

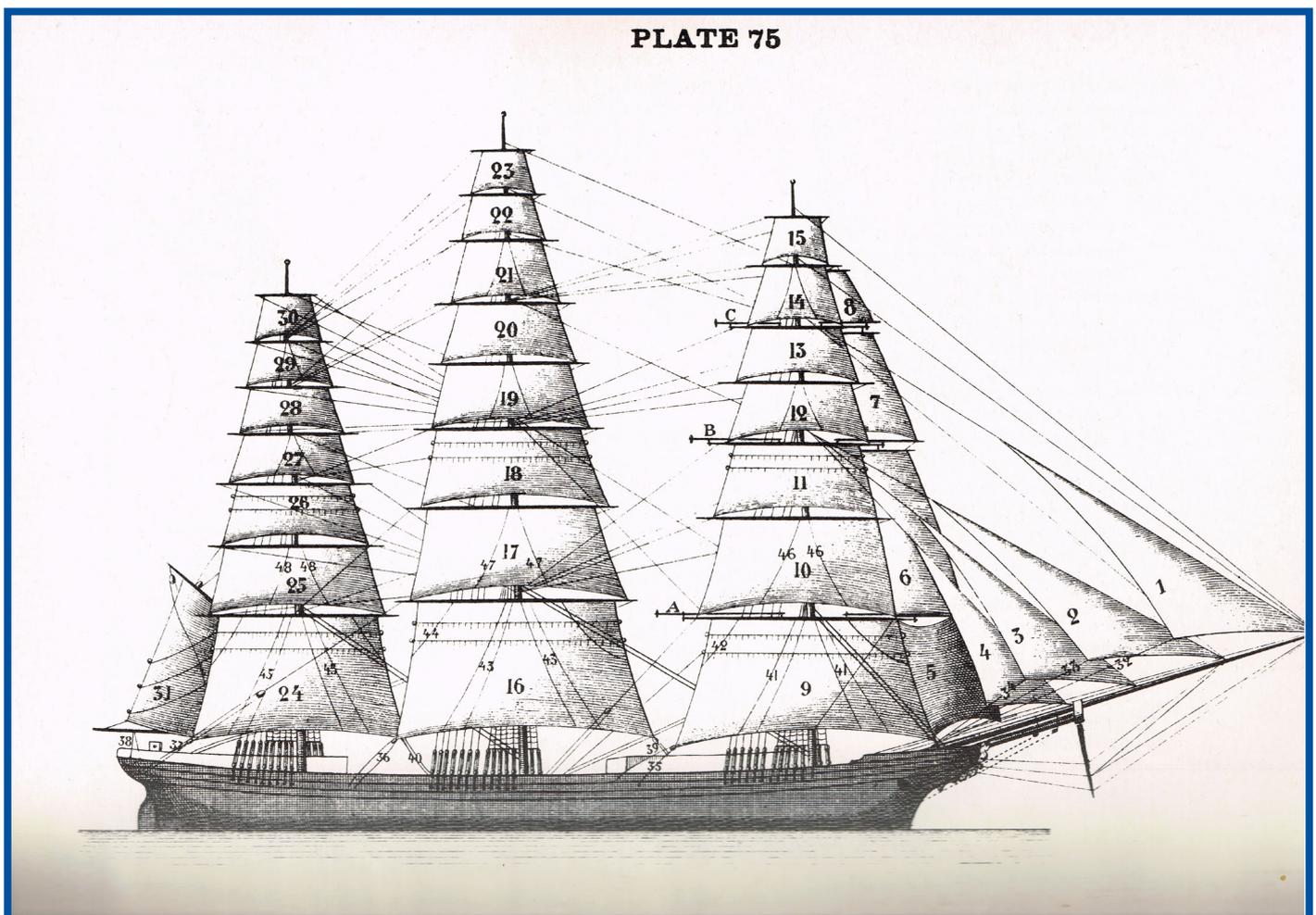


Welsh Wreck Web Research Project (North Cardigan Bay)

On-line research into the loss of the ship

Kenilworth,

which was wrecked on Sarn Badrig in January,
1870.



A Full-rigged Ship; taken from 'The Illustrated Marine Encyclopedia' by Captain H. Paasch.

Report Title: *Welsh Wreck Web Research Project (North Cardigan Bay)*

On-line and practical research into the full-rigged ship 'Kenilworth', which was wrecked in Cardigan Bay after having grounded on Sarn Badrig. The Barmouth and Abersoch lifeboats rescued everyone aboard.

The Illustrated Marine Encyclopaedia defines a full-rigged ship as 'A three-masted ship; fore-mast, main-mast and mizen-mast; each mast is fitted with a topmast, top-gallant mast and royal-mast. i.e. rigged with yards and square sails.'

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1.0 Abstract

The Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit (MADU) currently has a database of 453 shipwrecks in the north end of Cardigan Bay in north west Wales. These wrecks date from 1590 to 1993 and very few have been investigated in any depth!

The author of this report is an amateur diver who has visited many of the shipwrecks around the Welsh coast between Barmouth and the Dee Estuary. He wrote and published 'The Essential Underwater Guide to North Wales, Volumes One and Two', and co-wrote 'Life and Death on the Royal Charter'.

He is also the licensee of the submarine 'Resurgam', a historic vessel that lies on the seabed off Rhyl after being lost in 1880.

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2.2 Contributors

Chris Holden.

2.3 Abbreviations used in this report:

MADU Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit

NAS Nautical Archaeology Society

CPH Chris Holden

RL Richard Larne

3.0 Introduction

During the 19th-Century, a brisk trade existed transporting cotton from the southern states of the USA to Liverpool, with this cargo often being carried in American-built ships such as the 'Kenilworth'.

Many cotton-laden vessels successfully crossed the Atlantic Ocean only to come to grief on the coast of Wales. The 'Rambler' (1810), the 'Diamond' (1825), the 'Crise' (1825), the 'Transit' (1839), the 'Pride of the Sea' (1854), the 'John Bannerman' (1855), the 'Oberon' (1860), the 'Danube' (1861), the 'Arago' (1866), the 'Wapella' (1868) and the 'Missouri' (1886) amongst many others, all succumbed to the perils of the Welsh coastline when only a few miles from their destination of the River Mersey.

This is the story of the 'Kenilworth', but note that there are many contradictions in the information discovered, so please feel free to update the report if any new information is discovered.

Note that the spelling of the town of Porthmadog varies in the early newspapers, so it may appear as 'Port Madoc' or 'Portmadoc'. 'Tudwal' also appears as 'Tudwall' or 'Tudwel'. Aberystwyth appears as 'Aberystwith'.

Caernarfon appears as 'Carnarvon' or 'Caernarvon'.

Wherever possible, the spellings in the published newspapers have been used.

4.0 Background.

The author has been keen to identify the shipwrecks that he has visited along Sarn Badrig, but as yet has been unable to positively identify the 'Kenilworth'.

5.0 Research Methodology.

Equipment and sources used:

Richard Larne's Shipwreck Index of the British Isles. West Coast and Wales.

