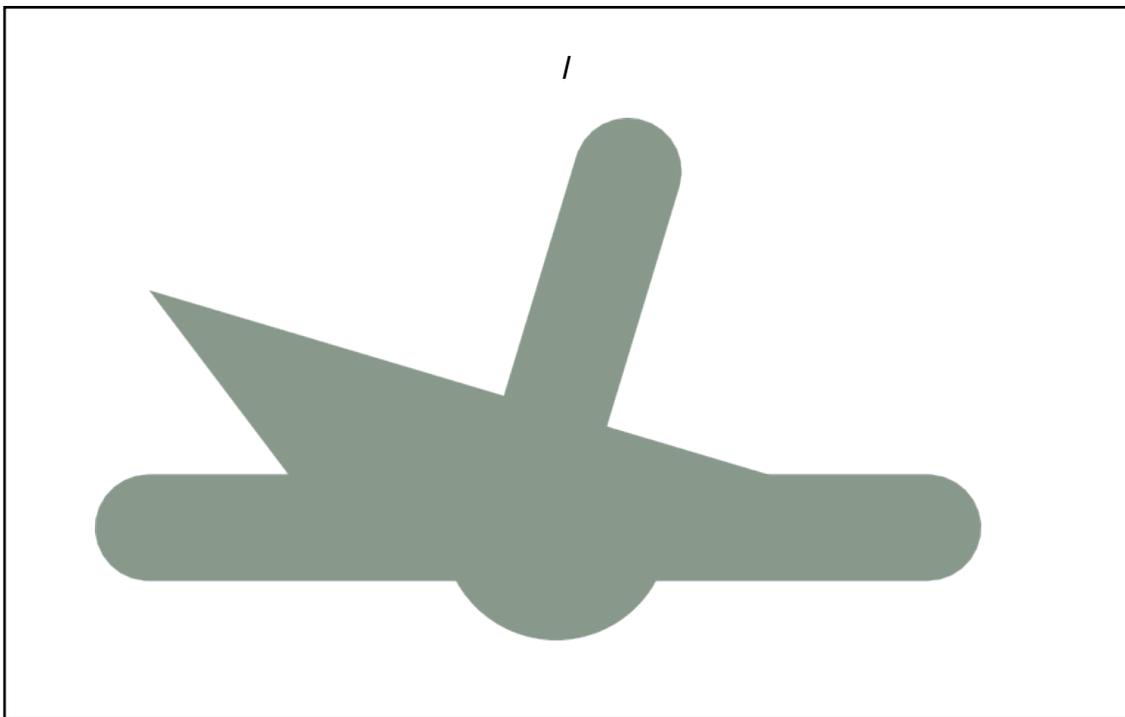


Welsh Wreck Web Research Project (North Cardigan Bay)

**On-line research into the wreck of the:
*Portland (MADU Ref No. 16)***



Report compiled by:

Rob Konings

Report Title:

**Welsh Wreck Web Research Project
(North Cardigan Bay)
On-line research into the wreck of the:
*Portland (MADU Ref No. 16)***

Compiled by:

Rob Konings
Robkonings_20@hotmail.com

On behalf of:

Nautical Archaeology Society
Fort Cumberland
Fort Cumberland Road
Portsmouth
PO4 9LD
Tel: +44 (0)23 9281 8419
E-mail: nas@nauticalarchaeologysociety.org
Web Site: www.nauticalarchaeologysociety.org

Managed by:

Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit
17 Hornyold Road
Malvern
Worcestershire
WR14 1QQ
Tel: +44 (0)1684 574774
E-mail: MADUdiving@gmail.com
Web Site: www.madu.org.uk

Date:

11 December 2021

Report Ref:

1.0 Abstract

Between 2002 & 2009 the Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit (MADU) had been involved with investigating a shipwreck in the north Cardigan Bay area of West Wales. During this exercise, a database, listing over 450 shipwrecks and vessels that had been involved in maritime incidents in this area had been compiled, and from this list, the "Welsh Wreck Web Research Project" evolved.

People, who were interested in carrying out some research from the safety of their home during the COVID-19-pandemic, were invited to undertake on-line investigations into vessels from the database, and to follow this up with a report on their findings. Findings could include the circumstances of the loss of the ship, details of the owners and crew, the cargo carried and the ship's history.

