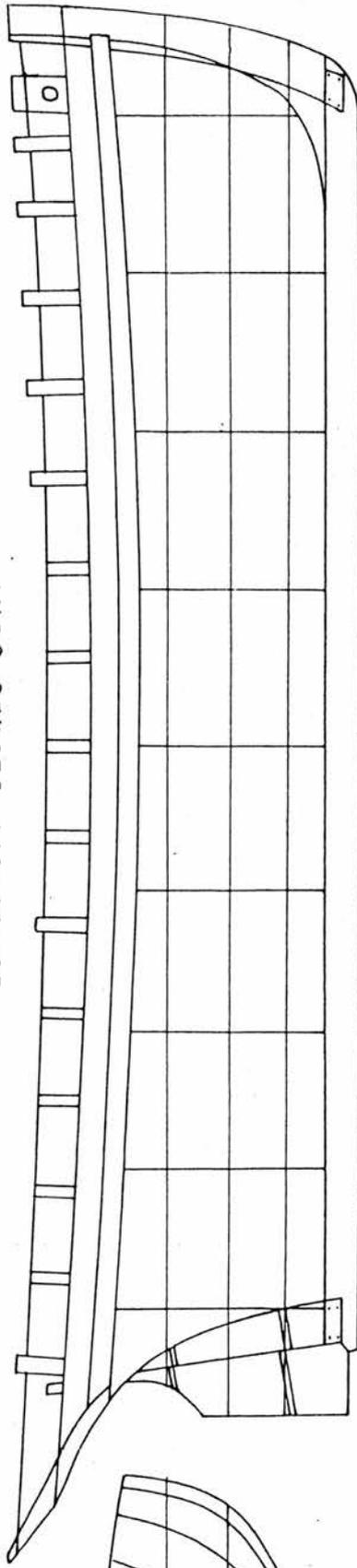
ISLE OF MAN FISHING BOAT
[Forecastle Deck]



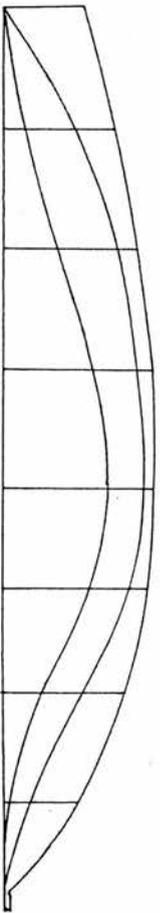
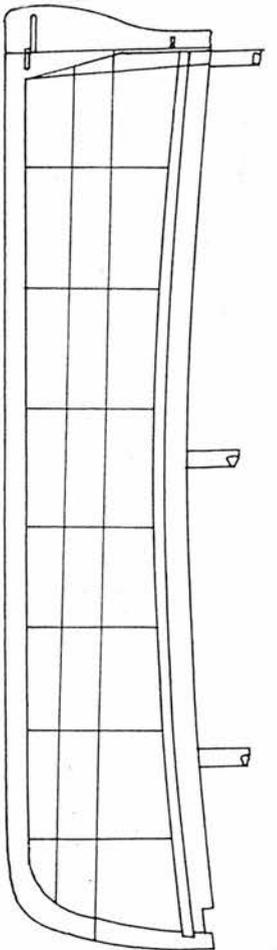
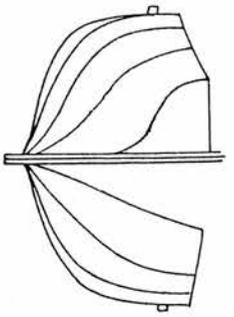
WASHINGTON REPORT
1849