Gwynedd Archives Record Office, Caernarfon.

Denbighshire Records Office, Ruthin.

British Library on-line newspaper records.

National Library of Wales on-line records.

Lloyd's List records.

6.0 Details.

Vessel Name: Kenilworth (Formerly ‘Leona’).

Type: Full-rigged ship with three masts. Built: in 1855 by McLennon, at Thomaston, in the State of Maine, USA, in 1855, and launched as the ‘Leona’. Her tonnage was 1,145. length 188ft., breadth 32ft., and depth 25ft. Her wood was oak and hackmatack (American larch), she had two decks, and was fitted with Howe’s system of reefing, a newly-introduced system whereby a single sail was replaced by two smaller ones, with the result that the sails on the upper masts were easier to handle and required fewer hands to go aloft.

No.	NAME AND CAPTAIN.	Rig.	Class.	Tons.	Decks.	Wood.	Fast.	When Metal'd.	When Built.	Where Built.	Builders.	Hulls from.	Managing Owners or Consignees.	Measurement.	Model.	REMARKS.	Date of Survey.	
1006	Leona.....Norris	"	" 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1145	21	2	O.H.L.C.	'56	1855	Thomaston.	McLallum.	Thomaston.	Robinson.	186	35 $\frac{1}{2}$ 25 $\frac{1}{4}$	F.	H.P. Howe's Rig.	Jan. '61

She is listed in Lloyd’s American Ships until 1863, then came into British ownership in 1864, when her name was changed to ‘Kenilworth’.

1531	Kenilworth.....	R. Butler	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	860	3	19	m.	C.I.	Nov '69	1865	Quebec, Cda	Liverpool	A. F. Eggers	175	33	20	F	P.C.	Hpl Nov '69
318	Kenilworth.....	Austin	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1145	2	21	o.	h.C.I.	May '68	1855	Thomaston, M	Liverpool	Taylor, Tipper & Co	186	35 $\frac{1}{2}$ 25 $\frac{1}{4}$	F	Late Leona Op Con 3 yrs N m almost rps '68	NO Dec '69	

Under her new owners, Messrs. Taylor, Tipper, and Co., of Liverpool, her official number became 48,836, and her registered tonnage was still listed by Lloyd’s as 1,145, but the Mercantile Navy List and Maritime Directory for 1870 records her as being of 1,275 tons. Richard Larne has recorded her as being built at Berry, Quebec, Canada, but this may be a transcription error as three vessels named ‘Kenilworth’ were registered in Liverpool. See below..

2071	Kenilworth, Auckland, N.Z.	V.L.R.V	507	..	David Crawford, Auckland, N.Z.
48836	Kenilworth, Liverpool	V.W.K.P	1275	..	Murdoch McKenzie, Waipi, Auckland, N.Z.
51538	Kenilworth, Liverpool	W.N.Q.S	860	..	Taylor, Tipper, and Co., Liverpool.
51920	Kenilworth, Liverpool		701	..	Albrecht F. Eggers, 3, Cook Street, Liverpool.
50100	Kenilworth, London	W.G.Q.V	174	120	Robert Hickson, Liverpool.
51033	Kenilworth Castle, Liverpool	W.L.P.D	1062	..	James B. Howell, 1, Frederick's Place, Old Jewry, Lon
62083	Kenmore, Greenock		97	..	Donald Currie, 48 & 49, Albany, Oldhall St., Liverpool
40521			90	60	Robert McGregor, Greenock.

American Lloyd’s Register of American and Foreign Shipping 1870

SHIPS.																		65
Signal No.	NAME AND CAPTAIN.	Rate	Decks, and Beams.	Tons.	Ma- terial.	Fast- ening.	When Metal'd.	When Built.	W're and by Whom Built.	Port Belonging to.	Owners or Consignees.	Dimensions.	Model.	REMARKS.	Place and Date when last Seen.			
1564	Kenilworth.....	1 ³ 2		860	19	m	C I	9 '67	5 '65	Quebec	Liverpool	Wilson	175	33	20	F	Liv 9, '67	
1565	Kenilworth..... Johnson	1 ² 2		1145	21	o	h C I	5 '68	'55	Thomaston	Liverpool	Taylor, Tipper & Co	186	35 $\frac{1}{2}$ 25 $\frac{1}{4}$	F	1 rps '68, con 4 yrs x Leona	Liv 9, '68	
	J. N. Brown											185	28	26	M	13 '67, con 4 yrs x J.L. Liv	9, '67	

