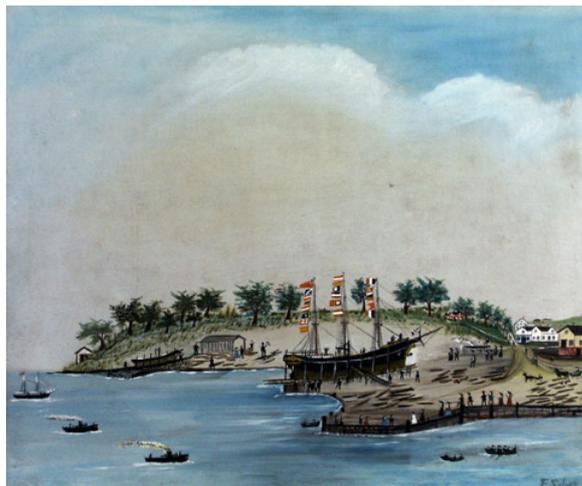


Welsh Wreck Web Research Project (North Cardigan Bay)

On-line research into the wreck of the:

Scotia (MADU 266)



Launching a schooner – Nova Scotia Archives
<https://archives.novascotia.ca/images/schooners/200400565.jpg>

Scotia

Report compiled by:

Gwyneth M James

Report Title

**Welsh Wreck Web Research Project
(North Cardigan Bay)
On-line research into the wreck of the:
*Scotia (MADU 266)***

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1.0 Abstract

The Welsh Wreck Research Project aims to contribute to a wider understanding of the maritime history of North Wales by using on-line research into vessels identified as wrecks in North Cardigan Bay. The schooner *Scotia* was one of the vessels listed by MADU (Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit) as wrecked in Cardigan Bay (MADU 266) and suitable for further investigation.

As a vessel built in New Brunswick, it was hoped that she would provide a link to the triangular trade between the UK, the Maritime Provinces of Canada and mainland European ports. The object was therefore to follow her working life to learn more about the nature of the trade links between North Wales and foreign ports. The main question being whether her links to New Brunswick continued and if so, in what manner. The report will show that, while her build and early voyage/s took place in North America, further links could not be established.

Her working life was in fact, spent as a British coaster and only a single tentative record voyage outside British or Irish waters could be found. Although, her early links with Ireland were maintained with Northern Ireland a major destination in her last two decades.

As a vessel carrying slate on her final journey, it was useful to explore how strong her links were to the slate trade. At this time a major feature in the development of North Wales. The *Scotia* was involved in the slate trade at the height of the development of that industry in North Wales when the seas and ports were busy with transporting the resources of the Industrial Revolution.

Her final moments are part of a bigger picture of the dangers which mariners faced aboard the small sailing ships which played such a huge role in both national and local commerce. The use of equipment in the rescue of her crew also provides an opportunity to look at provision for the time and the growing concern of local communities for the safety of seafarers.

2.0 Index

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2.3 Abbreviations	
MADU - Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit	
Coflein - Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Wales	
NLW - National Library of Wales. (Newspaper Archives)	
WMI - Welsh Mariner's Index	
LRS - Lloyds Register of Shipping.	
BNA - British Newspaper Archives	

3.0 Introduction

Reports found by the researcher on other vessels, the *Sam Slick* and *Endeavour*, lost on the beaches of the Llŷn Peninsular in the severe gales of December 8th-9th 1886, offered information on the wrecking of the *Scotia* on nearby Aberech Beach.

The *Scotia* was of particular interest as she was carrying roofing slates at the time of wrecking in 1886, at the height of the North Wales slate trade. She is identified as one of the many vessels working as slate ships and subsequently wrecked in a report *The Maritime Archaeology of the Welsh Slate Trade* (Wessex Archaeology, 2009).

Initial information recorded that she was not locally built but was from New Brunswick, which with Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia form the Canadian Maritime Provinces. The *Scotia* was indeed built in St Johns, New Brunswick for 'T. Ferguson and Others' in 1837. This has been verified in a list of locally registered ships found on the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick website: *AN ACCOUNT of all Vessels in existence on the Records of Registry at this Port (St John's, New Brunswick) on the 1st December, 1837.*

Links between British North America and North Wales have been discussed by Emrys Hughes and Aled Eames in their book '*Porthmadog Ships*' (Hughes and Eames, 2009) indicating that, by the mid 19th Century, a fashion for investing in North American built ships had developed amongst Welsh shipowners as well as throughout the UK. The *Scotia* could then be seen as an example of this trend, although Hughes and Eames (2009) tell us that, between 1821 and 1874, only 16 vessels registered locally were built in New Brunswick. The developments in ship building, particularly of schooners, in the area appears to have owed much to North American designs which were seen and experienced by mariners engaged in trade with Newfoundland. Such schooners were well suited to the requirements of local coastal conditions and to combating the strong inshore drift of Cardigan Bay.

