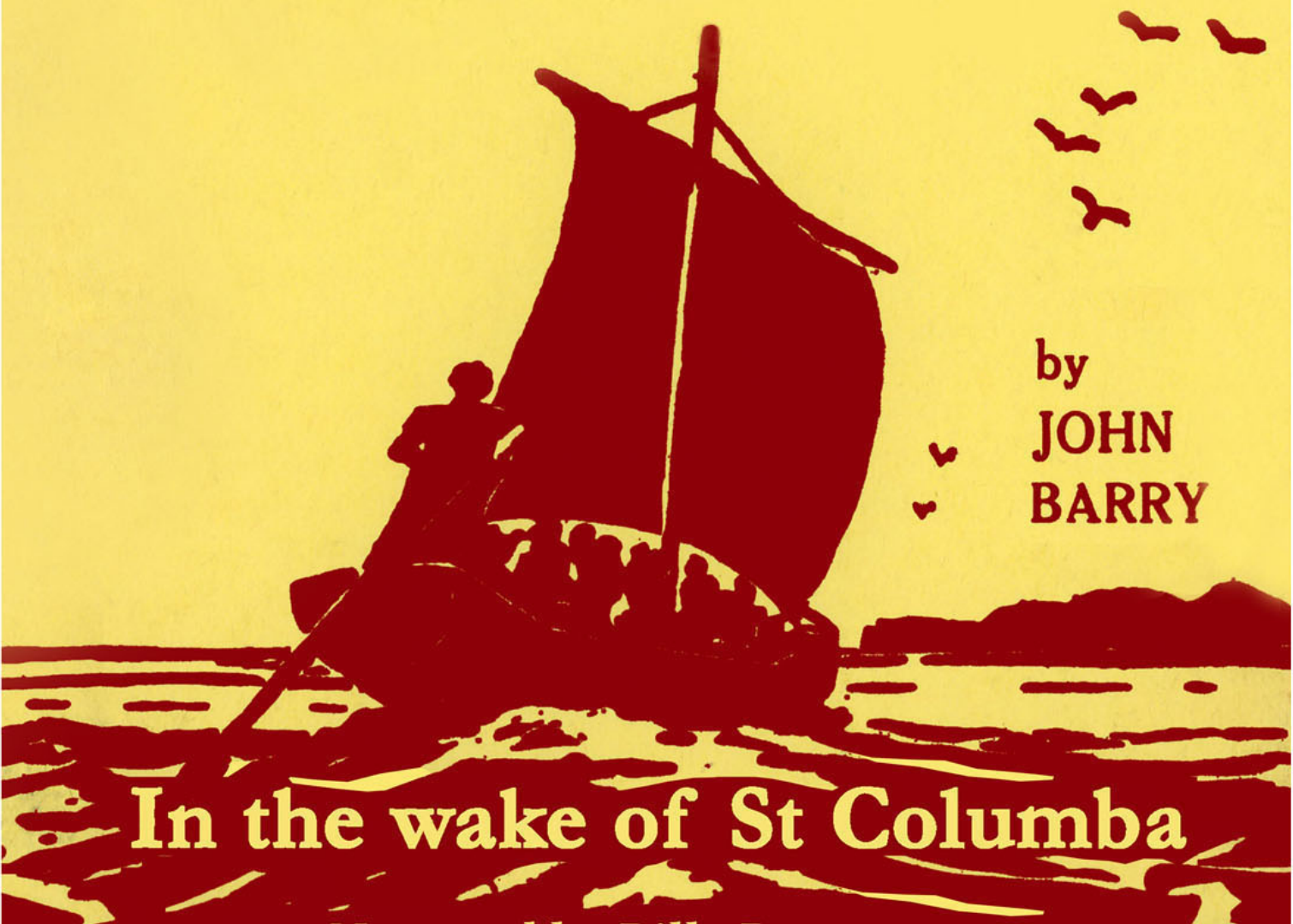


JOYFUL PILGRIMAGE

by
**JOHN
BARRY**



In the wake of St Columba

Narrated by Billy Patterson
with Jonathan Barry, Bruce Clark & Nicholas Grainger

BONUS CONTENT WITH MAPS, ILLUSTRATIONS AND PHOTOS

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FROM VICE-ADMIRAL A. R. HEZLET, C.B., D.S.O.*, D.S.C.

THE FLAG OFFICER, SCOTLAND

AND NORTHERN IRELAND

NOVEMBER 1963

FOREWORD

To design and build a replica of a famous craft of the past and re-enact in her an historic voyage—the story of such a venture could hardly fail to fascinate any Seaman and stir his imagination.

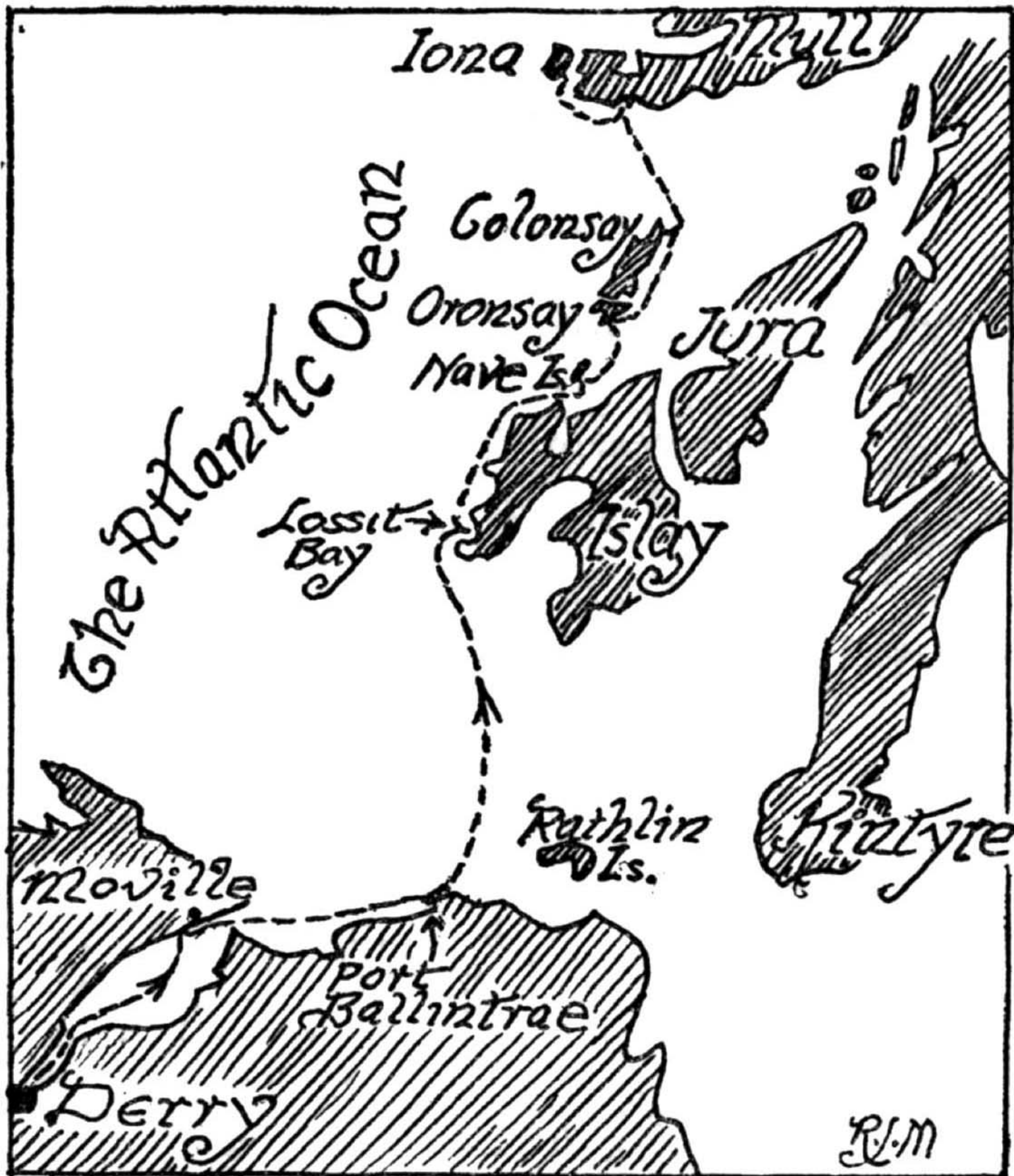
This story is no exception, yet there is far more in it than the Sea and Seamanship, it is a story also of Faith and an inspiring example of the way in which vision can be translated into achievement, whatever the difficulties along the way