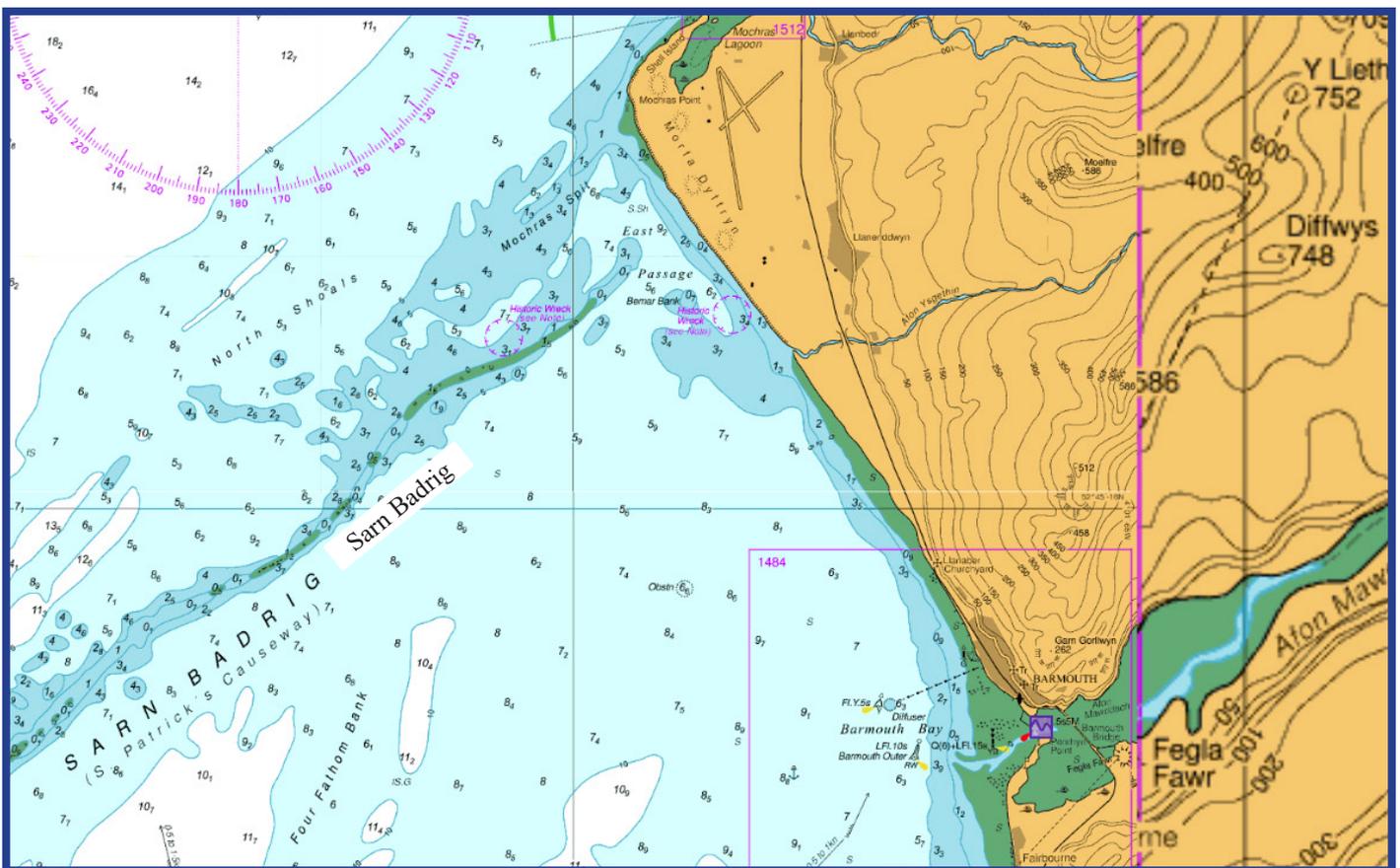
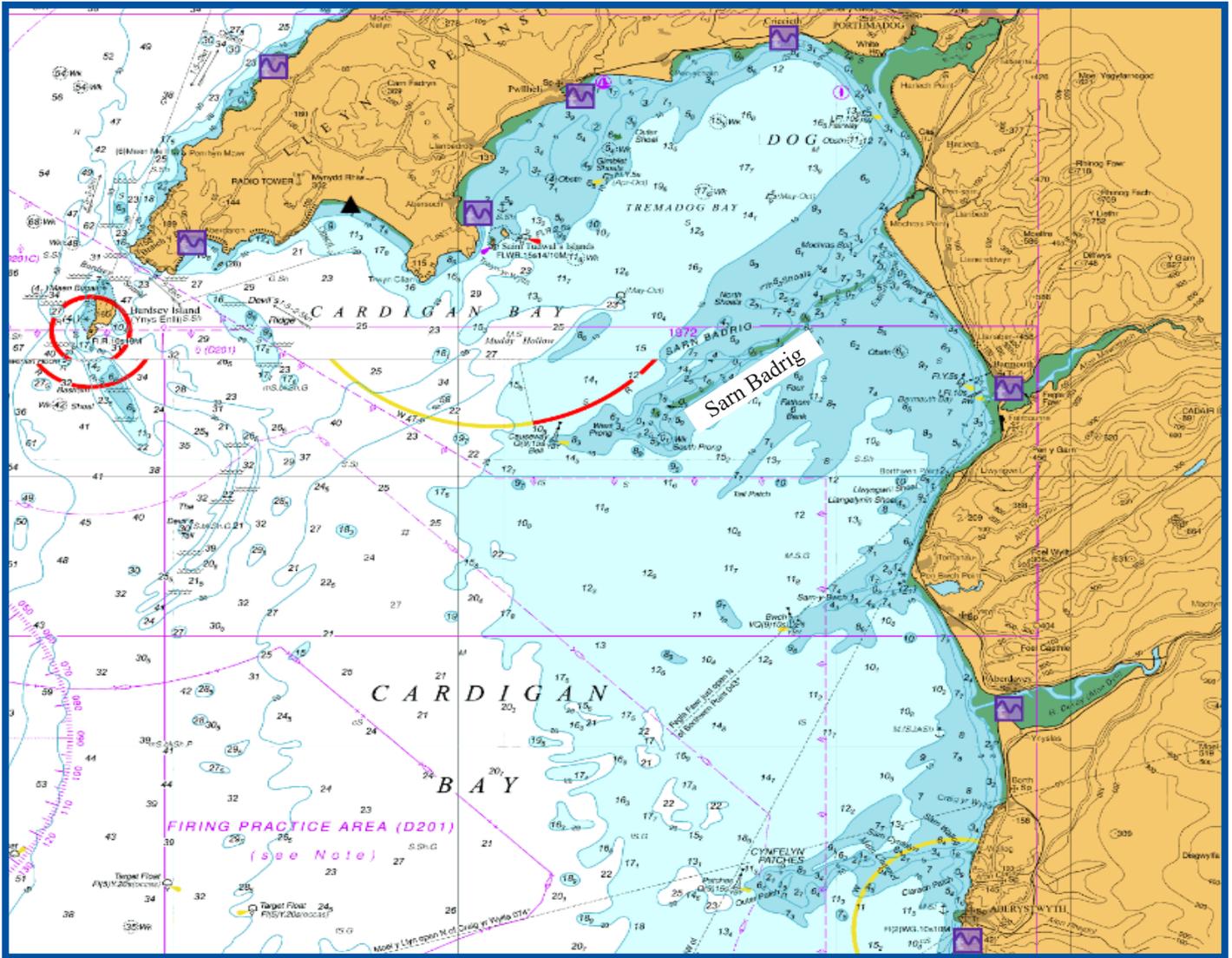
Location.

Sarn Badrig stretches out to sea for a distance of around ten miles. The author has visited several wrecks here, but further investigation would be required to prove if one of them is the ‘Kenilworth’, or if these are the remains of a totally different vessel.

Overview.

Launched in 1855, the ‘Kenilworth’ successfully traded for fifteen years under both American and British flags until she became a total wreck in January, 1870. Yet another magnificent vessel lost on Sarn Badrig, otherwise known as ‘The Ship-breaking Causeway’!

Vessel	Name/s	Kenilworth.
	Type	Full-Rigged Ship.
Built - Date	Laid down	
	Launched	1855.
	Builder	McLennon.
	Where built.	Thomaston, Maine, USA
Construction	Materials	Wood.
	Decks	Two.
	Bulkheads	
Propulsion	Type	Sail.
	Details	Three masts.
Dimensions	Length	188 ft (or 186 ft) / 57.3 metres
	Beam	32 ft (or 35 ft) / 9.75 metres
	Draught	25 ft / 7.62 metres
Tonnage	Registered tonnage	1,145 or 1,275.
Owner	First	R. Robertson.
		George Peabody and Co
	Last	Messrs. Taylor, Tipper, and Co., Liverpool.
Registry	Port	Liverpool.
	Flag	U.K.
	Number	
History	Routes	U.S.A.
		To U.K.
	Cargo	Cotton & tobacco.
Final Voyage	From	New Orleans.
	To	Liverpool.
	Captain	Artell Austin.
	Crew	20
	Passengers	None.
	Cargo	Cotton
Wrecking	Date	14/1/1870.
	Location	Sarn Badrig and / or Pwllheli.
	Cause	Ran aground.
Loss of life	Numbers	Nil.
Outcome		Total loss.



The 'Kenilworth', wrecked on Sarn Badrig in 1870.

