

Fenit Port & Marina



For centuries the Old Port of Fenit was Barrow Harbour. The port was key in medieval times to monastic settlements in Ardfert. Blennerville Quay became the primary area port built in the middle of the 17th century until silting compromised its viability. Tralee Ship Canal, a town port was completed in 1846, superseding Blennerville, but before long silting and the increasing size of incoming ships doomed its viability. A deep-water port was established in Fenit in the late 1880's. The modern-day Fenit Viaduct & Harbour was upgraded in the early 1950's. The old wooden structure was replaced when it was discovered that during construction some wooden piles hadn't been treated with creosote. The non-creosoted piles were damaged by sea worms and were rotting leaving the pier in a dangerous condition.² The old wooden structure was replaced and opened in 1955. Fenit remains an important international port to this day, and the modern structure includes a deep sea pier of approximately 175 meters.



Data Sources:

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fenit>

Keenan Desmond, 'Post-Famine Ireland: Social Structure: Ireland as it Really Was' (2006)

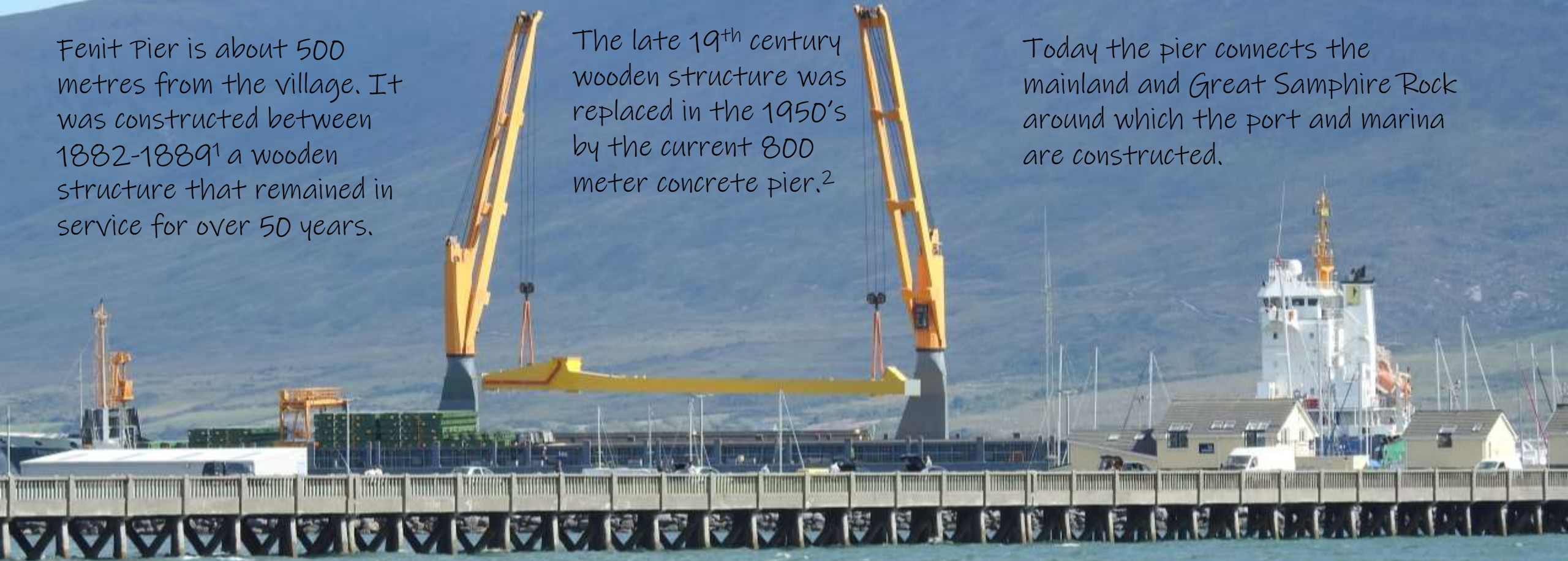
² The Kerry Sentinel, August 19, 1893. Dangerous Condition of the Fenit Pier. From the records of Bridie Brassil, local historian & folklorist.

Fenit Pier

Fenit Pier is about 500 metres from the village. It was constructed between 1882-1889¹ a wooden structure that remained in service for over 50 years.