4.0 Background

In the 19th Century New Brunswick ships were renowned for their speed and the craftsmanship of their construction. They helped give Canada a key place in the international shipbuilding industry. In the 1800s New Brunswick became an important source of timber for Britain after the supply from the Baltic area was cut off due to the Napoleonic wars.

Numerous inland waterways provided easy access to the forests, but square timber, a bulky product, had to be carried across the oceans in large wooden sailing vessels. Since New Brunswick possessed hundreds of kilometres of coastline suitable for launching ships, timber-merchants built shipyards and increased their output to meet this demand. (New Brunswick Museum, 2003)

During the course of the 19th century merchants began to export other goods such as fish, stone and agricultural produce. Schooners were the backbone of trade both in the Maritime Provinces of North America and the British Isles.

The schooner's reputation was built on serviceability — relatively small, speedy, agile and seaworthy, it was the workhorse of the sea. (Nova Scotia Archives, Accessed, February 2021).

Many of New Brunswick's larger shipyards were self-sufficient operations. They had their own wood yards, sawmills, steam shops for bending planks, warehouses, blacksmith's forges and workshops. Lower wages but a high standard of build in North American yards resulted in competition with the developing Welsh shipbuilding industry. Eames (1987) suggests that there was a policy amongst the wealthier shipowners in the early to mid-19th Century, to buy the cheaper North American built ships in addition to those of local yards. It is also likely that design aspects of the North American ships influenced the later development of the renowned Porthmadog built Western Yachts (Hughes & Eames, 2009).

Early practice was to sell vessels and their cargoes in England after a single Atlantic crossing, although this changed by 1850 when many New Brunswick merchants and investors were purchasing rather than chartering vessels. Built in Portland, New Brunswick in 1837, it seems possible that the *Scotia* was built either for sale or for a British owner .

5.0 Research Methodology

Research was undertaken as an online exercise with an Apple Mac laptop computer. Using Google as a search engine and Chrome as the browser.

Online sites recommended for the project were followed up. These included Lloyds Register of Shipping (LRS), the Crew List Index Project (CLIP), Coflein and local sites such as *Caernarvon Traders*. The Crew List Index Project also gave access to the Mercantile Navy Lists. To these was added the Welsh Mariners Index (MRI) which gave information on some of the ship's Masters.

Access to the British Newspaper Archive was available and provided background material of both ship movement and significant events. The key search word was the name of the ship, sometimes prefixed with 'wreck of', schooner, cargo or the home port. In searching for the voyages and events in the life of the vessel, the name of the master was affixed to identify the ship accurately. Shipowner names and particularly dates of events were also useful in searching newspaper articles, for example the details of the sale of the ship in Cork was found using *Scotia, schooner, Ferguson*. The National Library of Wales Archive of Newspapers was used alongside the BNA to extend the search options.

Using a temporary table for reference in plotting voyages covering years where the ship was in new ownership, had a new master or if events seemed in any way significant was helpful in looking for trends in cargos and destinations and in establishing the name of the master over a period of time .

The website of the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick provided a link to the local Newspaper Archives and a general URL search of ship building in the Maritime Provinces produced *The Golden Age of Sail*, An online account of shipbuilding in the area by the New Brunswick Museum.

The website *Caernarvon Traders* was found to be useful in providing information on Caernarfon in the 19th Century and the Parry family.

The *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society* provided information on the storm itself and was accessed through a Google search for 'Storm of December 8th 1886'.

Several hard-back books were also used in reference to provide information and context *Porthmadog Ships* (Hughes & Eames, 2009) and *Ventures in Sail* (Eames, 1987) (see reference list).

6.0 Results

6.1 Description:

The *Scotia* was a sailing schooner built for 'Thomas Fergusson and others' in Portland, St Johns, New Brunswick in 1837. She was a wooden ship, built of Black Birch and Spruce with Iron Bolts and with the dimensions: 58ft:1ins length, 15ft:7ins width, 7:4ins deep. Net 55 tons. (<https://archives.gnb.ca/Documents/IrishPortal/Newspapers/0513.pdf>).

119	Schooner	Union,		114	Jacob Haviland and John Farris.	'33	
120	Ship	Peruvian,		369	E. Drury & Co.	'34	
121	Schooner	<i>Scotia</i> ,	N.B.	55	82	T. Fergusson and others.	'37
122	Barque	Isabella,	N.B.	805	332	James Kirk.	'37
123	"	Henry Hood,	N.S.	809	298	Henry Hood.	'37

6.2. History of her working Life:

The first mention found of the *Scotia* were the following reports of an eventful early voyage in the *Shipping and Mercantile Gazette* of March 27 1838,. Although at first dismissed as a different vessel, she is named here as a British Schooner. Her Master, T. Fergusson is recorded by Hughes and Eames (2009). In a list of ships registered in New Brunswick, he is also named as an owner which suggests that she is indeed the *Scotia*, later of Caernarfon.

Fell in with British schooner Scotia, Ferguson, from Norfolk, bound to Jamaica. had been knocked her beam ends, decks swept, and her hold had been full of water—after cutting away mast she righted and they succeeded in pumping her out ; was under jury mast and bound for the first port she could make—supplied them with provisions, but could not give them any water, being without any. The crew of the Scotia had not had any water for nine days previous. They had lost charts, compasses and almost every article which they had on board.