The 'Leona', now under Welsh ownership and re-named 'Kenilworth'.**The Welshman. 16th December 1864**

LLANELLY. INTELLIGENCE. We understand that Mr David Jones, shipowner, of the Wern, in this town, has purchased the fine American-built ship "Kenilworth," 1,400 tons burthen, which is shortly to sail for the East Indies. Her former owners were Messrs. George Peabody and Co., the celebrated American merchants of London, (see advert.)

The Welshman. 16th December 1864.

WANTED, immediately, some First class Apprentices for the fine ship, "Kenilworth," (1,400 tons), just about to sail for the East Indies. Application to be made to Mr David Jones, shipowner, Wern, Llanelly, Carmarthenshire. Lads having been to sea before will be preferred. Dec. 13th, 1864.

The End of the 'Kenilworth'.**The Western Mail. 17th January 1870**

FEARFUL WRECK IN CARDIGAN BAY. LOSS OF TWENTY-ONE LIVES.

The ship Kenilworth, Captain Austin, bound from New Orleans to Liverpool, with about 4,000 bales of cotton, became a total wreck at seven o'clock on Friday morning on St. Patrick's Causeway, Cardigan Bay. The captain and twenty of the crew perished. The cargo was valued at £80,000.

The Western Mail. 18th January, 1870.

THE WRECK OF THE KENILWORTH. A communication from Aberystwith, North Wales, informs us that the lifeboat Mabel Louisa, belonging to the National Lifeboat Institution, has been the means of saving the thirteen men who were supposed to have been lost from the ship Kenilworth, of Liverpool, which has been totally wrecked on St. Patrick's Causeway. It appears that the Barmouth Lifeboat, Ellen, went out to the wreck in a tremendous sea while the wind was blowing a gale from the westward. After a long struggle she got to it, anchored, and veered alongside, when a communication was effected, and the shipwrecked crew commenced to lower themselves one by one into the sea, made fast to lines. By those means eight of them were safely got into the lifeboat. By this time the gale had increased and the sea risen fearfully, when suddenly the rope connecting the lifeboat to the ship parted, the boat's cable had to be cut, she drifted to leeward, and all attempts at the time to get back to the wreck were unavailing, and the boat had to make for Pwllheli. When it was reached, a message was sent to the Aberystwith Lifeboat Station, some distance to windward, asking that that boat might also be sent out to the aid of those who had been left on board the wreck. Some hours previously, information of a large vessel being in distress on the Sarn Badrig had reached Aberystwith, and the life-boat was immediately taken out, and cruised about for some hours in search of the ship. The crew, however, failed to find it in the darkness, and they returned to shore, meaning to go off again, so as to be at the Sarn at daylight. The boat, however, was launched again, and after a careful search for about three hours, the ship was sighted; the boat's anchor was then let go, and she went alongside. The thirteen men left on board were then safely got into the boat. No damage was done to the lifeboat. The Kenilworth's crew had launched their boats, but when they got

them over the side they were immediately smashed to atoms; so that, even if they could have got away from their vessel in them, they would undoubtedly have perished in the midst of the fearful seas. When the Aberystwith lifeboat left the ship, she was a complete wreck, being swept by every sea. The cargo, it is estimated, is worth £80,000.

Note - There is much incorrect information in the 'Western Mail' of the 17th and 18th of January, 1870, and they were not the only newspaper to print this misinformation. All aboard the 'Kenilworth' were saved by the Barmouth and Abersoch lifeboats, but being further away, the Aberystwyth lifeboat was not involved in the rescue. See the update in the 'Western Mail' of January 22nd, 1870.

The Western Mail. 20th January 1870.

THE WRECK OF THE KENILWORTH.

The following particulars of the noble services performed by the Barmouth life-boats, in rescuing the crew of the ship Kenilworth, have been published by the Secretary of the National Lifeboat Institution: "The Kenilworth, which was a noble vessel, left New Orleans a few weeks since with a cargo of cotton, valued at £80,000, and had, I believe, an average good voyage till, unhappily, she grounded on St. Patrick's Causeway, in Cardigan Bay, early on the morning of Friday last, the 14th inst., the weather being thick, and blowing a gale of wind. No sooner had information of the perilous position of the ship reached Barmouth and Abersoch than the two lifeboats on those stations proceeded at once to the assistance of the distressed crew; for, between the thickness of the weather and the storm, no other class of vessel could safely venture out.

The Barmouth lifeboat 'Ellen' was the first to proceed to the rescue, and she encountered a tremendous sea, with a gale blowing right against her progress. After a long struggle, she reached the ship, anchored, and veered alongside, when a communication was effected, and the shipwrecked crew commenced to lower themselves one by one into the sea, made fast to lines, and by these means eight of them were safely got into the lifeboat. By this time the gale had greatly increased, and the sea having risen fearfully, the rope connecting the lifeboat to the ship suddenly parted. The boat's cable having instantly been cut, she drifted to leeward, and all attempts to get her back to the wreck were unavailing. She accordingly made for Pwllheli, which was safely reached about 8 o'clock, the crew being in a very exhausted state. A message was then sent to the Abersoch lifeboat station, some distance to windward, asking that she might be sent out to the aid of the remainder of the shipwrecked men. However, information of a large vessel in distress on the Sam Badrig having previously reached that station, the lifeboat had immediately proceeded out, and had cruised about for some hours in search of the wreck; but the crew had failed to find it in the darkness, and they were also compelled to return to the shore. It was half-past three o'clock in the morning, when, after considerable difficulty, the lifeboat was again launched, this time under the superintendence of the Rev. Owen Lloyd Williams, the hon. secretary of the Abersoch branch of the National Lifeboat Institution, he himself going off in her. After a careful search for about three hours, the ship was sighted; the boat's anchor was then let go and she went alongside, but not without some risk from the floating wreckage. The 13 men then left on board were then safely got into the boat. It was a very dangerous operation, as heavy seas came rolling over the bows of the ship; but, fortunately, no damage was done to the lifeboat. The lifeboats of the National Lifeboat

Institution carry red signal rockets with them, and seeing these, the shipwrecked men were nerved afresh. They had launched their boats; but when they got them over the side they were immediately knocked to pieces. Even if they could have got away from their vessel, they would undoubtedly have perished in the midst of the fearful seas. When the Abersoch lifeboat left, the ship was a complete wreck, the huge waves sweeping completely over her. The Abersoch boat has only been about three months on its station, and it was the gift of Mr. Robert Barnes to the Lifeboat Society, through its Manchester branch. Mr. Williams and the crew were highly pleased with the manner in which their boat behaved. The Reverend Gentleman has assisted in different lifeboats in saving altogether 52 lives."

The Western Mail. 22nd January 1870.

