FOSO POCO Cork 21st July, 2021

Cathy Buchanan
Meitheal Mara
Crosses Green House
1998 - 2021

- Community boat yard
- Training centre
- Social enterprise
Naomhóg
(Co. Kerry currach)
COMMUNITY work & training

In Meitheal Mara we promote and foster maritime culture and traditional skills, using boatbuilding, woodcraft and seamanship as the means to help both groups and individuals to learn, progress and develop. We provide work and training for young people and adults through to retirement, and sometimes beyond. Our approach is inclusive and based on mutual respect.

Training is tailor-made to suit needs, abilities and time scales through a variety of programmes. We work closely with other local youth, education and community organisations to achieve positive outcomes. Funding partners include Cork Education and Training Board, Cork City Council, Cork County Council, the Port of Cork, Cooperation Ireland Cork, the Health Services Executive, Rebel, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the Department of Education, and the Department of Social Protection.

BOATBUILDING & woodcraft

Meitheal Mara’s workshop is at the heart of what we do.

Our workers specialise in building traditional Irish currachs, particularly the magnificent Kerry-style currach, and a variation on the 2-person hare and currach used on the north coast of Donegal. We are widely recognised for our success in the use of currach building to develop team work and personal effectiveness skills. We work with groups of young people and adults from diverse and sometimes challenging backgrounds.

We also provide repair services such as sanding, painting, restoration and maintenance of currachs and wooden boats. We build wooden boats too, and have developed one-off designs with our youth and community partners for all kinds of groups, events, exhibitions, documentaries and films, including Irish Design 2015 and The Game of Thrones.

The team in the workshop also produces the Meitheal Mara range of hand-made woodcraft: bowls, toys, model boats, bookshelves, tables and stools.

SEAMANSHIP rowing & sailing

The ethos of Meitheal Mara is to get people on the water, especially those who would not otherwise have the chance to do so. Young people in our Búidsúacht programme learn how to row, sail or paddle, and to become comfortable with handling boats. They might even build their own currach, or compete in an international seamanship contest in our flagship, the 38-foot Bantry longboat Fionnbarra.

Meitheal Mara’s workers learn water safety and boat handling skills as part of the regular workshop routine for the River Lee cleanup service and also carry out work for film and television companies.

Our partner organisations Neamhgha Chorchaí, Cork’s currach club, and Cork Dragons, the dragonboat club for breast cancer survivors, work with us to promote Cork’s growing reputation as a leading centre for community boating.

MARITIME culture & activities

Meitheal Mara is also actively involved in celebrating Ireland’s rich maritime heritage and in promoting and fostering maritime culture and activities locally and overseas.

The high point of our calendar, Ocean to City – An Rás Mhór is Ireland’s largest and most inclusive racing series and the anchor for the week-long Cork Harbour Festival each June. The 18-person crews in our regular Dragon Boat Challenge bring the colour and buzz of spring racing to Cork city centre. A gender-neutral race is encouraged in our CORKunavigation guide for those who want to paddle the Lee around Cork. We support the annual Rebel MAID for small boat and sea tourists in the proposed Cork Harbour Blueway.

Members of our staff and Board are often consulted for their expertise and take part in documentaries, research projects and publications, including the Traditional Boats of Ireland and Ulster’s Galway Boats.

As well as inspiration, getting people on and boats afloat requires good development planning and physical infrastructure. Meitheal Mara has a long history of advocacy, particularly for improving access to the water, based on submissions to local authorities, policy papers, research seminars and consultations.
Workshop
Workshop and river
Bádoireacht
Cork Harbour Festival & Ocean to City 2019

- Cork 2005 European Capital of Culture – legacy event
- 585 Ocean to City participants
- 26% overseas
- 544 Dragon Boat Challenge participants
- 5,640 Cork Harbour Festival participants
- 24,373 CHF Spectators
- 31,198 CHF Spectators & Participants
- 1,345 Bed Nights
- € 101 K total income
- 73:27 public:revenue
People

• Board:
  • 9 members of Board
  • 12 additional members of Board Committees
  • 9 members Bádóireacht Council

• Staff
  • 5 full-time
  • 6 part-time
  • 12 CE participants

• Volunteers
  • 7 additional year-round
  • 350 Cork Harbour Festival & Dragon Boat Challenges
People

- Naomhóga Chorcaí:
  - c. 120 full time members
- Cork Dragons
  - c. 90 full-time members
- Meitheal Mara Men’s Shed
  - 12 – 20 members
Training & progression

- Age groups from 12 to over 65 years
- Female and male
- All abilities and backgrounds
- Woodwork, woodturning, personal effectiveness – QQI Level 3
- Boat building, rowing and seamanship – preparatory
Sustainability – income sources

- Sales & services: 15%
- Consultancy: 4%
- Programmes (CSP, Bádoireacht, BTEI): 8%
- Ocean to City: 20%
- Project grants: 1%
- Fund raising: 1%
- Training allowance: 1%
- Donations: 1%
- Memberships etc: 49%
Sustainability 2001 - 2020

Meitheal Mara Teo - Annual Accounts 2001 - 2020

Graph showing the annual accounts from 2001 to 2020.
Meitheal Mara
Crosses Green House
1998 - 2021

• Thank you!