As such I commend it to Seamen and Landsmen alike for I am sure that all will find much in it to learn and to admire.

A. R. HEZLET

Vice-Admiral

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Northern Ireland and the Western Isles,
showing the route followed by the Curragh,
June 1963

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Curragh at sea under Sail

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Pulling away from the Quay

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Leaving the Cathedral.

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Bishop of Derry Blesses Crew

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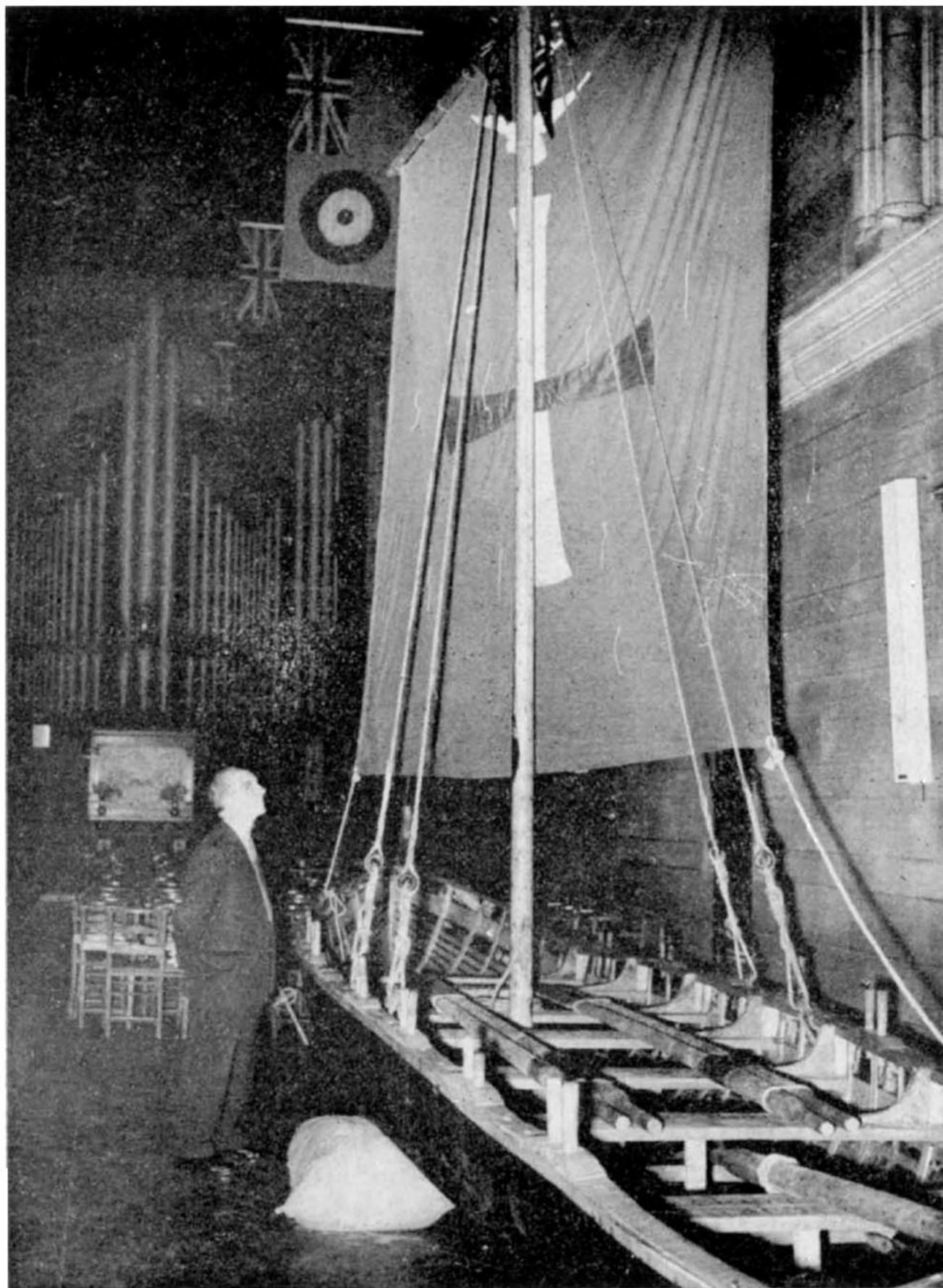
The Pilgrim Procession on Iona.