SENSATIONAL REPORTS. We never know the extent of our misdoings till they are pointed out by our neighbours. Our contemporary, the Cambria Daily Leader, yesterday, through an "Anti-Sensation" correspondent, in reference to the loss of the ship Kenilworth in Cardigan Bay, asks if the conductors of this paper are aware of the tremendous responsibility they take upon themselves in being the medium of spreading false reports; reports calculated to cause pain and sorrow to the surviving friends of so-called "drowned men." On the morning of the 17th inst., we published, as did all our London contemporaries, the following special telegram: "The ship Kenilworth, Capt. Austin, bound from New Orleans to Liverpool, with about 4,000 bales of cotton, became a total wreck at seven o'clock on Friday morning, on St. Patrick's Causeway, Cardigan Bay. The captain and twenty of the crew perished. The cargo was valued at £80,000."

We are told by our contemporary that it is all very well to aim at supplying sensational news, but that a journalist ought to exercise caution. We perfectly agree with him. On the 18th, when the details of the disaster became known, we published the facts, by which it became apparent that the special telegram forwarded to us, as well as to the Times, Standard, Telegraph, Daily News, Pall Mall Gazette, and other leading papers, the day previous, was, so far as the loss of human lives, incorrect. It will thus be seen that if we erred, as undoubtedly we did, it was in good company. But the error we committed on the 17th, and repaired on the 18th, was deliberately reproduced on the latter date by our contemporary, the Cambria Daily Leader. In other words, our special telegram of the previous day was made use of without any acknowledgment (treatment, we may say, we have become quite accustomed to), and now our contemporary reads us a lecture upon the tremendous responsibility incurred by us in spreading false and sensational news. Surely, the journalist that ought to have "exercised caution" in this instance was himself. We can readily understand how galling it must be to have to supply news to his readers a day after ourselves, but if he is compelled to resort to this extremity, there is no necessity to abuse us. It is not usual to pick a man's pocket and revile him at the same time.

Monmouthshire Merlin. 22nd January 1870.

DREADFUL WRECK IN CARDIGAN BAY. REMARKABLE ESCAPE OF THE CREW.

The Liverpool ship Kenilworth, homeward bound from New Orleans, has been stranded in Cardigan Bay, but there are conflicting statements as to the extent of the disaster. The cargo consisted of 3,863 bales of cotton, and was valued at between £70,000 and £80,000. A communication received in London states that the lifeboat Mabel Louisa, of the National Institution, had saved thirteen men who were supposed to have been lost. The Barmouth

lifeboat went out to the wreck in a tremendous sea, and while the wind was blowing a gale. After a long struggle she got to it, anchored, and veered alongside, when communication was effected, and the shipwrecked crew commenced to lower themselves, one by one, into the sea, made fast to lines, and by those means, eight of them were got into the lifeboat. Suddenly the rope parted, the boat's cable had to be cut, she drifted to leeward, all the attempts to get back to the wreck were unavailing, and the boat had to make for Pwllheli. A message was then sent to the Abersoch lifeboat station, some distance to windward, asking that its boat might be sent out to the aid of those who had been left on board the wreck. Some hours previously, information of a large vessel being in distress on the Sarn Badrig had reached Abersoch, and the lifeboat was taken out, but failed to find the ship in the darkness, and returned to shore. The boat, on receipt of the news from Barmouth, was launched. In three hours the ship was sighted the boat's anchor was then let go, and she went alongside. The thirteen men left on board were then safely got into the boat. The shipwrecked men said they had launched their boats, but when they got them over the side they were smashed to atoms. When the Abersoch lifeboat left, the ship was a complete wreck, being swept by every sea. The crew saw the Institution's Barmouth and Portmadoc lifeboats going out to the wreck as they returned to the shore.

Aberdare Times. 22nd January 1870.

WRECK OF THE KENILWORTH. The ship Kenilworth, Captain Austin, bound from New Orleans to Liverpool, with about 4,000 bales of cotton became a total wreck at seven o'clock on Friday morning on St. Patrick's Causeway, Cardigan Bay. The lifeboat Mabel Louisa, stationed at Abersoch was fortunately the means of saving the lives of thirteen of the crew, who it was at first supposed had perished, the Barmouth lifeboat, Ellen, having first succeeded in saving eight men. The latter boat went out to the wreck in a tremendous sea and succeeded with great difficulty in getting the men into the lifeboat, the men having lowered themselves by means of lines into the sea. The rope by which the lifeboat had been made fast to the ship suddenly parted, and all efforts to get back to the wreck became unavailing on the part of the crew of the lifeboat. The boat, therefore, made for Pwllheli, which was safely reached, and a message was at once forwarded to the Abersoch lifeboat, stationed some distance to windward of the wreck. The Mabel Louisa had been out the greater part of the night, cruising about in search of the wreck and on the message arriving at Abersoch, the Rev. O. L. Williams, the local honorary secretary of the society, caused her to be promptly launched again, and went out to her. After a search of about three hours, the wreck was sighted, and the remainder of the men on board were rescued, the task being one of great difficulty and danger. The Kenilworth had by this time become a complete wreck, and her people had made an effort before the arrival of the lifeboat to save themselves by means of the ship's boats, but these had been smashed to atoms by the tremendous sea as they were launched over the sides. Abersoch lifeboat had only been about three months on the station. She was the gift of Mr. Robert Barnes, of Manchester. On Friday morning, the lifeboat Cotton Sheppard, situated at Porthdinllaen, brought ashore the crew of three men from the schooner Gronant, of Carnarvon.

Carnarvon & Denbigh Herald. January 22, 1870.**WRECK OFF PWLLHELI AND GALLANT CONDUCT OF A COUNTRY PARSON.**

On Friday morning, the 14th inst., the ship Kenilworth, of Liverpool, struck on Sarn Badrig, alias St. Patrick's Causeway, eight or nine miles out at sea, opposite Pwllheli. She sailed from New Orleans for Liverpool on the 2nd of December last, and must have experienced the recent heavy gales which have prevailed in the Atlantic and the Channel. She is about 1300 tons register, and the cargo consists of 3,863 bales of cotton, and was valued at between £70,000 and £80,000. She was built at Thomaston, in the State of Maine, in 1855, and was considered a very fine vessel of her class. The fears that a large part of the crew had been lost happily proved to be unfounded. On Monday a telegram was forwarded to the owners by Captain Austin, and also a letter, stating that when the Kenilworth struck on the rocks the weather was very thick and tempestuous, and that he was compelled to cut away the masts in order to ease the vessel if possible, without effect. Captain Austin in his communication adds that he saved nothing but his watch. We leave the Lifeboat Institution to tell its own tale in the subjoined account, merely premising that the reverend gentleman who acted so noble a part has now been instrumental in saving fifty-two persons from various wrecks.