2.0 Index

2.1 Table of Contents	Page No.
1.0 Abstract -----	3
2.0 Index -----	4
2.1 Table of Contents	4
2.2 List of Figures	4
2.4 Contributors	5
2.5 Abbreviations	5
3.0 Introduction -----	6
4.0 Background -----	7
5.0 Research Methodology -----	8
6.0 Results -----	9
7.0 Analysis -----	11
8.0 Conclusions & Recommendations -----	12
9.0 References -----	13

2.2 List of Figures	Page No.
Figure 1. Global wreck location of the Portland plotted on the map prepared (© MADU) for this project	7
Figure 2. More precise wreck location of the Portland	10
Figure 3. More precise wreck location – based on online investigation - of the Portland	10

2.4 Contributors

Organisations:

Nautical Archaeology Society (NAS) for announcing this Research Project via their web site & e-mail circulations, plus for providing free access for the project's researchers to the British Newspaper Archives (BNA).

Individuals:

Ian Cundy (Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit) for leading this Research Project and for references on the wrecks I have selected.

Sue Barker (Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit) for her notes relating to information of the database-vessels.

Chris Holden for the information on the Portland he has very kindly sent through.

Duncan Ross for recommending web sites for the research.

2.5 Abbreviations

A list of any abbreviations used in this report, i.e.

GAT	Gwynedd Archaeology Trust
IJNA	International Journal of Nautical Archaeology
MADU	Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit
NAS	Nautical Archaeology Society
NPRN	National Primary Resource Number
OS	Ordnance Survey
RCAHMW	Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Wales
URL	Uniform Resource Locator

3.0 Introduction

Based on the recommendations of Ian Cundy to choose – for variety - one type of vessel from the earlier period, and something completely different from a more recent date I have chosen for **(the wreck of) the *Portland*** – a wooden sailing vessel that sank early 19th century – and (the wreck of the) *Farfield*, a steamship that sank mid-20th-century. These vessels also differ for information already known about them.

I did not have specific questions I was hoping to answer. My mainspring to participate was the enthusiasm with which this project was announced and the opportunity given to contribute to the existing Welsh Wreck Database. Next to that I would be able to become more familiar with Welsh and British databases as a Dutchman.

If I could contribute to find to some “standard” information about the ships, which might include the points below, I would be very pleased.

- What were the vessel’s specifications?
- What historical information is available relating to the vessel?
- What was the story leading up to wrecking?
- What caused the wrecking?
- What has happened since the wrecking?
- Has anyone previously investigated or researched the vessel back-story?
- Has anyone dived, recorded, surveyed or worked on the site?
- Has any salvage, etc. been carried out?
- Have there been any previous reports produced relating to the vessel?

4.0 Background

Prior to starting my research, I knew – or at least the Wreck database stated – that the *Portland* was a wooden sailing vessel, that sank 21 February 1809 near Bardsey Island, Caernarfonshire.

Based on this information I would locate (the wreck of) the *Portland* as done in the map below. I hope that the where known of this wreck site can be determined more precisely based on the on-line investigations.

