

support himself by. The stern did not like this a bit, for it robbed it of some of its all-important flexibility, and it split one rough March weekend off Dundrum ; and though we easily repaired the damage, the transom slowly dropped lower and lower in the water as we voyaged so that we used to ship water there long before there was any danger of doing so elsewhere and the gunwale ceased to have any rise at the stern at all.

Soon after starting to plan, we met Jim Boyd, who builds a number of small currachs annually as well as wooden boats, and he agreed to join the crew as well as build the curragh, a bold decision in the teeth of gloomiest prediction by local wiseacres. With his charming personality and great strength and skill as an oarsman, he proved the mainstay of the undertaking.

Having drawn the plans, Richard left the constructional details very largely to Jim. Donegal currachs are the roughest built of the surprisingly varied west coast type, they serve their normal purpose ideally but the transom in particular is weak, and our curragh (directly arising from the fact that she was too small and hence overloaded) proved too light in scantlings and construction. A double gunwale would have been stronger, with an extra bilge stringer, and knees bolted, or screwed in position instead of being merely nailed.

To improve her sailing qualities a deeper forefoot which would have been held up to windward by the lee bow wave would have helped. The length and depth of the false keel could have been increased