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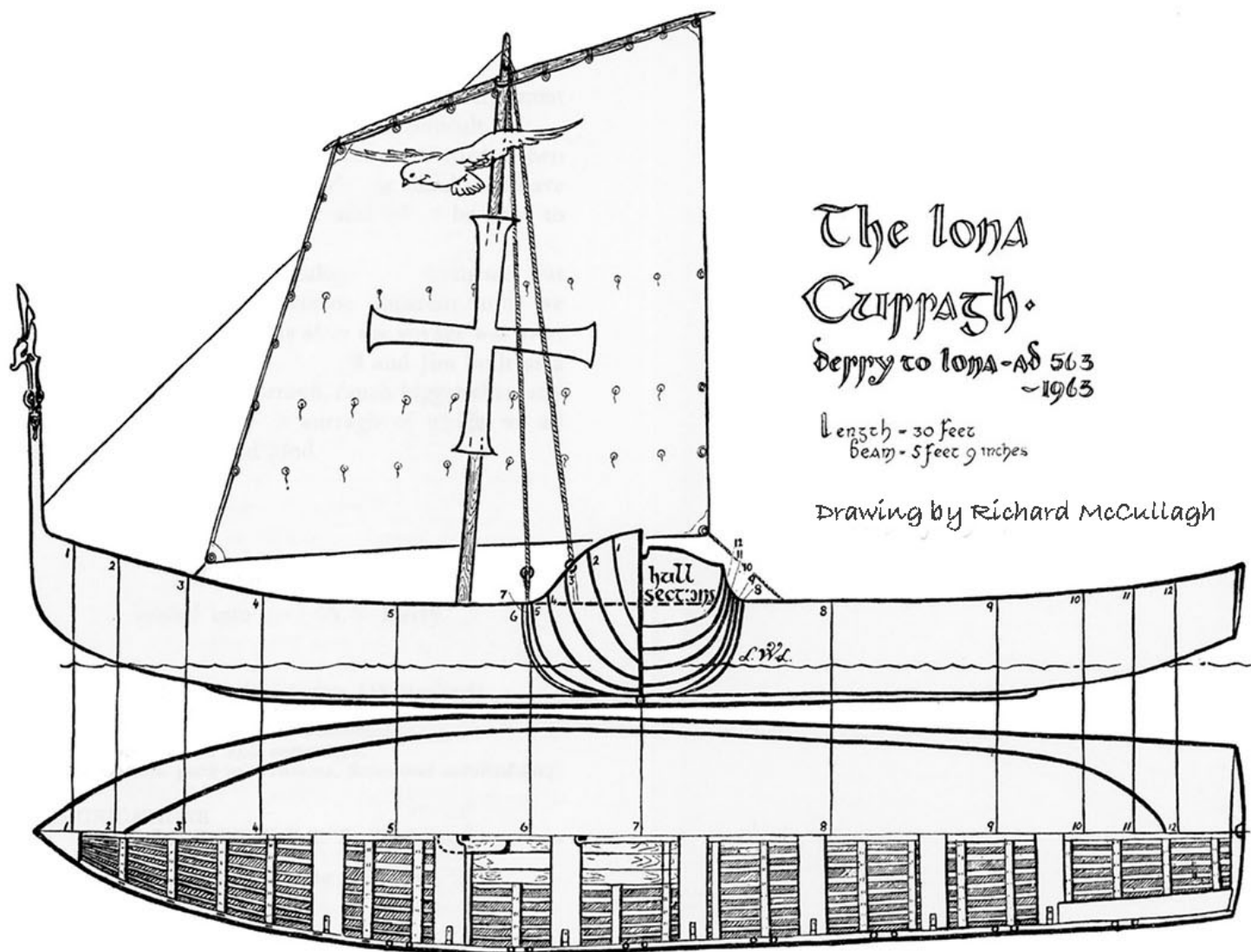
**Back Row (Left to Right): Richard McCullagh, Rev. Billy McCappin, Jim Boyd, Brian McKee,
Terry Maginis, Richard Hilliard, John Connolly, Rev. Stephen Cave**
Front Row (Left to Right): Tony Orr, Billy Patterson, Wallace Clark, Canon John Barry, Alistair Jameson.

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The Curragh in St Ann's Cathedral, Belfast
after return from Iona.

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This Curragh, designed by Richard McCullagh, is an enlarged edition of the hundreds which are in daily use in the west of Ireland. The area of the lug sail is 120 square feet. The boat was built by Jim Boyd who builds a number of small curraghs each year on Carrickfin Island, Co. Donegal. The gunwales and transom are of deal and the tarred skin of two thicknesses of cheap calico is stretched on a frame made from oak and larch which Jim felled in the woods of Dunlewy.

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LIST OF ALL GEAR
Loaded into the curragh in Derry

SAFETY

- 1 Rubber Dinghy – 8 man (13 overload).
- 1 Tin Red Flares.
- 1 Emergency S.O.S. Transmitter.
- Very Pistol and cartridges.
- (Dinghy contains pack with rations, flares and survival kit)*

COMMUNICATIONS

- 1 Walkie Talkie R.U.C. Radio (to communicate with Naval Drifter).
- 1 Portable Receiver (For forecasts).

GENERAL

- Anchor: 20 lb. Fisherman.
- 40 fm, 1¼ Nylon; 5 fm. spare 1½ manilla.
- Sea Anchor.
- 7 oars and 2 spare.
- Steering oar and crutch.
- Boat Hook/Whisker pole.
- 3 Fenders.
- Mast, Yard, Sail, 4 Shrouds, 1 Halliard, 1 sheet,
- 1 Tackrope, Traveller, 4 sheet lead bullseyes,
- 4 Plastic Buckets, for baling and camping use,
- 2 sponges, 13 stretchers; (4 strops for tripods),
- Entrenching Tool.
- Pair of side curtains; meat skewers; 6 steel tent pegs.
- Carpenters' tools and repair materials; spare thole pins.
- Sailmaker's kit and repair gear.
- First aid kit. 7 candles.

COOKING

- Pressure Cooker.
- Frying Pan; kettle; teapot; saucepan.

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14 enamel soup plates, 15 plastic mugs, drying up cloths, 10 lb. cylinder calor gas; 2 Rings:

Primus stove; Steel wool.

Can of Paraffin; Gas poker; Matches,

1 jerrican of water; 6 Army water bottles (one each thwart); Food for 48 hours.

NAVIGATION

Admiralty charts – 15 in number – in canvas wallet. Scottish Coast Pilot, I.C.C. and C.C.C. Sailing Directions, Tidal Atlas: Tide Tables, Hand bearing compass for steering, Pocket compass, Chart case, Log Book, Douglas Protractor, 2 torches, Tin of white flares.

Hawkins hand lamp; Binoculars.

PERSONAL

Each man — 1 kitbag, clearly labelled, containing following:-

1 Sleeping bag,

1 ground sheet or air mattress.

Spare clothing.

Wash gear,

One set of oil skins,

One life jacket.

1 Jack knife; 1 fork; spoon.

Above subdivided into several polythene bags. In the event of the curragh being swamped, kitbags, if properly made, will act as airbags.



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Glossary of nautical terms used in Joyful Pilgrimage

In the Technical Comment section of Joyful Pilgrimage, the curragh's skipper, Wallace Clark, uses many nautical terms to describe the curragh's build and setup, and her performance under sail and oar. Hopefully, the explanations below will help those less familiar with nautical terms to understand his words.