The Scotia, Ferguson, from Norfolk for Jamaica, has arrived it Charleston with damage, part of her cargo lost, having been on her beam ends.

On her "beam ends" is a reference to one of the main horizontal transverse timbers of a wooden ship. 'On her beam ends ' suggests that the ship had heeled over and had been close to capsizing (thefreedictionary.com).

From the earliest days of settlement, schooners of the Maritime Provinces traded along the Atlantic seaboard and down into the Caribbean, carrying salt fish and bringing back molasses, rum and other southern products (Nova Scotia Archives, online 2021). This could have been the initial plan for her trading life.

Soon after the report above, Captain Fergusson sold the ship from the Cove (Cobn) of Cork. Using the services of the local general, timber & coal merchant, ship owner and shipping agent James Scott of Hill House (freepages.rootsweb.com). *The Southern Reporter and Cork Commercial Courier*, 27th Oct. 1838, contains the following advertisement. This also explains a brief registration in Cork (Hughes & Eames, 2009)

ON SALE.



THE Fine Schooner "SCOTIA," THOMAS FER-
GUSSON, Commander, 81 Tons old, and 55 Tons
new measurement, built at St. John's, N. B. of the Best mate-
rials, One year old, carries a Large cargo, is a remarkably hand-
some little Craft and well suited in all respects for the Corn and
Coal Trade. She requires no alteration in her Spars, Sails or
Rigging, and can be sent to Sea without any expense. The
Vessel is now discharging at Cove. For particulars apply to
JAMES SCOTT & CO.

It is not clear whether Thomas Fergus(s)on was resident in St Johns, New Brunswick or had commissioned her build from Ireland. Neither is it specified whether the 'Norfolk' mentioned is in the UK or Virginia. It could be that the incident took place during her maiden voyage, making the most of her initial voyage to her new owners in Ireland by taking cargo first to Norfolk, Virginia and then Jamaica, before sailing for her new home port. Or possibly Fergusson was intending, all along to trade from North America and then had a change of plan after refitting. In either case the result appears to be that she was put up for sale in her first year, 1838.

By 1843 Lloyds Register of Shipping(LRS) reports her as owned by 'Owen Snr' with 'Owen Jnr' as her master. Her registration at Beaumaris in 1841 suggests that he was, indeed, her next owner. It appears that the damage to the ship in the event recorded above had been swiftly restored, as she is ready for use at sale. By 1845 the *Scotia* was still owned by the Owen family. At this point she is registered from Beaumaris as a coaster.

By 1850, Captain Parry appears in newspaper reports as her master, but she is still owned by the Owen family and now registered at Chester as a Flint coaster. The Welsh Mariner's Index(WMI) notes that Captain Robert Parry was the Master of the *Scotia* from 1856 to 1858 and then again from 1862-3. Lloyds Register also records him as Master from as early as 1851 while the Owen's family are still the owners. The *Scotia* is listed in Lloyds Register for the year 1856, 61 and 62 confirming Captain Parry as master and also owner by this time. Whether he was a part owner previously is unclear.

On 20th January 1864 the *Scotia* arrived at Ardrossan from Runcorn, setting sail to return to Runcorn on 23rd January (BNA). These are both recorded with Robert Parry as Master,

but on the 27th February, the return journey to Caernarvon from Runcorn does not record a Master's name, reducing this to a dash. An obituary in the *Caernarvon & Denbigh Herald* for 20 February 1864 (BNA) confirms that he died at Runcorn on the 12th February, age 48, but no record has been found to explain the circumstances of his death. We know that he was born in Nefyn, on the Llŷn Peninsular in 1816 (WMI) and that the family settled in Pool Side, Caernarfon.

The ship, however stayed with the Parry family for many years and Mrs Parry of 58 Poolside, Caernarvon is listed as her owner at the time of the wrecking in 1886. The family's close association with this ship is clear, *The Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald* of 6th November 1869 announces the marriage of Anne Parry, only daughter of the Late Captain Parry of the Schooner *Scotia*. A later obituary to Mrs Sarah Parry at the age of 87yrs, records her as widow of Captain Parry of the schooner *Scotia* (*Y Genedl Gymreig*, 10th October 1905). As this obituary is in a Welsh language newspaper it would appear that the family were primarily Welsh speaking and it may be that a further look at local Welsh records for the area would provide more detail of the cause of death.

It appears that none of the Parry children followed their father to sea, as the ship's masters following Robert Parry's death appear to be John Hughes and later, Captain Howells and John Edwards.

