



Welsh Wreck Web Research Project

(North Cardigan Bay)

On-line research into the wreck of the:

SS Stormarn

NO PHOTOS AVAILABLE FOR THIS VESSEL

Report compiled by

Lynn Jones

Report Title:

**Welsh Wreck Web Research Project
(North Cardigan Bay)
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*SS STORMARN***

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1.0 Abstract

The Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit (MADU) currently have a database of 524 shipwrecks in the area of Cardigan Bay. These wrecks date from 1590 to 1993, however very few have been researched in any depth. This project has been running since April 2020 and will end on 31 December 2020. With the current pandemic affecting all field activities and restrictions on movement around the UK, online research is a safe and accessible way to conduct research into these forgotten wrecks. This report describes the historical aspect of the incident.

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2.4 Contributors

MADU

2.5 Abbreviations

A list of any abbreviations used in this report:

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

3.0 Background

NPRN 272535

Map Reference SH00SE

Grid Reference SH0799500998

Unitary (Local) Authority Maritime

Old County Maritime

Community Maritime

Type of Site WRECK

Broad Class MARITIME

Period Modern

Site Description Archaeological remains associated with the loss of this vessel are not confirmed as present at this location, but may possibly be in the vicinity.

Event and Historical Information:

The STORMARN was an iron-hulled steamship built by G Howaldt, Kiel, in 1880. Technical and configuration specifications are given as 588gt, 355nt; 176ft 5in length x 25ft depth x 14ft depth; 1 deck; screw propulsion powered by a single steam boiler linked to a compound engine producing 61hp.

At time of loss, the vessel was owned by Nord-Ostsee, Rhederei, Hamburg, and under the command of master A Leisener. The ship was in collision with the Glasgow registered GORDON CASTLE on 6 September 1900 (see NRPN 272535). Both ships are reported to have foundered 15miles west of the Cardigan Bay lightship.

Information collated from a review of sources within the RCAHMW and National Library of Wales, which include: Larn and Larn Shipwreck Database 2002

Maritime Officer, RCAHMW, September 2008.

Table 1. Lloyds Register Casualty returns- 31 March 1900> 25 September 1900:

showing both ships' details

(d.) Collision.

No. in Reg. Book. 1900-01.	Vessel's Name.	Tons.		Nation-ality.	Descrip-tion.	Voyage.	Cargo.	Circumstances and place.	Date.
		Net.	Gross.						
238	Germania	66	150	U.K.	I. Sc.	Fishing		Off Blyth	29th July.
446	Gordon Castle.....	1295	2045	U.K.	I. Sc.	Benluf--Barrow ...	Iron ore ...	In Cardigan Bay	16th Sept.
566	Greenwood	577	928	U.K.	I. Sc.	London--Tyne	Ballast	Off South Pier, S. Shields : sunk & became a total wreck.	20th Aug.
246	Mantis	57	155	U.K.	I. Sc.	Fishing		50 miles N. W. by W. of Blyth	10th Sept.
850	Mistor	1462	2258	U.K.	Stl. Sc.	Newport--Malta ...	Coal	While lying at anchor in Cardiff Roads.	3th Aug.
694	Prince Consort ...	17	128	U.K.	I. Pad.	Trawler		Near Cove, off Aberdeen	16th Aug.
242	Retriever	55	147	U.K.	I. Sc.	Trawler		Off Bull Lightship, Spurn Head	17th Sept.
284	Rhyl	797	1274	U.K.	I. Sc.	Ardrossan-- Newport(Mon.)	Ballast	Off Holyhead	24th July.
212	Georgie	1383	2525	Pre.	Stl. Sc.	Theodosia & Batoum --Marseille.	General ...	Off Cape Injeh, Sea of Marmora.	23rd Sept.
1264	Stormarn	355	588	Ger.	I. Sc.	Manchester-- Hamburg.	General ...	In Cardigan Bay	16th Sept.
714	Andrea Vagliano	1045	1622	Grk.	I. Sc.	Taganrog-- Mediterranean.	Wheat	Sunk near Constantinople	4th Sept.
77	Calanda	865	1377	Nor.	Stl. Sc.	Nagasaki-- Port Arthur.	General ...	Off Iwoshima	28th Sept.