- **A long pull:** an extended hard row.
- **Amidships:** the middle of the boat, midway between the front (bow) and back (stern).
- **Beaching:** Bringing a boat onto a shore or shallow area.
- **Beam:** The maximum width of a boat, measured at the widest point, from side to side.
- **Bilge stringer:** A long piece of timber that runs along the inside of a boat's hull near the turn of the bilge (the area where the bottom curves up to become the sides) to provide structural strength and support the frames (supporting pieces of timber that run from side to side following the curve of the side of the boat).
- **Boat hook/Whisker pole:** a long pole with a curved hook and a blunt tip on the end, used to push, pull, or maneuver a boat. Often also used as a 'whisker pole', where it is attached to the bottom back corner of a sail and used to push the sail out from the boat to catch more wind, usually when the wind is coming from behind the boat.
- **Bow:** The front of a boat
- **Centre line steering oar (rudder):** This is a historical form of steering mechanism on a boat where an oversized oar is mounted directly along the central axis (centre line) at the very back (stern) of a boat to control the boat's direction.
- **Dead run:** This is a point of sail where a boat moves directly downwind, with the wind blowing straight from behind in line with the vessel's centre-line.
- **Dipping lug:** This is a traditional type of sail, which is set 'fore-and-aft' (i.e. in line with the boat, unlike a 'square-sail' that is set across the boat), where the spar holding the top of the sail crosses the mast and must be lowered and shifted to the opposite side of the mast every time the boat turns through the wind. It's efficient because it creates a clean sail shape, but it's troublesome to handle.
- **Double gunwale:** This refers to a boat having two distinct parallel rails along the top edge of the sides of the hull, the gunwale. Specifically, an inwale (inside the hull) and an outwale (outside the hull). It's commonly used to strengthen a boat's gunwale.
- **False keel:** This is an extra piece of timber (usually) attached below a boat's keel. The keel is the main centre-line structural spine running along the bottom of a boat's hull from the bow (front) to the stern (back). An additional false keel protects the keel and improves a boat's sailing performance by increasing lateral resistance, which reduces the tendency of a boat to slide sideways in the water when under sail. It may also improve stability, particularly if it is weighted. But it increases the depth of water required to float the boat (the draught).
- **Fighting up into shelter:** A nautical expression used to describe a boat sailing or rowing against strong wind and waves to reach a safe protected area.

- **Fisherman (anchor):** This is perhaps the most common type of anchor, which, combined with some chain, is used to attach a boat to the sea floor in relatively shallow water.
- **Fishing line trolled from amidships:** This means a fishing line, attached to the middle of the boat (amidships), was being dragged through the water. When under sail, the direction the line extends from the boat (towards the wind) indicates how much sideways movement the boat is making. See **leeway**.
- **fm (as in 40 fm):** 40 fathoms; a fathom is a measure of length (usually used for depth) and is equivalent to 6 feet, 1.83 metres. So, 40 fm is 240 feet, or 73.2 metres.
- **Force 3 or 4:** This refers to the Beaufort Wind Force Scale, which measures wind speed and sea conditions based on visual observations.
 - Force 3: Gentle Breeze; Wind Speed: 7 to 10 knots (8 to 12 mph or 12 to 19 km/h). Large wavelets and scattered whitecaps where crests begin to break. Safe and ideal for small boat sailing.
 - Force 4: Moderate Breeze; Wind Speed: 11 to 16 knots (13 to 17 mph or 20 to 28 km/h). Small waves becoming longer, with frequent whitecaps forming across the water. Sailing becomes lively and powered-up; sailors might consider reducing sail if there are strong gusts
- **Forefoot:** This is the part of the hull of a boat where the front end of the horizontal keel is joined to the bottom of the stem, the forward-most part or upward curve of the bow at the front of the boat.
- **Greased hides:** Animal skins treated with tallow, oil or fat to make them waterproof, flexible and durable for marine use
- **Gunwale ceased to have any rise at the stern:** This means that the top edge of the boat's side (the gunwale) became completely flat or level as it reached the back of the boat (the stern), rather than curving upward as is more common and desirable in a traditional boat to avoid larger waves sweeping across the back of the boat. The diminishing rise of the gunwale at the back of the boat (the stern), together with the weight of the men in the stern, made it more likely that the tops of waves would sweep over the gunwale into the boat, weighing the stern (back) of the boat down and making it still more likely for more waves to sweep over the gunwale. Quick bailing (scooping up the water with a container and throwing it over the side) would become essential to keep the boat floating.
- **Halliard:** The name given to a rope used on a boat to raise or lower a sail, spar or flag.
- **Handling in surf:** This refers to how a boat responds to being steered and maintains stability in breaking waves and coastal surf. In open water (away from a beach), when a wave moves through water, the water itself just goes up and down and presents little or no danger to a boat. It is only when the top of a wave breaks, such as when the wave approaches shallower water, causing the height of the wave to increase to a point where the top of the wave is no longer stable and it 'breaks', that the water itself starts moving forward, creating surf. Larger waves breaking and causing powerful, fast-moving surf on a beach can drive a boat forward at speed and steering can become extremely difficult. The boat can easily be swept sideways, then rolled over by the cascading water and overwhelmed. Both boat and crew can be lost.

- **Hard-mouthed:** This is an equestrian term that Wallace Clark has adopted to describe steering the curragh. A 'hard-mouthed' horse is one that has become insensitive to the bit (in its mouth), making the animal (curragh) stubborn, obstinate and difficult to steer or restrain.
- **Hawkins hand lamp:** Not known today (2026), but this was probably a small battery-powered lamp with a shutter mechanism enabling it to be used for signalling at night using Morse code.
- **Held up to windward by the lee bow wave:** This describes a hydrodynamic phenomenon where a boat is pushed or kept slightly toward the upwind direction by the pressure and displacement of water created by its own bow wave on the sheltered (lee) side of the bow. A deeper forefoot enhances this effect. It's desirable as it helps the boat make a better course against the wind.
- **Helmsman:** The person steering (helming) a boat.
- **High bow:** This refers to the front section of a boat that rises significantly higher above the water than the rest of the hull. Traditional Irish curraghs have an exceptionally high bow for crucial functional and survival purposes:
 - **Wave Clearance and Sheering:** Curraghs were traditionally built to operate off the rugged, storm-battered west coast of Ireland. Because they lack a traditional heavy keel and sit buoyant and high on the water like a seagull, a highly swept, elevated bow prevents the ocean's heavy rollers and surf from crashing over the front and swamping the open vessel during beach launches.
 - **Buoyant Lift:** As the boat meets a large wave, the steeply angled and high bow causes the waterplane area to rapidly expand as it climbs. This creates an aggressive upward buoyancy force, pushing the "head" of the light boat up and over the crest rather than cutting straight through it.
 - **Beach Launching:** Curraghs are fundamentally beach-launched boats. Their high, sharply raked bow allows the crew to push the boat out through rough crashing shoreline surf without immediately filling the hull with water
- **Hundredweight:** A pre-metric weight measure commonly abbreviated to cwt, (from the Roman c numeral meaning 100). Equivalent to 100 pounds in the US, and 112 pounds in the UK.
- **In danger of being embayed:** This refers to a sailing boat at risk of becoming trapped inside a bay or between two headlands (capes) by a wind blowing directly towards the shore. The combination of the wind direction (blowing toward the land), the surrounding coastline, and a boat's poor ability to sail upwind can make it incredibly difficult or impossible for a traditional sailing vessel to sail out into open water. Many sailing vessels have been wrecked, and lives lost through becoming embayed.
- **Inclined to gripe:** This refers to a boat's tendency to turn its bow directly up into the wind against the efforts of the helmsman. Also known as 'weather helm'. It's caused by a combination of wind in the sails and hull design that naturally forces the front of the boat to turn toward the wind. A little weather helm is desirable because it creates some hydrodynamic lift, pulling the boat upwind, and provides a safety factor by turning the boat into the wind in a gust, reducing pressure on the sail. However, excessive weather helm