"The lifeboat Mabel Louise, belonging to the National Lifeboat Institution and stationed at Abersoch, has happily been the means of saving the thirteen men who were supposed to have been lost from the ship Kenilworth, of Liverpool, which has been totally wrecked on St. Patrick's Causeway. It appears that the Barmouth lifeboat Ellen, which also belongs to the Lifeboat Society, went out on Friday to the wreck in a tremendous sea, while the wind was blowing a gale from the westward. After a long struggle she got to it, anchored, and veered alongside, when a communication was effected and the shipwrecked crew commenced to lower themselves one by one into the sea, made fast to lines, and by those means eight of them were safely got into the lifeboat. By this time the gale had increased, and the sea risen fearfully, when suddenly the rope connecting the lifeboat to the ship parted, the boat's cable had to be cut, she drifted to leeward, and all attempts at the time to get back to the wreck were unavailing, and the boat had to make for Pwllheli, which was safely reached. A message was then sent to the Abersoch lifeboat station, some distance to the windward, asking that that boat might also be sent out to the aid of those who had been left on board the wreck. Some hours previously, it seems, information of a large vessel being in distress on the Sarn Badrig had reached Abersoch, and the lifeboat was immediately taken out and cruised about for some hours in search of the ship. The crew however failed to find it in the darkness, and they returned to shore meaning to go off again so as to be at the Sarn at Daylight. When the Rev. O. Ll Williams, the hon. secretary, heard the news from Pwllheli, he proceeded to Abersoch and found the lifeboat had just returned from her unsuccessful cruise. As soon as practicable, he had the boat launched again; himself went out in her, and after careful search of about three hours, the ship was sighted; the boat's anchor was then let go and she went alongside, but not without some risk from the spars floating near. The thirteen men left on board were then safely got into the boat. It was dangerous work, as a big sea would come rolling over the bows of the ship, but fortunately no damage was done to the lifeboat. The shipwrecked men said that seeing now and then the red lights shown from the lifeboat was a great comfort to them. They had launched their boats, but when they got over the side they were immediately smashed to atoms; even if they could have got away from their vessel in them, they would undoubtedly have perished in the midst of the fearful seas. When the Abersoch lifeboat left, the ship was a complete wreck, being swept by every sea. The crew saw

the Institution's Barmouth and Port Madoc lifeboats going out to the wreck as they returned to the shore. The Abersoch boat has only been about three months on its station. It was the gift of Mr. Robert Barnes, Esq., of Manchester, through the Lifeboat Society's branch in that city. The crew are highly pleased with the admirable manner in which their boat behaved."

On Monday and the following days men were busily engaged in saving what was left of the wreck and cargo, which were discharged into lighters and towed into Pwllheli with one of the Port Madoc tug-boats. A number of articles had also been landed at Port Madoc.

It appears that the vessel belonged to Messrs. Taylor, Tipper, and Co., Liverpool, and that she had been insured to the amount of £5,000, and the cargo to £70,000. A singular coincidence has transpired in connection with the loss of this vessel. About two years ago the Wapella, a vessel belonging to the same brokers, was wrecked on the same rocks, and nearly all the crew perished.

Several comments compete for attention as regards the above report. First, whilst the Barmouth lifeboat initiated the rescue operations in extremely dangerous conditions, the report highlights the subsequent operations of the Abersoch boat when, reading between the lines, the conditions were clearly less severe. What should be remembered, however, is that 21 lives were saved by the two lifeboats. Secondly, it may be noted that, many years earlier, the Rev. O. Ll. Williams had developed his interest in the lifeboat service at Barmouth when curate to the Rev. John Jones, rector of Llanaber, and chairman of the local lifeboat committee. For the Barmouth lifeboatmen, this operation in respect of the Kenilworth was certainly one of their most distinguished. Sadly, they had not been able to offer any assistance to the crew and passengers of the barque Wapella as reported above.

Flintshire Observer. 28th January 1870.

THE WRECK OF THE "KENILWORTH. This noble ship, which was wrecked in Cardigan Bay on the 14th inst., had a cargo of 3,863 bales of cotton, which is valued at between £70,000 and £80,000. She was built at Thomaston, in the State of Maine, in 1855, and was considered a very fine vessel of her class. A singular coincidence has transpired in connection with the loss of this vessel. About two years ago the Wapella, a vessel belonging to Messrs. Taylor, and Co., was wrecked on the same rocks, and nearly all the crew perished. But the crew of the Kenilworth, consisting of 21 men, were saved by the determined and gallant services of the Abersoch and Barmouth lifeboats. The captain of the ship, who is an American, is very loud, says the Rev. O. Ll. Williams, in his praises of both boats, saying "that he never thought there were such boats in the world, and blesses the very name of the lifeboat inventor." A rather singular but melancholy circumstance has occurred in connection with this noble rescue. On the captain arriving the other day at Pwllheli, he learnt of the death of the wife of his mate, and on the next day that of his own wife. The captain saved nothing from the wreck but his watch.



Carreg yr Imbill or Gimblet Rock, at Pwllheli.

Aberystwyth Times. 29th January 1870.

Wednesday's Liverpool Mercury says: "The salvage at the wreck of the Kenilworth, from New Orleans for this port, wrecked at St. Patrick's Causeway, goes on satisfactorily. We believe the Underwriters have a special agent at the wreck, but the salvage is conducted by Captain Golding, for the Old Steam-tug Company, who have the contract. Up to yesterday morning 1,300 bales out of 3,000 had been landed. The vessel still rests in the causeway, and salvage is difficult. The tug Rattler, with about 300 bales, arrived at Liverpool last night. The Kenilworth will be a complete wreck." Friday's Mercury says: "One hundred and forty-five bales have been landed since the last report, making a total of 1,743 bales."

C.& D.H. January 29, 1870

PWLLHELI. THE WRECK OF THE KENILWORTH. Captain Austin has addressed the following letter to the Liverpool Mercury: "Gentlemen - On behalf of myself, officers, and crew of the ship Kenilworth, lately stranded on St. Patrick's Causeway, Cardigan Bay, I beg to thank the crews of the Barmouth and Abersoch lifeboats, who gallantly came to our rescue during the late gales of the 14th and 15th instant, when to all human appearances our ship was breaking up, and our position was hopeless, as far as life was concerned. We avail ourselves of the circulation of your paper throughout Wales, to express our gratitude to these men who so bravely risked their lives in relieving us of our perilous position.