LOWESTOFT DECKED BOAT

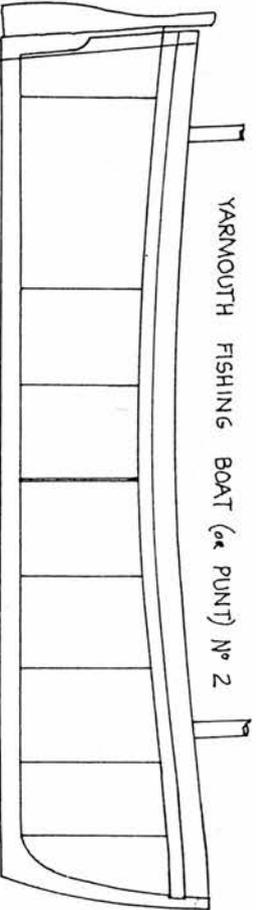
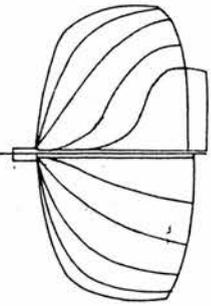


DEAL LUGGER

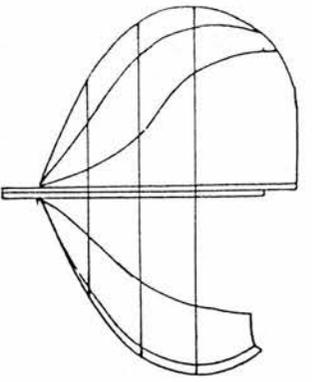


0 1 2 3 4 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 FEET