makes a boat hard to steer, and the excessive rudder (or steering oar) angle needed to sail straight acts like a brake, slowing the boat down.

- **Knees:** In boat construction, knees are right-angled braces used to reinforce structural joints where two timbers intersect. They act like heavy-duty brackets, preventing the boat from twisting under the stress of ocean waves.
- **Lead bullseyes:** (More commonly known today as fairleads). Bullseye fairleads are a type of fixed rigging hardware used on a boat to guide a line (rope or wire) smoothly and control its direction. A bullseye is a simple, circular ring or eyelet, held in a rope or wire strop, with a completely smooth, rounded interior. Unlike blocks or pulleys, a classic bullseye has no moving parts or rotating sheaves. Lines are threaded straight through the centre hole.
- **Leather-covered craft:** Historically, a "leather-covered craft" refers to a primitive or traditional boat made by stretching animal hides over a flexible wooden, wicker, or bone framework. These boats are incredibly light, resilient, and capable of navigating both rough seas and shallow rivers. A curragh, a traditional Irish ocean-going vessel, was made of light wooden frames covered in tanned ox hides.
- **Lee board:** This is a flat, fin-like wooden board attached to the side of a boat that is lowered into the water on the leeward (sheltered) side to prevent the vessel from slipping sideways.
- **Leeway:** This is the sideways drift of a boat or ship off its intended course caused by the force of the wind pushing against its side.
- **Like a Sputnik:** Not a common nautical term. However, the Russian Sputnik, the first manmade Earth-orbiting body, was launched in 1957, 6 years before the 1963 Curragh voyage, and for three months (before it fell out of orbit and burnt up in the atmosphere), could be fairly easily seen from Ireland on a dark night racing across the heavens.
- **Lug sail:** This is a four-cornered, fore-and-aft sail hoisted on a slanted spar called a yard, which hangs obliquely across the mast. Part of the sail area extends forward of the mast. It's a rig that is traditionally used on small boats and coastal fishing craft. (See Dipping lugsail above).
- **Making good a course eight points off the wind by pointing up five to six points off, leeway ... was in the order of three points:** Traditional sailing terminology divides a full circle into 32 points of the compass (each point is 11.25 degrees). Making sense of Wallace Clark's description of trying to sail the curragh upwind:
 - **"Pointing up five to six points off [the wind]":** Wallace was steering the curragh's bow at an angle of 5 to 6 compass points (about 56° to 67°) away from the direction the wind was blowing. This is how close he was trying to sail toward the wind. He would have been limited by the sail. We can assume that if he pointed any closer to the wind, the leading edge of the sail would have backwinded, and the curragh would have slowed or stopped sailing because the wind pressure was the same on both sides of the sail.
 - **"Leeway... was in the order of three points":** Because of the wind pushing against the side of the curragh, the curragh was sliding sideways. This sideways drift (leeway) pushed the curragh an additional 3 points (about 34°) off Wallace's intended course.

- "Making good a course eight points off the wind": "Making good" means the actual track the curragh achieved over the seabed. By adding the 3 points of sideways drift to the 5 points they were steering ($5 + 3 = 8$), their true path through the water was 8 points (90°) away from the wind.
 - In short: Wallace was trying to sail the curragh sharply into the wind to make his desired course, but because the curragh was drifting sideways so much, it ended up travelling at a 90-degree angle (perpendicular) to the wind.
 - In other words, they were not actually making any way upwind at all. It was time for the oars!
- **Moderate beam sea:** This tells us that sea waves were approaching the boat from directly or near directly on the side of the boat (i.e. at about a 90-degree angle to the boat). Their height would probably have been 1.25 to 2.5 metres (about 4 to 8 feet). This is a common sea state, and it is likely that in the moderately deep water the curragh was in, the wave tops would not have been breaking, or just a little, and the waves would have been safely passing under the light buoyant curragh, lifting her up and down as they passed beneath, while causing a sideways rolling motion.
- **Needs spare buoyancy:** When a boat is floating normally, its weight is perfectly balanced by the buoyant force of the water displaced by the submerged part of the hull. Spare buoyancy refers to the amount of hull above the water that isn't normally used to keep the boat afloat but is available when conditions change, e.g., when the boat is rolling in waves or larger breaking waves. Wallace Clark was concerned that the heavily loaded curragh with 13 men did not have as much reserve buoyancy as he would have liked for safety.
- **Otter board:** this refers to a board made of wood attached to a fishing trawl net's opening to keep the net spread wide open while being towed through the water. Wallace Clark thought the fishing line from the curragh must have such a board attached to set far out from the curragh (towards the wind) rather than following in the boat's wake. (See also **Leeway** above). Of course he knew it didn't (have an otter board) but was shocked by how much leeway the curragh was making.
- **Planked boat:** This refers to a boat whose hull is formed by attaching wooden boards (planks) to an inner framework.
- **Pointed stern:** This is a boat design where the back of a boat narrows to a point instead of being square (the latter known as a transom stern). In a boat made of traditional materials, a pointed stern provides greater structural strength and can give a more comfortable motion, but it provides less buoyancy and less space than a transom stern. The curragh had a transom stern.
- **Pulling to windward:** Rowing against the wind. This is hard work, as both the waves and wind press against the boat and oars, and a more rapid up-and-down motion makes rowing more difficult. Progress would have been slow. See also **A long pull** above.
- **Quarter steering oars mounted on pins on stout outriggers, the lee one generally the best to use:** Rather than trying to steer with a single centrally placed oar extending over the back of the curragh, Wallace Clark is describing here a more traditional steering method used on boats before the invention of a centrally placed rudder. For this, large oars are mounted on

the rear sides of a boat (**the quarter**), pivoting on pegs (**pins**) that hold the oar in place while allowing it to pivot. These pins are supported by a strong beam that projects outwards from the hull (**outriggers**). He suggests that the oar on the side sheltered from the wind (**the lee one**) would have been the best one to use. This would let the person steering face away from the wind and make it easier to control the boat's tendency to turn toward the wind by pulling the oar toward their body. See **Inclined to gripe** above.