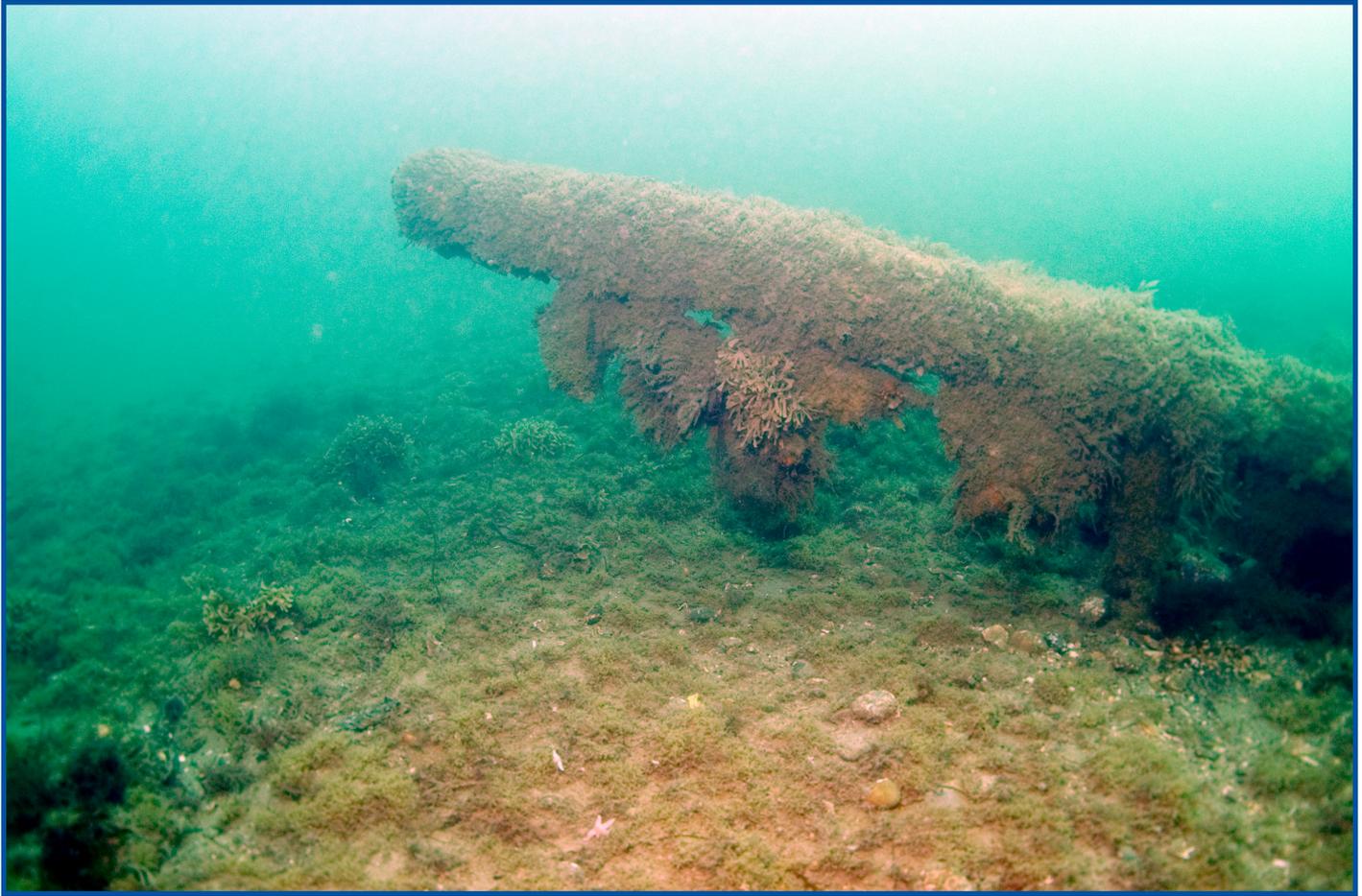
Artell Austin, Master of the ship 'Kenilworth'.

Liverpool Courier and Commercial Advertiser. Tuesday, 1 February 1870.

Kenilworth, from New Orleans for this port, ashore at St. Patrick's Causeway. A telegram received at 11 a.m. yesterday, reports. "Ship breaking up, and on the beach west of Gimlet Head"

Western Mail. 3rd February 1870.**THE WRECK OF THE KENILWORTH.**

An inquiry, ordered by the Board of Trade into the circumstances attending the loss of the Kenilworth in Cardigan Bay, was opened at Liverpool on Tuesday, before Mr. Mansfield, magistrate, and Captains Hight and Watson, nautical assessors. The inquiry on behalf of the Board of Trade was conducted by Mr. Gardner. Mr. Gardner stated that the inquiry had been ordered by the Board of Trade into the stranding of the ship Kenilworth on the causeway called St. Patrick's Shoal, in Cardigan Bay on the morning of the 14th of January, about a quarter-past six o'clock, on her homeward voyage from New Orleans. The Kenilworth was a sailing ship, built at Maine, in the United States, in 1857, and was originally called the Leona. She was registered in Liverpool in 1864. Her official number was 48,836, and her registered tonnage was 1,275 tons. She was built of wood, and had three masts. Her length was 188ft., breadth 32ft., and depth 25ft., and she was owned by Messrs. Taylor, Tipper, and Co., of Liverpool. She left New Orleans on the 14th of December last, under the command of Captain Artell Austin, who held a certificate of competency. She had a crew of twenty-one hands, all told; and carried a cargo of 3,864 bales of cotton and 10 hogsheads of tobacco, consigned to Messrs. Postlethwaite and Co. All went well till the 12th of January. At noon on that day an observation was taken, and the latitude was found to be 50.48 N and the longitude, if they were correct, was 10.45 West by observation. This would place the Fastnet Rock sixty-two miles distant, bearing N.E. by N. by compass. The vessel was then under plain sail. In the evening the breeze slackened, and soundings were taken in fifty-five fathoms, with a bottom of stones and shells. In the course of the 13th, soundings were again taken without change. The wind changed to W.N.W., and at 4 p.m. changed again to west. At 6 p.m., sail was shortened, and a variety of courses were steered. On the morning of the 14th, about three o'clock, more sail was made. The wind was from the W.N.W. and the ship was making seven knots. At about 4.30 to 5, a light was seen bearing about N.N.W., and estimated to be distant about four miles. The light then seen must have been the light on Bardsey Island, but it was supposed to have been the Blackwater light, according to the master's deposition, while some of the crew thought it was the Blackwater and others the Arklow or the Tusker; but they all imagined they were on the Irish coast instead of on the Welsh. Both the Bardsey and the Bluewater were bright lights, but one was on a light vessel and the other on elevated land. Shortly before the light was seen, the course steered was east by south. There was some difference as to the time the ship struck, but it was somewhere about an hour after seeing the light. Shortly after the light they sighted land, which remained visible until the ship struck. She struck on the south-western portion of the shoal. The shock was heavy. She struck several times, and speedily made water. Signals of distress were made, and the Barmouth lifeboat came out and took off eight men with great difficulty, and then had to return. The captain, chief officer and the rest of the men remained on board until the morning of the 15th when another life-boat took them off. The ship became a wreck. The bulk of the cargo has been saved. The vessel was insured for £4,000, considerably under her value, and the cargo for £70,000. It was quite obvious that the ship was lost through the Welsh coast having been



Part of an unidentified wreck on Sarn Badrig.

mistaken for the Irish coast, but whether the captain was to blame was for the court to decide. John Formby, chief officer, was then examined, and his evidence was corroborative throughout of the facts stated above. Under cross-examination, he said he regarded Captain Austin as a most efficient commander, and he was very attentive to his duties. The ship had two chronometers, and he had reason to believe both were wrong.

Llangollen Advertiser. 4th February 1870.

ROYAL NATIONAL LIFEBOAT INSTITUTION.