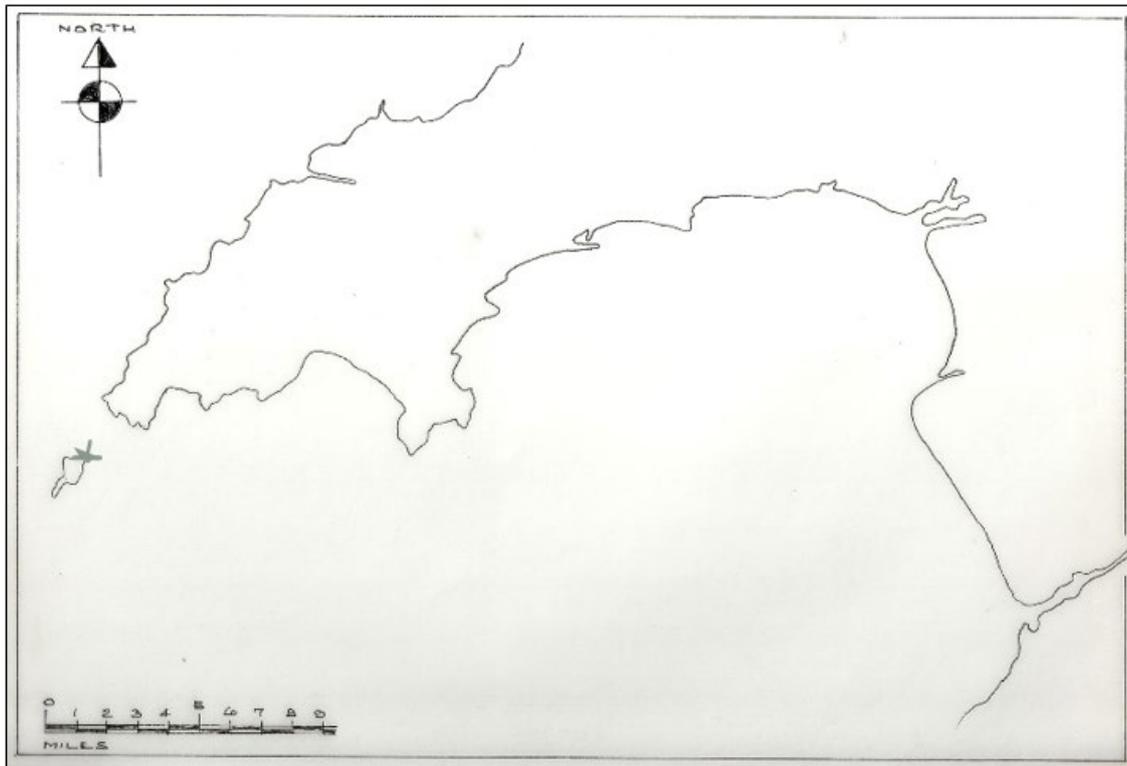


Figure 1: Global wreck location of the *Portland* plotted on the map prepared (© MADU) for this project.

5.0 Research Methodology

The internet access I had at my disposal was a Bang & Olufsen Elite book laptop with Microsoft Office 365.

The approach of my research was as follows. In random order, I used the following specific websites:

- <https://newspapers.library.wales/>
- <https://www.crewlist.org.uk/>
- <https://www.maritimearchives.co.uk/>
- <https://web.archive.org/web/20070425234855/http://freespace.virgin.net:80/r.cadwalader/maritime/lifeboat/wreck.htm>
- <https://coflein.gov.uk/en/>

The keywords used on those websites are (a combination of):

- Portland, wreck 1809
- Portland, wooden sailing vessel
- Portland, sunk 21 February 1809
- Portland, Bardsey Island, Caernarfonshire.

These same keywords were also used for a general search via www.google.com and www.scholar.google.com.

Next to these websites, I thankfully have made use of

- 1) The information that was put together by Chris Holden when he was carrying out research for his book "*The Essential Underwater Guide to North Wales: Volume One – Barmouth to South Stack*", and subsequently his e-book: https://play.google.com/store/books/details/Chris_Holden_The_Essential_Underwater_Guide_to_Nor?id=-60SBwAAQBAJ
- 2) The information, that was provided to me by Ian Cundy based on Larn, R. & Larn, B., 2000, *Shipwreck Index of the British Isles: Volume 5 – West Coast and Wales*. Lloyd's Register of Shipping.

No relevant search results were found via the general search at www.google.com and www.scholar.google.com. From the specific websites a relevant search result was found at <https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/271750?term=portland%201809> (last visited 11 December 2021).

6.0 Results

In this section, I am answering as many of the questions I have set out in Section 3, by simply putting the vessels specification and basic story in the table below:

Vessel	Name/s	PORTLAND
	Type	Sailing Ship (unspecified) /Sailing sloop
		Cargo
Built	Date	
Construction	Materials	Wood
	Decks	
	Bulkheads	
Propulsion	Type	Sail
Registry	Port	Pwllheli
	Flag	United Kingdom
History	Routes	
	Cargo	
Final Voyage	From	Liverpool
	To	Pwllheli
	Captain	Wiliam Davis / Davies
	Cargo	Coal
Wrecking	Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21/02/1809 (R) (this denotes the date the loss was 'reported', or when a hitherto unidentified wreck was first discovered) (Larn, R. & Larn, B., 2000) • North Wales Gazette dated 16th February 1809 mentions the wrecking of the Portland..
	Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caernarfonshire, Lleyn Peninsula, Bardsey Island, near • 52.45.15N 04.48W • has been assigned to the maritime named location OFF BARDSEY pending more information which may allow a more precise location for the loss to be assigned • Near Porth Golman point, within eight miles of Bardsey Island,
	Cause	The sloop Portland was driven on shore.
	Loss of life	
	Outcome	She went to pieces. Part of her cargo of coal was saved, with her mast, rigging, etcetera

Some additional possibly important information uncovered:

- A more extensive explanation of what a(n English) "sloop" is, is being addressed in amongst others:
 - <https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Sloop#/overview>
 - <https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Sloop-of-war>
- Based on <https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/271750?term=portland%201809> (last visited 11 December 2021) (the wreck of) the *Portland* can be (re)located more precisely. This is shown on the maps below.