During the 1870s the *Scotia*, under Captain Hughes, appears to have made frequent voyages to Northern Ireland which the *Belfast Telegraph*, *Ulster Examiner* and *Northern Whig* helpfully list as, "with slates". The *Scotia* does not appear in Lloyds Register after 1881 and in that last record the master is listed as Captain Hughes. By 1879 newspaper reports ceased to record the '*Scotia*' and '*Hughes*'. However, an identical regular run from Caernarvon to Northern Irish ports, also carrying slates is recorded for '*Scotia*' and '*Howells*'. This change of master is difficult to verify as Lloyds Register of Shipping records Captain Hughes as Master for 1881. At this point the *Scotia* appears to be trading almost solely in slate, although we have no available record of her return cargo.

At some point towards the end of her working life there appears to be a further change of master to a Captain Edwards. Some discrepancy has also been found in the reports as to the name of the master at the time of the wrecking incident. Here the *Carnarvon & Denbigh Herald* - Friday 10 December 1886 reports John Hughes as Master while the *North Wales Express* and *Coflein* name him as Captain Edwards:

The Carnarvon schooners "Miss Prichard" (Mr. Wm. Jones, Nevin, master) and "Scotia" (Mr. John Hughes, master, Mrs. Parry, Pool-side, owner) are ashore, the former near Portmadoc, and the latter on Abererch beach.
The schooner "Rebecca" of Carnarvon (Mr. G.

SEVERE STORM.
LOSS OF CARNARVON VESSELS.
During the terrific storm which was experienced on Wednesday, the 8th inst., the schooner *Scotia*, of Carnarvon, which had been labouring under a heavy sea, parted her cable at St. Tudwall's Roads, and drifted to Abererch beach. She was laden with slates for Bristol. Captain Edwards and the crew were saved by means of life lines, and were in a very exhausted state. The vessel belongs to Mrs Parry, Pool-side, and it is feared that she will become a total wreck. Two

Voyages recorded in the *Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald*, for 29th October and 19th November 1886 for Larne and 16th January for Belfast, suggest *Scotia* to be trading from Caernarfon under Captain Edwards (BNA). The vessel is not recorded in Lloyds Register at this time to provide the name of a master.

Voyages and Cargoes.

During the years from 1841 to 1850 the *Scotia* appears to have traded as a coaster along the west coast of Britain and Ireland, mainly covering an area from the Port of Lancaster, including the east coast of Ireland, the Bristol Channel and as far as Hayle and Poole on the south coast of England. Holyhead is frequently mentioned and appears as the *Scotia's* home port during this time. Holyhead had become an important port in the early 19th Century, when Thomas Telford built a new road connecting North Wales to London, with a bridge across the Menai Straits. In 1845 an Act of Parliament led to the building of a new port (Holyhead Port Authority). As the *Scotia's* owner at this time, Hugh Owen, was a coal merchant it is reasonable to suppose that this would be a major cargo for the *Scotia* and that she was operating from a bustling, newly rebuilt port.

The cargoes noted in newspaper archives are:

Lancaster Port - Scotia, Owen, Holyhead, oats. (*Kendal Mercury* - 10 February 1844)

Lancaster Port- Holyhead, coals (*Lancaster Gazette* - 02 March 1844)

Scotia. H Owen, from Dundalk, with 500 loads oatmeal for D Smith and Sons, 249 do Owens and co - Canning Dock (Liverpool) (Gore's Liverpool General Advertiser - 5th December 1844).

From 1850 her home port appears to be Caernarfon although her master, Captain Parry, is not yet her owner he is resident in the city. From this time, with a new master, the *Scotia*

sailed from Caernarfon rather than Holyhead. There appears to be a change in locations with at first, less sailings to Ireland, while ports visited expand to include Cornwall, Devon, the Channel Islands and then as far as Carlisle and the Firth of Forth.

From 1840, Caernarfon had become the port of registry for every ship in the area from Barmouth and included Porthmadog and Pwllheli (Jenkins 2006, cited Wessex Archaeology, 2009). Caernarfon, at this time, shipped slates throughout Britain, Western Europe and had considerable trade links with cities in the United States of America. It is recorded that 85,044 tonnes of slate were shipped from Caernarfon in 1844 (Gwyn 2002, cited Wessex Archaeology, 2009). It is difficult to substantiate to what extent the *Scotia* was involved, at this stage in the transport of roofing slates but she can be seen to regularly visit other slate ports such as Portdinorwic and Bangor.

An interesting find in the *Shipping & Mercantile Gazette* for 3rd January 1845 involves the cargo of the Russian Barque Nicolai Savin, stranded at Holyhead:

The Scotia, Owens ; Sir Sidney, Jones ; and John, Lewis ; are taking in deals, part of the Nicolai Savin's cargo, for Liverpool.

 On account of whom it may concern,
On Tuesday next, the 8th instant, at Holyhead,
The Hull, Stores, and Materials of the Russian
Barque **NICOLAI SAVIN**,
Lately stranded, and now lying in Holyhead Har-
bour. The vessel is 452 tons, English measurement, and only
seven years old. The Materials consist of complete Sets of Boars,
Sails, Standing and Running Rigging, Chain Cables, Anchors,
Boats, Copper, Cabin Furniture, &c., all of superior quality, and
in good condition.
The sale to commence at Ten o'clock, A.M.
For further particulars apply to the Captain, at the King's
Arms, Holyhead, or to Mr. JOHN JONES, of the said town,
Auctioneer.