- **Reaching:** This describes a point of sail where a boat travels across the wind, with the wind coming onto the boat's side. This is usually the fastest point of sail.
- **Reserve buoyancy:** see **Needs spare buoyancy** above.
- **Rig:** This refers to the arrangement and configuration of a boat's mast(s), spars, sails, and lines (the rigging) used to capture wind power and propel the boat.
- **Running:** This describes the point of sail when a boat is sailing directly or near directly in front of the wind, with the wind coming from behind the boat. Usually, the waves come from the same direction as the wind, so the waves would be coming from behind the boat as well (travelling faster than the boat). See **Dead Run** above. This is usually the most comfortable point of sail with the least motion and apparently little wind. But it's not the fastest. See **Reaching** above.
- **Scull:** This describes the use of a single oar used on the back of a small boat to propel the boat, and also the use of two oars, one on each side of the boat, held by a single oarsman, the latter being that described here by Wallace Clark. Aboard the curragh, it was decided that sculling would require the curragh to be too narrow to provide sufficient stability, buoyancy, and space. Moreover, sculling (with an oar in each hand) requires more skill and practice than rowing with a single oar.
- **Sculling notch:** This refers to a semi-circular or U-shaped cutout in the centre of a boat's transom (the flat back surface of the stern). This acts as a pivot point when using a single oar off the stern to scull (see above). According to Wallace Clark, they first tried locating the centrally placed steering oar in a sculling notch in the transom, but this proved too weak.
- **Sea anchor:** This is an underwater, small but strong, parachute-like device usually deployed on a long line from the front of a boat to create drag, slow down drifting, and (hopefully) keep the boat facing into the wind and waves during rough weather and strong winds. Unlike a conventional anchor, it sits just below the surface of the sea and makes no contact with the seabed.
- **Several oars going sometimes to windward, usually to leeward:** This was a tactic used by Wallace Clark on the curragh to help steer the boat (the steering oar not being sufficient alone). He found that when sailing it was usually necessary to have one or two oarsmen rowing on one side or the other of the curragh to help maintain the desired course. Usually, he says, the leeward side, this being the opposite side to that which the wind was blowing onto. However, they weren't rowing in the conventional sense, but backwatering (pushing the oar in the opposite way) to counteract the curragh's tendency to turn up towards the wind. (See **Gripe** above). Described elsewhere as **Two after oars poised to backwater** to assist the helmsman.

- **Sheet:** Aboard a sailing boat, a sheet is a rope attached to the lower corner of a sail to control its angle relative to the wind.
- **Shetland sixarene rig:** This refers to the sail setup used on a **sixarene**, a traditional, open, double-ended wooden fishing boat native to the Shetland Islands. The name comes from the Norse and describes a six-oared boat, about 25–30 feet long (7.8 to 9.1 metres), and about 6–8 feet wide (2.8–3.4 m). The sixarene rig evolved over the centuries from the Viking square sail and features a near-rectangular sail suspended on a wooden spar (a yard) from a single short mast, allowing the sail to be set ‘fore and aft’ in line with the boat. It is extremely efficient when sailing before the wind or with the wind on the side of the boat (**reaching**, see above). In its original form (as Wallace Clark appears to have adopted it for the curragh), its performance to windward (against the wind) is poor, as he found. Shetland fishermen modified the rig over the years to improve its windward performance, but these adaptations are not seen on the curragh rig. This is understandable, as the sixarene is a much more substantial planked boat that can sail in more demanding conditions than the light curragh. To go to windward, Wallace relied on his crew of oarsmen.
- **Ship water:** This refers to water coming into a boat over the side of the boat. It doesn’t refer to water coming in from a leak or hole in the boat.
- **Shrouds:** These are strong wires or ropes that run from the side of a boat’s hull to the top of the mast (or partway sometimes) to provide lateral (side-to-side) support for the mast. They work together with a fore-stay and back-stay to support the mast.
- **Stern:** The back of a boat.
- **Stern sheets:** This refers to seating in the back of a boat, often around the side inside the gunwale, further back than the rearmost rower’s bench, and is where the helmsman (steering) commonly sits. The name comes from this position being where the **sheets** for the sails (see above) were/are usually controlled from.
- **Stretchers:** These are the footrests used by rowers to brace themselves against when pulling an oar. Aboard the curragh, they were removable, and when camping on a beach, doubled as tripod supports for the oars that supported the inverted curragh, under which they slept.
- **Tackrope:** This is a line used to control and secure the lower forward corner of a sail.
- **The curragh stood up to her canvas:** This tells us that the curragh was quite stable and resisted heeling (tipping sideways) when the wind pushed against the sail (up to a point, it might be added).
- **Thole pins:** These are pairs of wooden pegs fitted to the upper side of the gunwale of a rowboat to act as a pivot point for an oar. They help to keep the oar in place while rowing. They can be seen in the photo of the curragh in St. Ann’s Cathedral. In modern rowboats they have been superseded by metal U-shaped rowlocks.
- **Thongs:** Thin strips of cured animal hide (leather) used as sturdy, flexible laces to stitch and bind the outer skin coverings together and lash them to the wooden framework of the curragh.
- **Thwart:** This is a bench that runs from one side of the curragh to the other on which an oarsman sits. It also provides transverse strength to the boat.

- **Too light in scantlings and construction:** This implies that the structural dimensions, the frames and materials of the curragh, were too thin and weak to safely withstand the loading they were subjected to and the subsequent forces of the sea. In defence of the builder, a curragh is essentially designed as a very light boat and has been successful for aeons as such. Increasing the weight and strength of the construction would have diminished this important characteristic. A dilemma Wallace Clark understood well.
- **Transom:** This is the flat (or slightly curved) squared-off back end of a boat. It joins the two sides of the hull at the back of the boat, adding strength and rigidity.
- **Traveller:** Aboard a sailing boat, the sheet of a sail is often fed through a ring of some sort that can slide on a rod or track across the boat from one side to the other, enabling a better shape of the sail to be set.
- **Two after oars poised to backwater to assist the helmsman:** see **Several oars going** sometimes to windward, usually to leeward above.
- **Very Pistol:** Flare gun used to fire coloured flares, smoke, or blanks into the air for signalling or illumination.
- **Watches:** Aboard a boat, the crew is usually divided up into teams that rotate duty (Watches) and rest periods over a 24-hour period. Because the curragh was never at sea for a full 24 hours, it appears the crew were divided into two teams of six and, when necessary to row, would alternate 'watches', i.e., rowing.
- **Wetted area:** also known as wetted surface area, refers to the total external surface area of a boat's hull submerged in the water. The submerged surface area causes drag, which slows a boat down, so the less, the better, as long as stability and the sailing performance are not compromised.
- **Yard:** This refers to the diagonal spar (pole) pulled up the curragh's mast (by a halliard, see above) and from which hangs the sail.