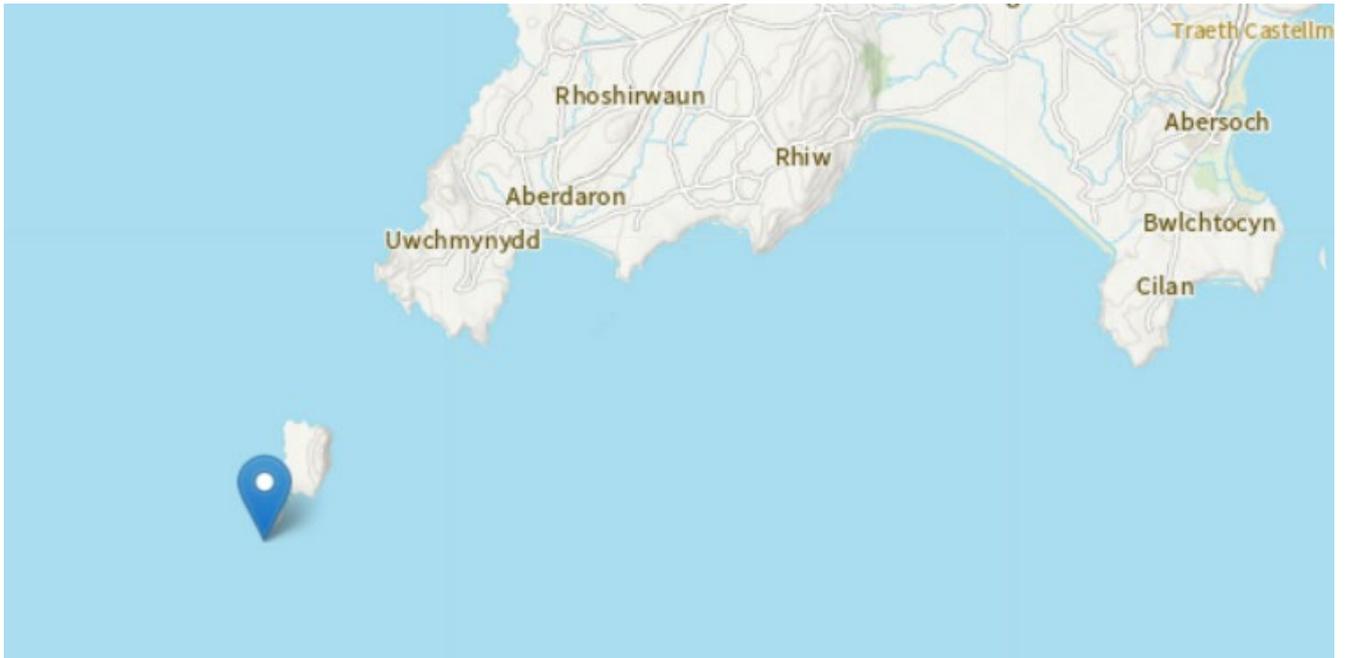


Figure 2: More precise wreck location of the Portland as plotted on <https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/271750?term=portland%201809> (last visited 11 December 2021)