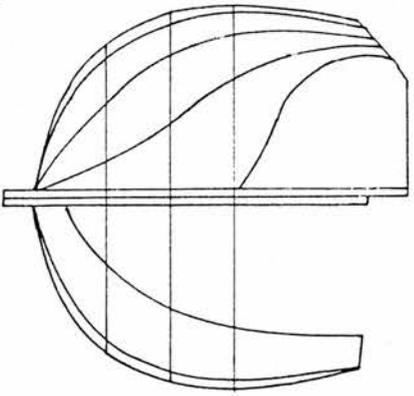
YARMOUTH FISHING BOAT (OR PUNTY) N° 2



LINES PLANS FROM WASHINGTON'S REPORT
1849

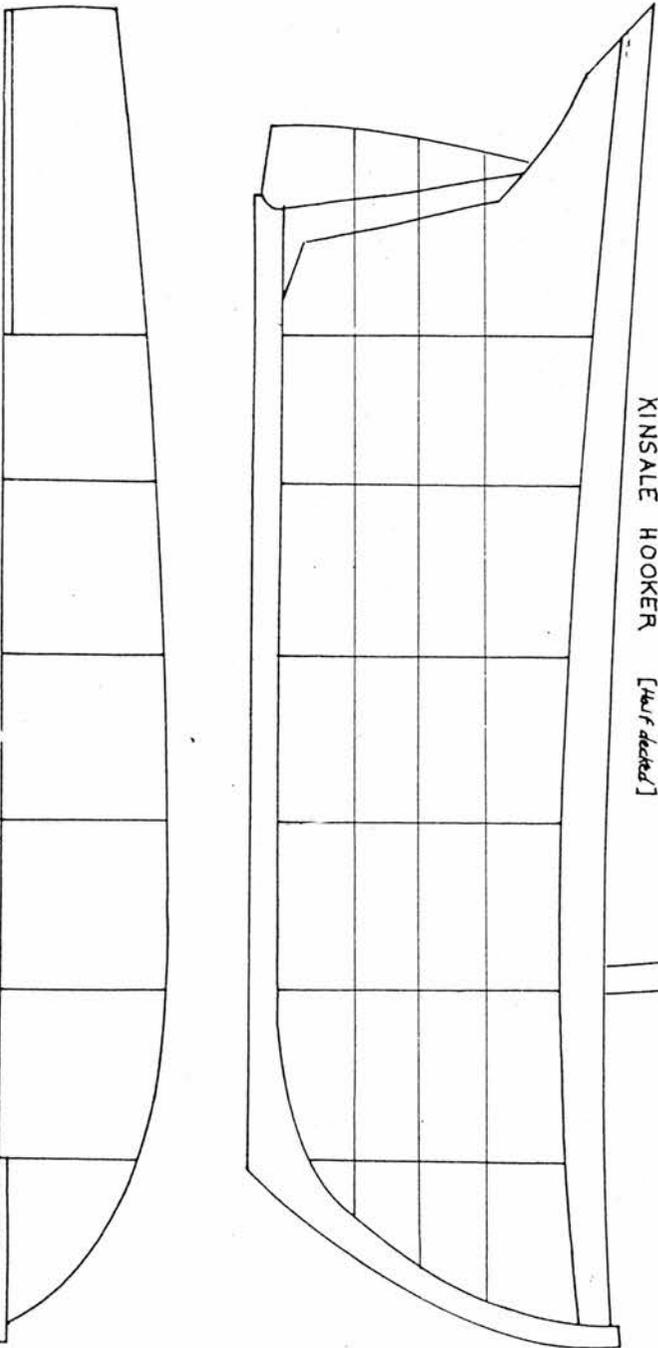
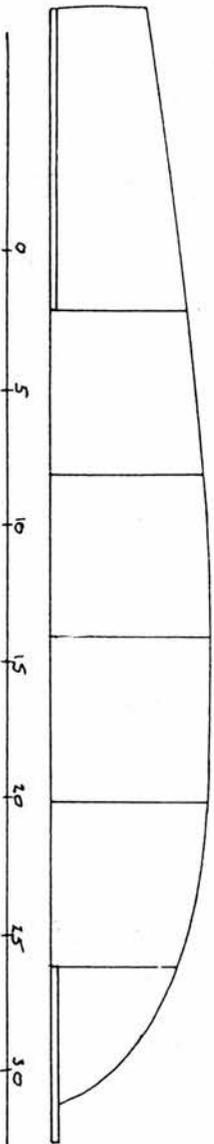
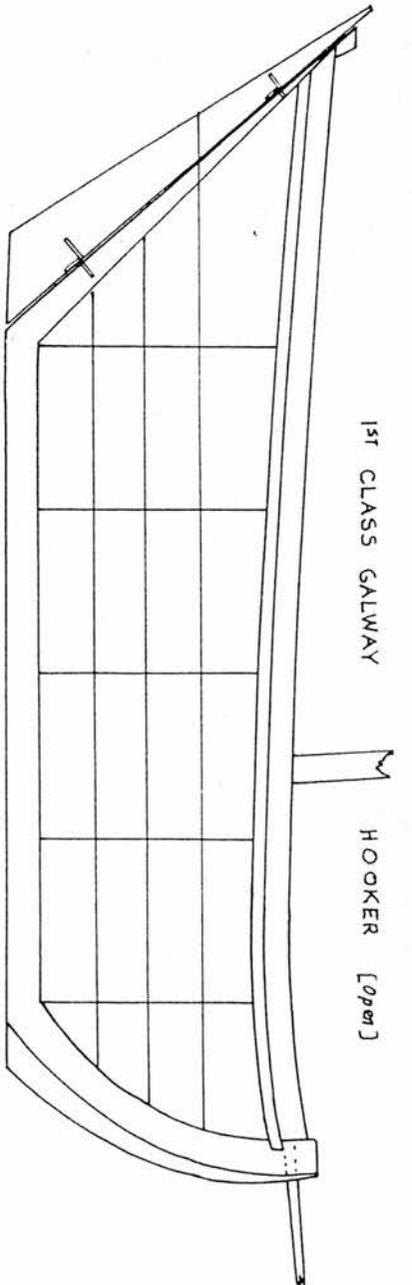