Joyful Pilgrimage

by John Barry

First published in 1963 by The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (APCK), Dublin.

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PO Box 2440, Brighton Nth, Victoria 3186, Australia

Email info@vinycombpress.com

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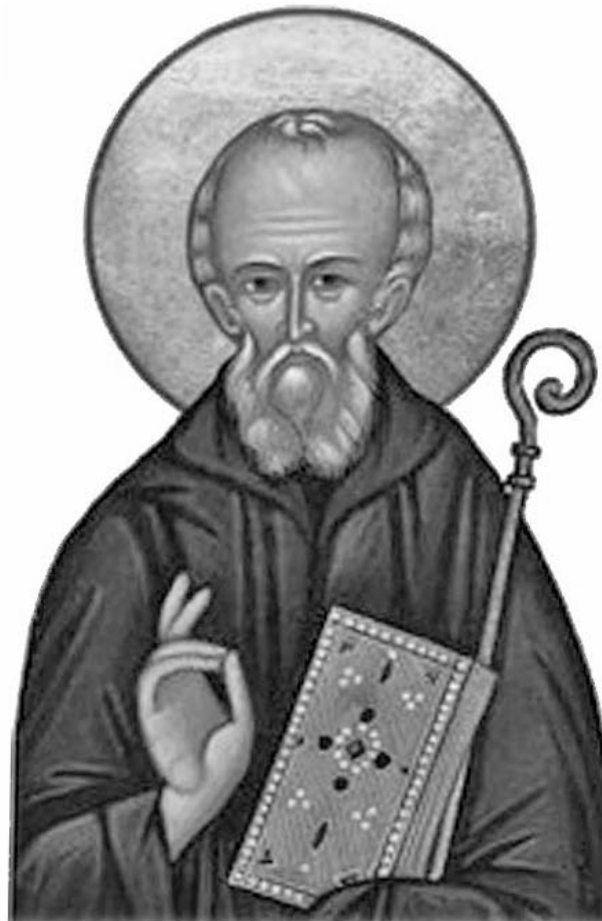
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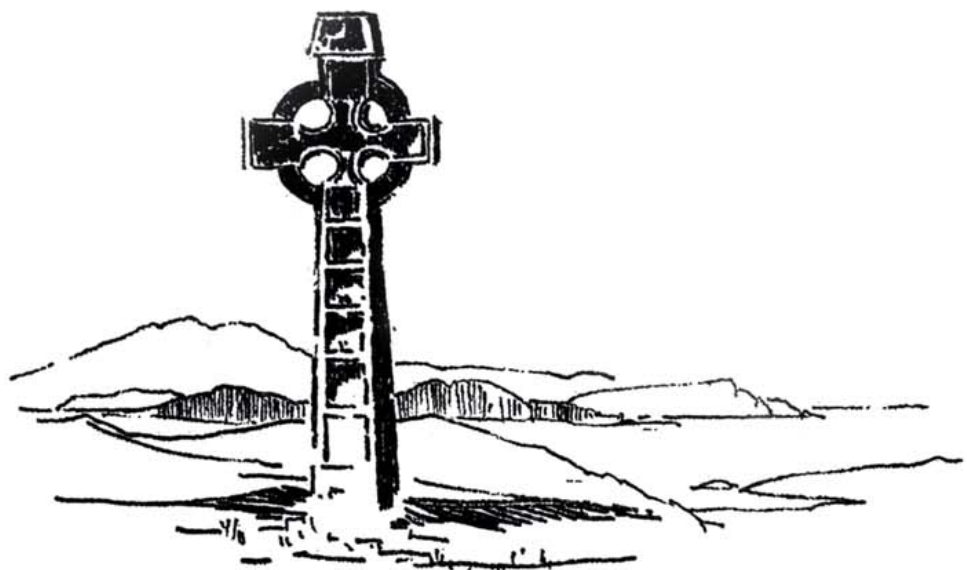
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About the author

John Barry was born in Belfast in 1915 into a Protestant family, the descendants of religious migrants from Northern Italy who had reached Ireland in the early 17th Century. Embodying the spirit of his forbears, he was ordained in 1938, coming to believe that in life we may be called to travel and must be ready to embrace others and their differences, their cultures, and ideas.



In St Columba, he found a kindred spirit, someone from the distant past whose spirituality predates our contemporary divisions, and someone whose vision can inspire us in the present and lead to a better future.