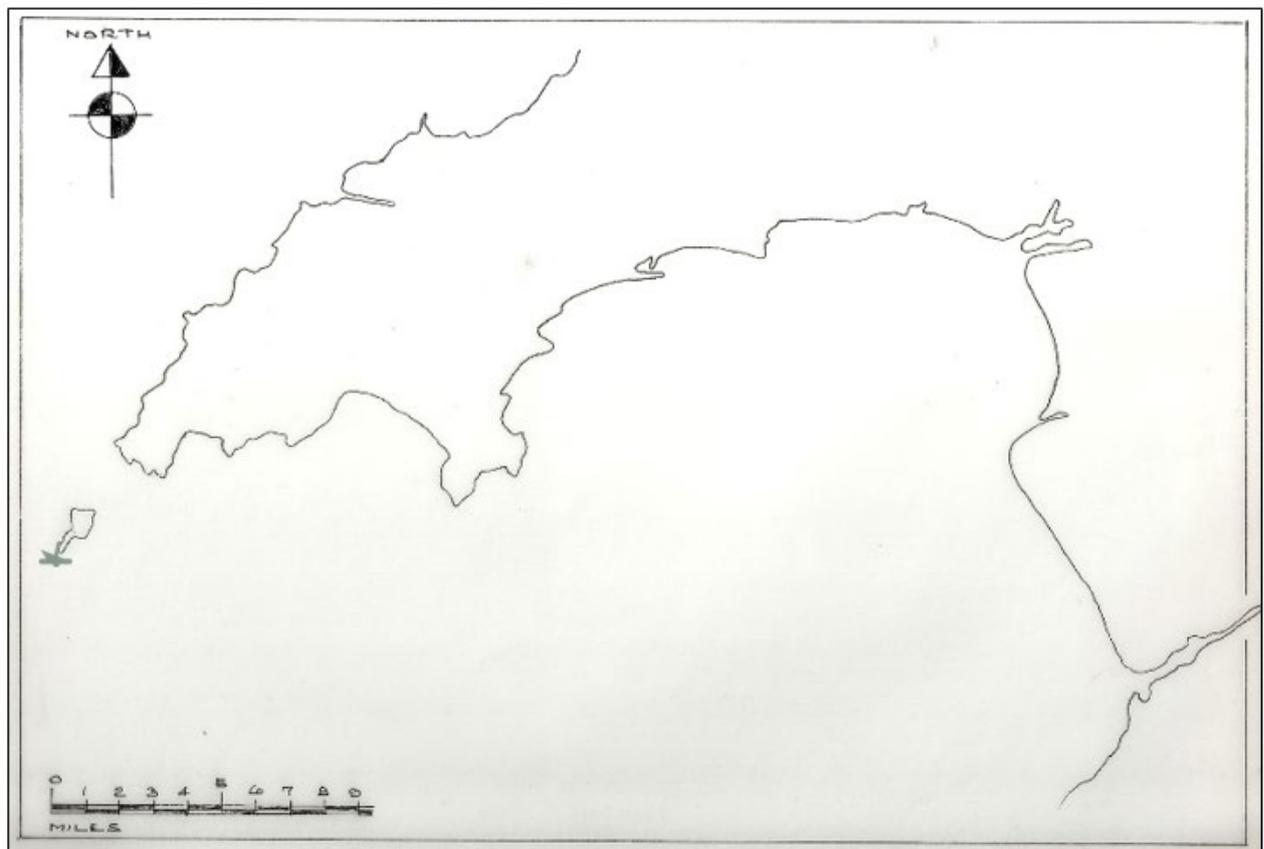


Figure 3: More precise wreck location – based on online investigation - of the Portland plotted on the map prepared (© MADU) for this project.

7.0 Analysis

Based on the (online) resources that could be retrieved by me some global information about the (wrecking of) *the Portland* has been collected.

This information however does not lead to an unambiguous and indisputable picture of the (history of) the *Portland*, but onverges to a more limited range of possibilities of what could have been (and could have happened).

For example, the use of ship, vessel and sloop gives room for different interpretations of possible ship-constructions. The same goes for the different locations and dates. Because the principal commodity shipped to Welsh ports in that time was coal – and the *Portland* was carrying coal as well – more information about the *Portland* – or similar sailing sloops – could possibly be found in sources regarding this coal trade.

8.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

Roughly I have spent 6 hours on this project, of which approximately 85% on-line.

Based on the results (6.) and analysis (7.) - as one can judge for oneself – there were conflicting accounts. It was not possible for me to turn these into more specific and unambiguous accounts.

Therefore, before trying to dive this wreck site I would recommend to do “on water research” (e.g. side scan sonar) in a specific area, based on the descriptions of the location of wrecking.

Next to that, it would be worth carrying out any further on-line research, into this vessel by following leads with regard to the coal trade of that time.

So far, the story behind this wreck is too limited to be developed further into a talk or a paper. However the exercise taught me a great deal on on-line research in Welsh-databases.

9.0 References

Books

- Holden, C., 2015, "The Essential Underwater Guide to North Wales: Volume One – Barmouth to South Stack", and the e-book:
https://play.google.com/store/books/details/Chris_Holden_The_Essential_Underwater_Guide_to_Nor?id=-60SBwAAQBAJ
- Larn, R. & Larn, B., 2000, Shipwreck Index of the British Isles: Volume 5 – West Coast and Wales. Lloyd's Register of Shipping.

Websites (all last visited 11 December 2021):

- <https://coflein.gov.uk/en/>
- <https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/271750?term=portland%201809>
- <https://www.crewlist.org.uk/>
- <https://www.maritimearchives.co.uk/>
- <https://newspapers.library.wales/>
- <https://web.archive.org/web/20070425234855/http://freespace.virgin.net:80/r.cadwalader/maritime/lifeboat/wreck.htm>
- <https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Sloop#/overview>
- <https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Sloop-of-war>