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27'2"
13 fms

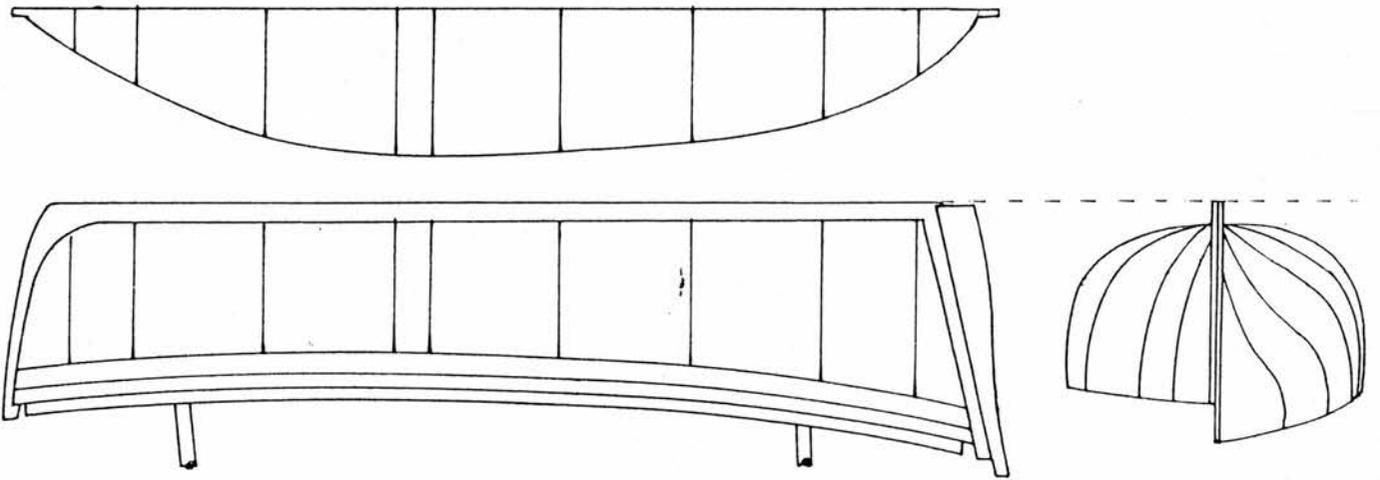


LOA
KEEL
39'4"
32'9"
19 fms

WASHINGTON REPORT
1849

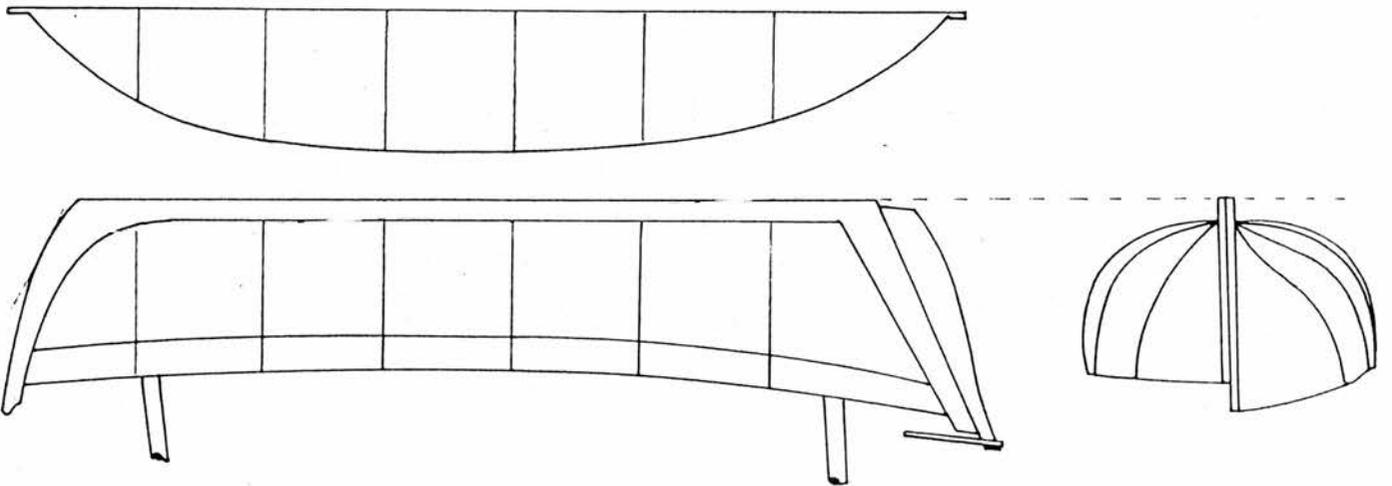


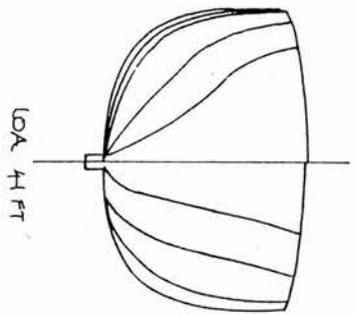
ST IVES FISHING BOAT c 1848



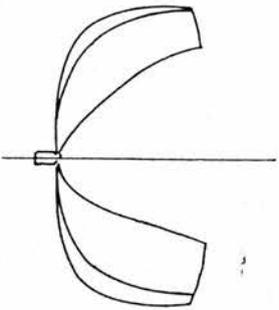
FROM THE WASHINGTON REPORT
OF 1849

PENZANCE FISHING BOAT c 1848

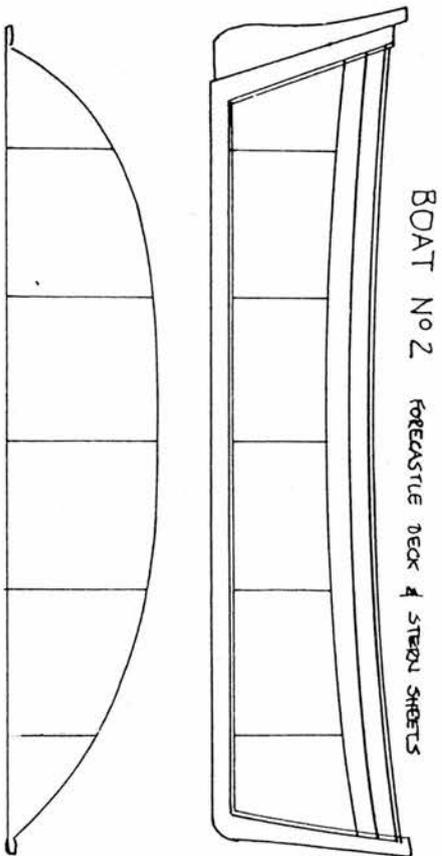
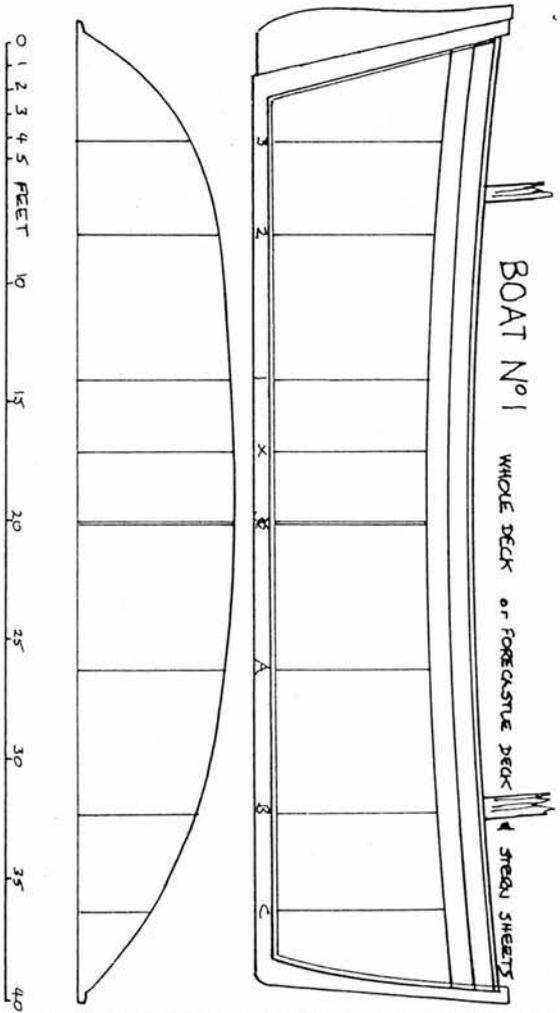




LOA 41 FT



LOA 34 FT 6 IN



CAPT. WASHINGTON'S PROPOSED FISHING BOAT DRAFTS 1849 - DESIGNED BY JAMES PEAKE, H.M. NAVAL ARCHITECT

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Key to photographs

First group identifies the author

Second the country...S – Scotland, E – England, W – Wales, I – Ireland, IOM – Isle of Man.

Third photo number under category

Thus: WD/S/01 = William Daniell / Scotland / photo 01

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