It appears, however, that at least from 1870 to 1886 the *Scotia* traded mainly in slate and a regular trading route was established between Caernarfon and Northern Ireland in particular. The advertisement below fits with the newspaper sailing records (BNA) for the *Scotia* leaving Caernarfon on 23rd October 1880 for Belfast under Captain Howells, although a master is not named in the advertisement.

ROBBS BROTHERS beg to announce the ar-
rival of the **SCOTIA** with a CARGO of their
PENYRORSEDD SLATES.
The usual advantages will be given if taken
from the vessel's side.
70, GEORGE'S STREET
AND
109, CORPORATION STREET.
BELFAST.
3rd November, 1880. **2286**

A single exception to the pattern of the trade route to Ireland seems to be a voyage in *Lloyds Lists* on 16th November, 1877 from Caernarfon to Bilbao.

Repairs and refits.

It appears that there some repairs took place in 1850 with a new keel and keelson and then in 1855 there were further repairs under special survey conditions (LRS). It suggests that these repairs were undertaken when the ship came into the ownership of the Parry Family sometime around 1855.

In 1875 the Quatre Deck was raised 16ft. and she required a Special Survey for 4yrs.

Events in the vessel's lifetime.

Apart from the event in the first year of her working life there have been a small number of other events recorded.

Lloyds Lists reports The *Scotia*, under Captain Owen, was driven on shore near Coleraine on 18th March 1842. She was also reported as stranded at Pile of Fondray near Glasson Dock, Ardrossan on the 23rd March 1844.

A strange story is recounted in the *Caernarvon & Denbigh Herald* for 26th May 1877, under the heading 'A Rash Act' when Captain John Hughes of Glanymor, Caernarfon, jumped overboard as the vessel, *Scotia*, left Belfast for home. A boat was launched, and he was rescued on the 'point of drowning' and later reported to be in a critical state in hospital. Captain J Hughes is indeed registered as Master for the year 1877 and also for some time afterwards, which suggests a recovery. However, Captain Howells appears to be in charge on at least two voyages, one in 1878, others in 1879 & 1880, before John Hughes disappears from records as Captain by 1881.

Events leading up to the wrecking.

December 1886 saw the year ending with gales and storms throughout the UK. The following newspaper report is representative of others throughout the country, indicating serious damage to structures on land as well as at sea. The *Western Mail*, 10th December 1886, reporting from Porthmadog, says the following:

The most awful storm experienced on the Welsh Coast for the past twenty years blew from the west on Tuesday evening, and has continued with more or less violence since. The barometer touched the lowest point on Wednesday night at six o'clock, when it recorded 27 845. The wind blew a hurricane all along the coasts of Flintshire, Carnarvonshire, and Anglesea. The coastguards were prepared for emergencies, as it was seen to be impossible for any but the stoutest vessels to live in the awful sea running. This morning the Anglesea and Carnarvonshire Coasts are strewn with the wrecks of Vessels which went down during the darkness of the

night. Near this town, which is one of the most exposed on the North Carnarvonshire Coast, the full effects of the gale were felt. (NLW)

In early December 1886 the weather in the UK had been very disturbed for some time and by the 8th December, the barometer had fallen to the lowest level previously recorded for Ireland, Northern and Central Britain and remained low for an unusually long period of time. The resulting storm was of the first magnitude and unusual in its wide distribution, from Norway to Spain, and in the length of its duration (Harding, 1887).

The *Scotia* was caught at sea, travelling with a cargo of slate from Caernarvon to Bristol in the gales which raged throughout that day and the next. Accounts of wrecks, ships in difficulty, rescues and losses can be read in the newspaper archives for those few terrible days.

Wrecking incident:

Though there have been many shipwrecks along this area of the Llŷn Peninsular, the gently sloping beaches at Pwllheli give the possibility of beaching vessels and perhaps providing a chance for the crew to reach safety and the ship itself to be salvaged (Holden, 2009)

SEVERE STORM. LOSS OF CARNARVON VESSELS. During the terrific storm which was experienced on Wednesday, the 8th inst., the schooner Scotia, of Carnarvon, which had been labouring under a heavy sea, parted her cable at St. Tudwall's Roads, and drifted to Abererch beach. She was laden with slates for Bristol. Captain Edwards and the crew were saved by means of lifelines and were in a very exhausted state. The vessel belongs to Mrs Parry, Poolside, and it is cleared that she will become a total wreck. (North Wales Observer and Express, Dec 10 1886)(NLW)

The schooner Scotia, Carnarvon, with slates for Bristol, went ashore. Two of the crew succeeded in landing, but up to a late hour the captain was reported to be still aboard. (Liverpool Weekly Courier - Saturday 11 December 1886)

The life-saving apparatus on Abererch beach was of much service as by it the crews of the 'Hoylake boats and the " Scotia" were 'saved. (The Caernarvon & Denbigh Herald, 10th December 1886)