The late 19th century wooden structure was replaced in the 1950's by the current 800 meter concrete pier.²

Today the pier connects the mainland and Great Samphire Rock around which the port and marina are constructed.



¹ Source: King, Jeremiah King, 'County Kerry Past and Present' Accessed at: http://www.askaboutireland.ie/aai-files/assets/ebooks/80_County-Kerry-Past-and-Present/80%20County%20Kerry%20Past%20and%20Present.pdf

²Source: Lewis, Frank 'In the Footsteps of St. Brendan' May 8, 2007. Accessed at: www.saint-Brendan.org/images/gallery/092511aslibhreanainn.htm

Fenit Port

The most westerly commercial port of Ireland, the British isles and mainland Europe.¹ It is the only commercial port between Foynes and Cork.



Data Sources:

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fenit>

Exports from Fenit Port



Exports from Fenit are largely cranes and related goods manufactured by Liebherr Killarney. Shipment destinations are worldwide.

Tug Guide Boats



Vessels up to 500 feet in length and up to 17,000 Dwt can be accommodated in Fenit Port. The larger vessels necessitate tugboat guidance into and out of the harbour. Tugboats connect with incoming ships just beyond the lighthouse. They safely guide and manoeuvre the ships into and out of port.



A Fishing Village for Generations

Traditionally a fishing village, in early morning light vessels still depart the harbour for area fishing grounds.



Fishing changes with the seasons, with close to shore shrimp fishing August to December, Tralee Bay oyster fishing predominantly in November and December, and fishing in deeper fishing grounds as conditions allow.

Fenit and many fishing communities around Ireland have seen local fishing industries diminished with European Union quota limits and competition from larger foreign fleets in Irish waters.

Data Source: McCarthy, James & Catherine. Digimac Video Productions, Fenit Spa a Journey Through Time – The Sequel, 2016 Edition.

Tralee Bay Oyster Fisheries

Ireland can date the first flat oyster fishing to the 13th Century.¹ Records of oysters harvested from Tralee Bay date to the early 1800's.²

The ecosystem of Tralee Bay is home to one of Europe's only native oyster beds. The native species is the European Flat Oyster (*Ostrea Edulis*), a bivalve mollusc.

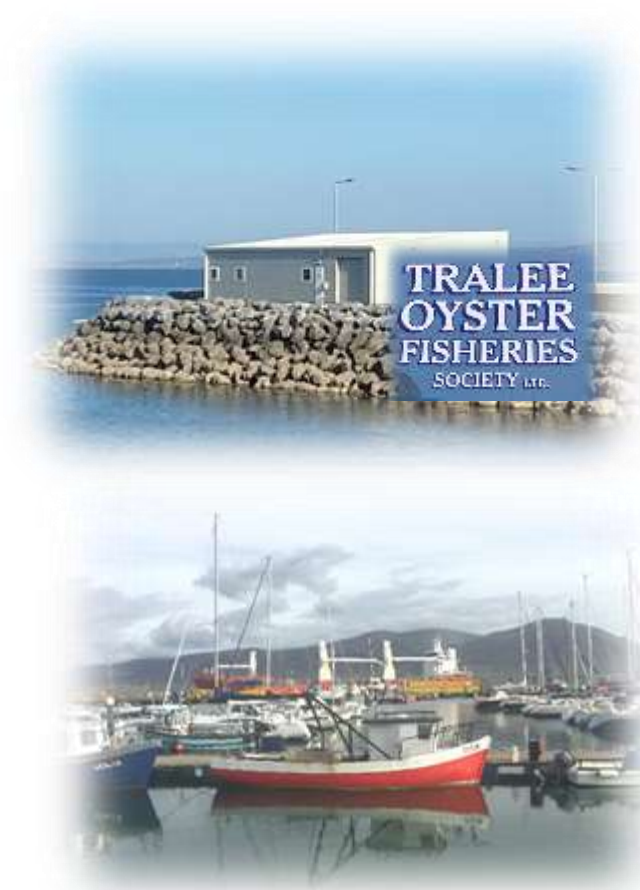
The oyster shell is oval- or pear-shaped, rough and scaly, and is yellow/brown in colour. The oyster meat is creamy beige to pale grey in colour.³ Taste is often described as salty or to have a slight iodine flavour. The texture is smooth.