Yesterday (Thursday, 3rd Feb.), a meeting of this Institution was held at its house, John-street, Adelphi, Thomas Chapman, Esq., F.R.S., V.P., in the chair. Richard Lewis, Esq., the Secretary, having read the minutes of the previous meeting, the Silver Medal of the Society and a copy of the vote inscribed on vellum were granted to its local Honorary Secretary at Abersoch, North Wales, the Rev. O. Lloyd Williams, and £42 9s to the crew of that lifeboat, in acknowledgment of their gallant services in putting off in the boat on the 14th and 15th ult., and after much difficulty, saving thirteen of the crew of the *Kenilworth*, of Liverpool, which was wrecked on St. Patrick's Causeway, in Cardigan Bay, during a N.W. gale and in a heavy sea. £36 were also granted to the crew of the Barmouth lifeboat for going off on the 14th ult. to the same wreck, and saving 8 of the crew. The two lifeboats of the Society thus saved the whole of the officers and men — 21 in number. This ship, a most valuable one, was bound to Liverpool from New Orleans with a cargo of cotton, and her captain who is an American, publicly testified his gratitude for the determined courage of the lifeboat crews in saving the lives of himself and crew amidst the greatest dangers. £8 8s. were also voted to pay, the expenses of the Porthdinllaen lifeboat in bringing ashore the crew of three men from the schooner *Gronant*, of Carnarvon.



Another unidentified wreck on Sarn Badrig.

Western Mail. 5th February 1870.

THE LOSS OF THE KENILWORTH. The inquiry touching the loss of this ship concluded at Liverpool on Thursday. The captain in his statement attributed the loss of the ship to the errors in the chronometers. The court, however, was of opinion that he had not exercised sufficient caution in bringing his ship up Channel, and directed that his certificate be suspended for six calendar months.

Bury & Norwich Post. February 8, 1870.

THE WRECK OF THE KENILWORTH.

The inquiry ordered by the Board of Trade into the circumstances attending the loss of the ship Kenilworth, in Cardigan Bay, was opened on Tuesday, and terminated on Thursday. The vessel was on her voyage to Liverpool from New Orleans, which port she left on the 14th December, under command of Captain Austin, having a cargo of 3,864 bales of cotton, and ten hogsheads of tobacco, with a crew of 20 persons. On the morning of the 14th ult., when in Cardigan Bay, the vessel struck on St. Patrick's Shoal. The men were taken off by lifeboats, and the bulk of the cargo was saved. It was alleged in defence that the captain had mistaken the Welsh for the Irish coast, his chronometer being out of order, and that in the bay there are strong in-draught currents which prevented him from saving his ship when he found he was out of his reckoning. The Court, being of opinion that Captain Austin had not exercised sufficient care in navigating the vessel, suspended his certificate for six months. On his arrival home, Captain Austin found that besides losing all his effects, which were in the ill-fated vessel, he was, to his great grief, also a widower, his wife having died shortly before his return.

Monmouthshire Merlin. 5th February 1870.**SHIPPING DISASTERS.**

A heavy southerly gale blew in the Irish Channel on Sunday evening. The ship Kenilworth, from New Orleans for Liverpool, broke up and washed ashore on the main in pieces. Nearly 2,000 bales out of 3,800 on board have been saved.

Llangollen Advertiser. 11th February, 1870.

The ship Kenilworth wrecked lately on St. Patrick's Causeway, will be a total wreck, but the salvage of her cargo (cotton) has been very favourable, a great proportion of the bales having been rescued.

The Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard. 26th February, 1870.

The captain of the Kenilworth, which was lost on the Welsh coast a few days ago, is dead. It will be remembered that, although his conduct could hardly be found fault with, his certificate was suspended, and the excitement of the inquiry seems to have brought on an attack of fever, which was fatal. He bore a high reputation for attention and kindness to those placed under his charge and on many occasions when steerage passengers were smitten with sickness, he gave them the use of his cabin until they were convalescent.



Carreg yr Imbill or Gimblet Rock, at Pwllheli.

“Ship breaking up and on the beach west of Gimlet Head” 1st. February 1870.

Baner ac Amserau Cymru. 22nd June 1870.

SALE OF WRECK.

—
ON ACCOUNT OF WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.
—

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,
BY
MESSRS. OWEN AND SON,
AT
THE CROWN HOTEL,
In the Town of Pwllheli,
On SATURDAY, JUNE the 25th, 1870,
At the hour of One, p.m.,

THE REMAINDER OF THE HULL OF THE SHIP,
“**KENILWORTH,**”

AS it may then be sunk near the “St. Patrick’s Causeway,” in Cardigan Bay. Also, the remainder of the **COTTON**, being a portion of the Cargo of the said vessel that may be still unsaved on the day of Sale, together with the right of strand to recover any Materials or Cargo, that may be washed ashore from the said wreck after that date. About 200 Bales of Cotton are still missing.

For further particulars apply to Messrs. Taylor, Tipper & Co., Brokers, Liverpool, or to Messrs. Owen & Son, Compton House, Carnarvon.

7.0 Analysis.

The newspaper reports are somewhat confused as to which lifeboats went to the rescue of the crew of the Kenilworth, and it would appear that the Aberystwyth lifeboat was not involved in the operation. The South Prong of Sarn Badrig, the nearest point of the reef to Aberystwyth, lies nearly twenty miles from that port, whereas the distance from Barmouth is around half that distance, making it unlikely that the Aberystwyth boat was involved in the event.

The rescue of every member of the crew of the Kenilworth shows the tremendous courage and endurance of the lifeboat-men in an age of sailing and pulling (rowing) lifeboats. Being the nearest, the Barmouth lifeboat covered a distance of 5 to 10 miles in horrendous conditions, but, having taken eight men off the 'Kenilworth' and with the wind against her, the coxswain wisely headed for the safety of Pwllheli Harbour. Thankfully, the Abersoch lifeboat then took off the captain, chief officer and the rest of the men, meaning that twenty-one lives were saved by the two lifeboats.

8.0 Conclusions & Recommendations.

Reading the newspaper reports, it is unclear whether anything remains of the 'Kenilworth' on Sarn Badrig, as the 'Monmouthshire Merlin' reported in February, 1870, that

'The ship Kenilworth, from New Orleans for Liverpool, broke up and washed ashore on the main in pieces.'

Other reports said:

'Ship breaking up and on the beach west of Gimlet Head.'

However, several months later, she was advertised for sale as:

'THE REMAINDER OF THE HULL OF THE SHIP, "KENNILWORTH" [SIC], As it may then be sunk near the "St. Patrick's Causeway" in Cardigan Bay.'

These conflicting reports suggest to the author that part of the 'Kenilworth' still lies on the seabed close to Sarn Badrig, while a portion of the vessel drifted ashore near Gimblet Rock, Pwllheli. The author has visited the remains of four wooden wrecks on Sarn Badrig, but as yet has been unable to positively identify any of them.

9.0. References.

Sources include: Lloyd's Register.

Shipwreck Index of the British Isles. Vol 5 (Richard Larnie, Lloyd's Register).

The Essential Underwater Guide to North Wales. Vol. One, Part One. (Chris Holden)

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Wrecksite website <https://www.wrecksite.eu/Wrecksite.aspx>

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The British Newspaper Archive www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/

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