The Caernarvon & Denbigh Herald for Friday 17 December 1886 reports the following:

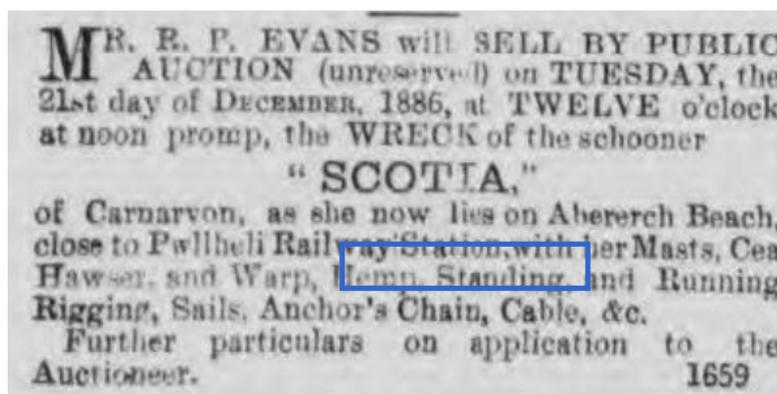
"The saving of the lives of the crews of the Scotia, ashore near Aberech was accomplished with much difficulty. Some of the crew nearly perished by the upsetting of the boat. It is impossible to name the brave men who hazarded their own lives to save others, they were far too numerous. Every kindness was shown the unfortunate sailors by several persons in the town."

The saving of the lives of the crews of the Scotia, ashore near Aberech, was accomplished with great difficulty. Some of the crew nearly perished by the upsetting of a boat. It is impossible to name the brave men who hazarded their own lives in attempting to save others; they were too numerous. Every kindness was shown the unfortunate sailors by several persons in the town.

The crew of the *Scotia* and others on Aberech Beach had the advantage of rescue equipment to aid their recovery, which was missing from nearby Pwllheli Beach, where four lives were lost, three on the *Mary Anne* and Captain Isaac Jones of the *John and Mary*. Appendix 1. gives a summary of shore-based lifesaving equipment in use at this time.

Aftermath of the wrecking incident:

The remains of the ships wrecked on the beaches in the storm were sold as salvage. *'All the vessels ashore on Pwllheli Beach have been sold by auction'. (Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald, 17th Dec 1886-BNA)*. The fate of the *Scotia* can be seen further in an advertisement in the *North Wales Chronical* for 18th December 1886.

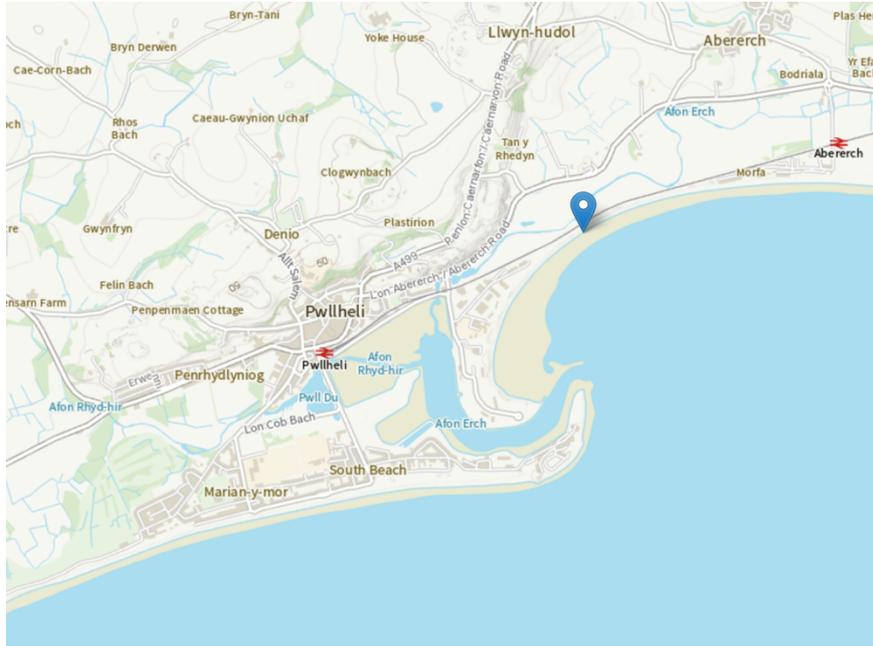


MR. R. P. EVANS will SELL BY PUBLIC AUCTION (unreserved) on TUESDAY, the 21st day of DECEMBER, 1886, at TWELVE o'clock at noon promp, the WRECK of the schooner "SCOTIA," of Carnarvon, as she now lies on Abererch Beach, close to Pwllheli Railway Station, with her Masts, Sea Hawser, and Warp, Iron Standing and Running Rigging, Sails, Anchor's Chain, Cable, &c. Further particulars on application to the Auctioneer. 1659

There is a possibility that some wreckage could have been abandoned on the beach. Coflein notes that *'Archaeological remains associated with the loss of this vessel are not confirmed at present at this location but may be in the vicinity'*. Establishing a positive connection between remains and a particular wooden schooner wrecked, on that day alone would seem to be a challenging task although the use of black birch and spruce in her build could perhaps help identification.