Data Sources:

¹ <http://glenbeighshellfish.ie/product/native-irish-flat-oysters/>

² <http://bim.ie/news-and-events/name,119519,en.html>

³ Tralee Harbour Information Board, Fenit, Co. Kerry





Oyster Stocks

The Tralee Oyster Fisheries Society (TOFS), a not-for-profit cooperative has been harvesting oysters in Tralee Bay since it was established back in 1979. TOFS operates out of Fenit with harvesting predominantly in October/November.

In recent decades, harvesting levels and habitat changes (such as reduced mussel shell habitat for spat) have led to a reduction in oyster stocks. The diminished supply prompted restorative and sustainable harvesting initiatives managed by TOFS and with funding support by FLAG (Fisheries Local Action Groups).

Impressively Fenit and TOFS are featured in a Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) documentary on innovative technology use in oyster fisheries.

Data Source:

[FARNET Fisheries Area Network - Enhancing native hoyster stocks in Tralee Bay](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet2/on-the-ground/good-practice/projects/enhancing-native-oyster-stocks-tralee-bay_en) https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet2/on-the-ground/good-practice/projects/enhancing-native-oyster-stocks-tralee-bay_en

Oyster Market

The main market for Tralee Bay oysters is France. The industry is worth close to 1 million per annum, with approximately 80 boats and 200 fishermen involved.





Sheltered Harbour and Marina

Fenit Marina is located at arguably one of the most idyllic harbour settings in Ireland, with Little Samphire Lighthouse as the backdrop!

Since 1997, Fenit boasts a fully-serviced 130-berth marina for leisure craft. It caters for boats up to 15m in length.

The marina is accessible at all tidal levels and with its sheltered setting provides protection from all conditions.

Data Source:

eOceanic. 'Fenit Harbour', 2016-2020. Accessed at:

<https://eoceanic.com/sailing/harbours/212/>



Old Lifeboat Station

"The Fenit Coastguard Station took over the duties of its Kilfenora predecessor in 1848, when a neat row of terraced houses was built for the crew and a bigger house constructed for the head boatman...Fenit's first lifeboat, the *Admiral Buthcher* (1879), crewed by local men using only oars and sail, was initially moored off Great Samphire Island. A splendid cut stone lifeboat house was built to store the gear needed to run the lifeboat, but the service was withdrawn from Fenit in 1969 because of lack of rescue calls.... In 1994 the service returned to Fenit and a beautiful new boat, the *Ralph and Bonella Farrant* was moored off the head of the pier. The old lifeboat house is no longer used by the RNLi and is now in private ownership."

Data source – quoted text:

Ireland Byways, Tralee & Environs (Co. Kerry) – 'The Spa, Fenit & Barrow (Co. Kerry /West). Accessed at: <https://irelandbyways.co.uk/top-irish-peninsulas/irelands-south/tralee-co-kerry-environs/5/>



Fishermen & Sailor Memorial

Ó éirí luí na gréine, cuimhneoidimid orthu

From the rising to the setting sun, we will remember them



Unveiled in 2013, the Fishermen & Sailors Memorial depicts a fisherman fixing his nets looking out to sea. The community memorial is dedicated to local fishermen and those whose last port was Fenit who lost their lives to the sea. The beautiful memorial was made possible by local efforts and fundraising, and was crafted by Clare sculptor Séamus Connolly.

Data Source:

McCarthy, James & Catherine. Fenit Spa A Journey Through Time – The Sequel.

Digimac Video Production, 2016 Edition.

Ode to FENIT

Harbour home and gentle skies
Samphire grows as gannets dive
Brent geese feed as crabs traverse
The tidal phase, sand steps erase
The harbour fills, all boats rise
The mountains stretch to meet the skies
Crashing waves, the singing sea
Sunset by Brandon, glory be
Fish shoals come, sea gulls cry
Trawlers pass Little Samphire by
For onward years, leave it unspoiled
This wonderful place, oh Fenit wild!

Trisha O'Halloran, 2020



Ná Fág Ach Lorg Coise

Leave Only Your Footprints

An Excerpt from:
Fenit – A Walk in the Wild Place

Author Trisha O'Halloran, Fenit, 2020

Photos and art by Trisha unless otherwise cited