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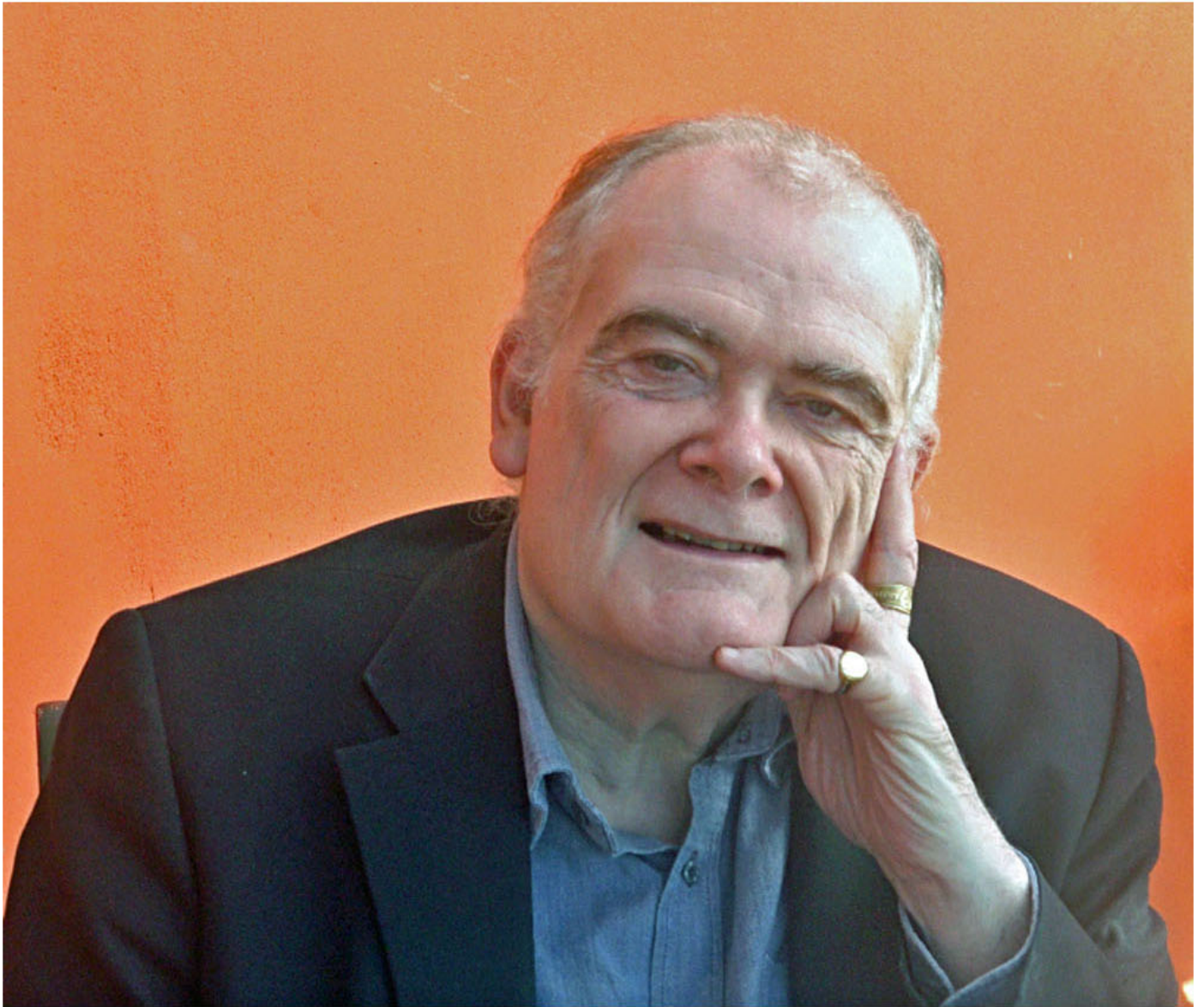
Billy Patterson in 1963 - Crewmember and Narrator

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**Jonathan Barry, son of Canon John Barry in 1963 (aged 16)
leading the procession to Derry Cathedral before the voyage.
Narrator**

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Bruce Clark, son of the 1963 curragh skipper Wallace Clark, is a British journalist, author, and commentator on international affairs, religion, and history.

Narrator

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Nicholas Grainger, nephew of Canon John Barry aboard The Aegre in the middle of the Atlantic, 1973. Author of 'The Voyage of the Aegre' and Narrator.

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The 1963 Iona Curragh today

After the curragh's voyage from Derry to Iona in 1963, and her transport back to Ireland on the deck of the *Devonia*, the curragh was displayed for a time in St Ann's Cathedral in Belfast.

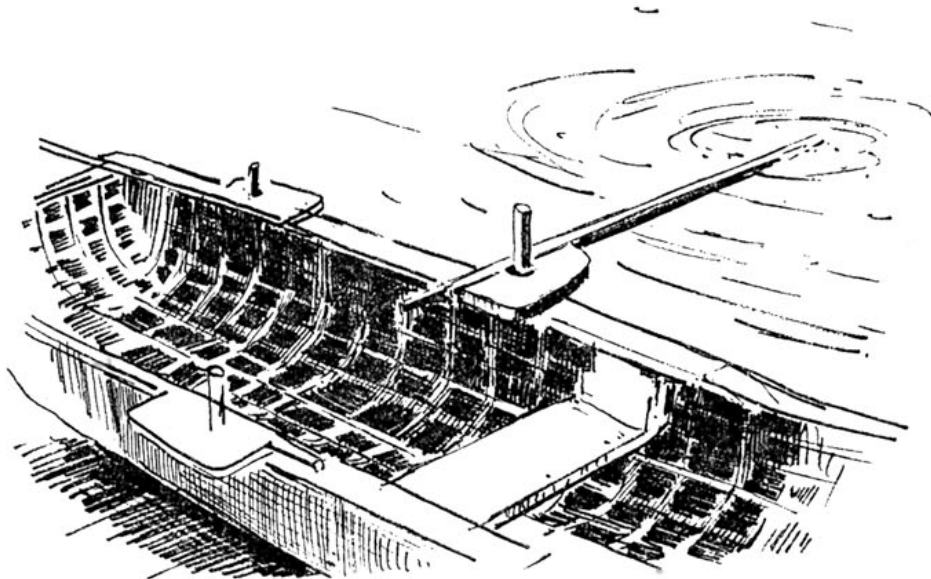
The curragh was then moved to Derry, where it was placed in the care of the Tower Museum near the city centre.

In 2017, Derry advanced plans to build a dedicated £11.2m maritime museum and archive facility at the historic 19th-century [Ebrington Barracks](#) site (a former WWII naval base known as *HMS Sea Eagle*). The plans for this new museum have evolved since 2017. It will now be a £15m regional attraction known as the DNA (Derry-Londonderry on the North Atlantic) Museum, scheduled to open in 2027.

The 30ft 1963 Iona curragh will be a major exhibit in the new building's Entrance Hall.

The curragh is currently in safe storage under the care of the Tower Museum's heritage team while the new venue is being constructed.

A specialised conservator recently evaluated the 63-year-old canvas-and-wood boat and found it in excellent shape, requiring only minor routine repairs before it returns to public display.



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Links to further information about Joyful Pilgrimage

Documentary films about the Journey on YouTube



A 24 minute film by Jack Neilson about the 1963 recreation of St Columba's voyage from Derry to Iona in 563AD.

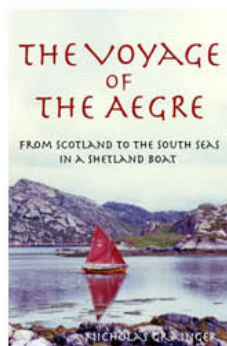
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TB3_GWUUUZc



A short 1 minute British Pathé newsreel about the 1963 voyage of the curragh featuring films of key events and narration.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-IOouwMTkA>

The Joyful Pilgrimage page on *The Voyage of The Aegre* website:



'My uncle went to sea in a boat with a calico skin...' is the opening sentence of Nicholas Grainger's account of sailing a small fishing boat from NW Scotland across the Atlantic and much of the Pacific in the early 1970s. He was partly inspired by his adventurous uncle, John Barry, and the 1963 curragh voyage.

See:

<https://nicholasgrainger.com.au/the-curragh-voyage-1963/>



Derry People/Donegal News 16 June 2023

PICTURE SPECIAL: A DONEGAL man who was a crew member on the Derry to Iona voyage has recalled the incredible experience 60 years on from the momentous journey..

<https://donegalnews.com/picture-special-donegal-man-recalls-incredible-iona-voyage-60-years-on/>

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