6.3 Location of the wrecking incident.

www.coflein.gov.uk/en/site/271622?term=wreck%20of%20the%20scotia%201886



Map ReferenceSH33NE

Grid ReferenceSH3893535627

Sources include:

Board of Trade Wreck Return 1886 Appendix C Table 1 pg130 (896)

Larn and Larn Shipwreck Database 2002

7.0 Table of Results:

Vessel	Name/s	Scotia	
	Type	Schooner.	
		Cargo.	
Built	Date	1837	
		T Fergusson and Others	
	Builder	Unknown	
		Portland, New Brunswick	
Construction	Materials	Wood - Black Birch and Spruce with iron bolts.	
	Decks		
Propulsion	Type	Sail	
	Number		
Dimensions	Length	58ft	1 ins
	Beam	15ft	7 ins
	Draught	7ft	4 ins
Tonnage	Gross	55t	
	Net		
Owner	First	T. Fergusson and Others	
	Last	Mrs Sarah Parry 1864 – 1886. 58 Poolside Carnarvon.	
	Others	Owen Family (Hugh Owen – Coal merchant).1840-55. Mr Robert Parry, 1855 – 64:	
Registry	Port	St Johns New Brunswick, Cork (1839), Glasgow(1839), Beaumaris (1841 – 49), Chester (1849-54), Caernarvon (1855 – 86).	
	Flag	British	
	Number	3103	
History	Early Routes	St Johns, NS to Caribbean via Norfolk, (Virginia?)	
		To Jamaica (unclear whether destination was reached as she puts in at Charlestown, Georgia)	
	Cargo	Unknown	
Final Voyage	From	Caernarvon	
	To	Bristol	
	Captain	Edwards	
	Crew	3?	
	Passengers	0	
	Cargo	Roofing Slates	
Wrecking	Date	8 th December 1886	
	Location	Aberech Beach, Pwllheli	
	Cause	Gales force winds.	
	Loss of life	0	
	Outcome	Total Loss sold as salvage.	

8.0 Analysis

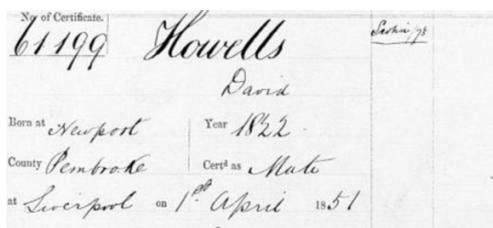
The *Scotia* did not, as hoped, provide an ongoing link with the triangular Newfoundland trade routes, although her first voyages suggested that this could have been the initial plan for her future. Rather she became a typical coastal vessel plying her trade over a rather small area in the ownership of local family businesses.

It has not been possible to establish whether the *Scotia* was built specifically for the UK market or whether the plan was always to take her to Ireland for sale. Conflicting reports on her early years, of her arrival in the UK and identity of masters have been discussed in the text and appear to suggest that she made a single voyage, although an eventful one, which resulted in her sale in Cork. Whereafter, she remained mainly as a coastal vessel in Welsh ownership. No further links were found to New Brunswick or any part of North America.

As family businesses appears to be a reoccurring theme in this story, the occasional insights into people involved with the *Scotia* have led to more questions than answers: Who was Thomas Fergusson; an Irish immigrant to New Brunswick or someone domiciled in Ireland?

What exactly happened to Robert Parry on his final trip to Runcorn has not been established, but his burial in Llanbeblig Cemetery, near Caernarfon on 19th February, 1864 is recorded in the *Caernarvon Traders Website* (accessed, 24th March 2021).

Why John Hughes "jumped" overboard is not explained. Only one master mariner called John Hughes can be found on the *Caernarvon Traders website*. He is living at 12, Uxbridge Square from 1868 until 1878. By 1880 he has moved to 8, North Street, Caernarvon. If this is the correct John Hughes, it could signify a change of circumstances; and presents the possibility that ill health could have been the cause of a change of master. The gap between the final voyages of John Hughes on the *Scotia* and the arrival in accounts of John Edwards, appears to be filled by Captain Howells. Attempts to find further information on either John Edwards or Captain Howells have been inconclusive. A Master Mariner David Howells born in Newport, Pembrokeshire in 1822 could have been associated with the *Scotia* (WMI), at least in 1873, but again the link is very tenuous.



9.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

The project has provided an insight into the life of a small merchant ship of the time, showing clear ties to North Wales. She had a working life of 48 years as a coastal vessel first out of Holyhead and later Caernarfon.

There was initially some confusion with vessels of the same name but once the name of the current master was established this became easier. Initially a gamble was taken on the owner being also the master, as was common for small vessels, this was indeed the case for Fergusson, Owen and Parry.

In her final years a master's name was more difficult to identify as she does not appear in Lloyds Register and therefore no master's name was identifiable. The Mercantile Navy Lists continued to provide a link to the Parry family. We therefore know that she was still owned by Sarah Parry, but there is no record of the change of master from John Hughes to Captain Howells and then John Edwards. The exact progression of ship's master is therefore not corroborated. It is possible that further research using census information may have provided links.

Most of the websites accessed were free to view, the exception being the British Newspaper Archives. However, if this is a problem, the National Library of Wales newspaper site is free and easily accessed.

I do not think that there is much merit in further work on the *Scotia* wreck site, unless this were to be part of a larger piece of work on the vessels lost in the area on that day. It would appear that most were either re-floated or sold as salvage. Further work has taken place following up two other ships involved in this event, the *Endeavour* (MADU 269) and the *Sam Slick* (MADU 264). Included, (Appendix C) in the report on the *Endeavour*, is a list of the ships which were named in articles searched for regarding the storm of 8 & 9th December 1886, with some of the information gained.

10.0 References

Online sites:

- <https://archives.novascotia.ca/schooners/>
- (<https://archives.gnb.ca/Documents/IrishPortal/Newspapers/0513.pdf>).
- www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/
- <http://www.carnarvontraders.com/new.shtml>
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- <https://holyheadport.co.uk/about-holyhead-port/history>.
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- Holyhead Port Authority: online at <https://holyheadport.co.uk/about-holyhead-port/history>. (accessed 19th March 2021)
- Provincial Archives of New Brunswick: PORT OF SAINT JOHN, NEW-BRUNSWICK - AN ACCOUNT of all Vessels in existence on the Records of Registry at this Port on the 1st December, 1837. at <https://archives.gnb.ca/Documents/IrishPortal/Newspapers/0513.pdf>.
- The Maritime Archaeology of the Welsh Slate Trade - Archaeological Desk-based Assessment (2009). Wessex Archaeology online at https://coflein.gov.uk/media/37/242/aent28_10.pdf. (Accessed, 17th March 2021)

Books:

- Hughes E, Eames A. (2009) *Porthmadog Ships*. MOROL (Institute of Welsh Maritime Historical Studies).
- Eames A. (1987). *Ventures in Sail*. Published jointly by Gwynedd Archives and Museum Services; Merseyside Maritime Museum; National Maritime Museum.

Illustrations:

- Front Cover : <https://archives.novascotia.ca/images/schooners/200400565.jpg>
- Illustration of a Manby Mortar: <https://www.edp24.co.uk/lifestyle/norfolk-on-a-stick-hilgay-village-sign-1439526>

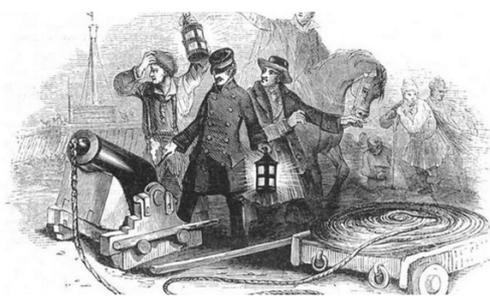
Appendix 1.

Rescue Apparatus.

The type of rescue apparatus available at Pwllheli at the time of the incident is unclear but it is likely to have been based on the type of equipment generally issued at the time.

Following the Coastguard Service Act, 1856 the existing Preventative Water Guard, Riding Officers and Revenue Cruisers were amalgamated to form the Coast Guard. Set up mainly to control smuggling, it had other duties, such as responsibility for assisting ships in distress. To accomplish this, from 1810 the Board of Ordnance supplied life-saving apparatus known as Manby's mortars which fired a shot and line from shore to ship to enable rescue of those aboard. It is possible that this was the rescue apparatus available on Aberech Beach in December 1886. Equipment stores were provided near Coast Guard premises for housing life-saving apparatus, the Manby mortars and its successors, with a cart for transport. Other stores could be set away from the station. There were also a number of independent life-saving companies and brigades that were set up and from 1860s the equipment was increasingly operated by life-saving companies under the supervision of the Coastguard (Historic England, Coastguard Stations accessed, 23th March, 2021).

George William Manby (1765- 1854) was barrack master at Great Yarmouth when in 1807 he saw a small naval ship, the Snipe, wrecked close to shore with huge loss of life when over 60 people were drowned, including French prisoners of war, women and children. He realised that rescue in such a case could be attempted through a physical link with the land, so he used a small military mortar and invented a way to fire a rescue-line from the shore. The mortar fired a light line over the top of a ship, so that a stronger rope could be taken out to it for people to slide down and reach the shore. The first rescue using the equipment was in 1808 but before he died, in 1854, over 1000 lives had been saved by use of his invention.



An 1842 illustration of a Manby Mortar.

Image: Johann Jacob Weber/Public Domain - Credit: Archant

<https://www.edp24.co.uk/lifestyle/norfolk-on-a-stick-hilgay-village-sign-1439526>