TOTALS:--STEEL, 3--5,150 tons. IRON, 9--7,032 tons. WOOD AND COMPOSITE, Nil. TOTAL, 12--13,192 tons.

5.0 Research Methodology

Equipment Used:

HP Laptop with Windows 10

High speed broadband

Microsoft Office

Google Search engine

Admiralty Chart- Cardigan Bay Northern part 1984 edition

1. I have a good library of reference books on maritime history including the classic books on shipwrecks of the Welsh coast. I started my research from here.
2. I checked in the Lloyds Register database to see if there is an entry to obtain building date and dimensions. The master's name is given which is useful for correlating the vessel details in the register with newspaper and other accounts as there is more than one ship with the same name.
3. Check for entry in Larn and Larn shipwreck Index Vol 5 to see if the wreck is included.
4. Online check of COFLEIN website to see if this ship appears.
5. A general search with GOOGLE ensuing the type of ship and date of sinking are listed to ensure the correct ship is identified.
6. The National Library of Wales newspaper collection of Welsh newspapers 1800-1919 is invaluable <https://newspapers.library.wales/> (free access).
7. The British Newspaper Archive online is a valuable source of information. (Subscription required) <https://www.britishnewspapersarchive.co.uk/>
8. Many newspapers had a section on shipping movements and intelligence. In the search field always enter the ship's name followed by the master's name. Unfortunately, the cargo carried is not often mentioned.
9. Wrecksite.eu is another good website. This site sometimes has the Board of Trade Inquiry Report.
10. Lloyd's Register Casualty returns 1890-2000 <https://hec.lrfoundation.org.uk/archive-library/casualty-returns/>

6.0 Results

Vessel	Name/s	Stormarn	
	Type	Cargo ship	
Built	Date	1880	
		Launched new to Howaldtswerke AG. Kiel	
	Builder	AG. Howaldtswerke (yard no.35)	
		Kiel	
Construction	Materials	Iron	
	Decks	1 deck	
	Bulkheads	4	
Propulsion	Type	Engine	
	Details	Steam	
Engine	Details	61 HP	
		1 x Screw, 2 cylinder comp	
	Boilers	1 x steam boiler	
Drive	Type		
	Number		
Dimensions	Length	53.6 metres	
	Beam	7.7 metres	
	Draught	4.8 metres	
Tonnage	Gross	569	
	Net		
Owner	First	Lange Gebr.	
	Last	Nord-Ostsee, Rhederei, Hamburg	
	Others	J P Maclay and T W McIntyre	
Registry	Port	Kiel	
	Flag	Germany	
	Number		
History	Routes	Hamburg- Manchester, UK	
	Cargo	General cargo	
Final Voyage	From	Manchester	
	To	Hamburg	
	Captain	A. Leisener	

	Crew	13
	Passengers	
	Cargo	Iron ore
Wrecking	Date	10 September 1900
	Location	15 miles west of Cardigan Lightship
	Cause	10/09/1900 sunk in collision with the Glasgow registered steamship SS Gordon Castle, in dense fog in Cardigan Bay. (Barcelona for Barrow in Furness)
	Loss of life	None
	Outcome	Both ships sank before any rescue vessel arrived.

Background of the steamships

A **steamship**, often referred to as a **steamer**, is a type of steam-powered vessel, typically ocean-faring and seaworthy, that is propelled by one or more steam engines that typically move (turn) propellers or paddlewheels. The first steamships came into practical usage during the early 1800s; however, there were exceptions that came before. Steamships usually use the prefix designations of "PS" for *paddle steamer* or "SS" for *screw steamer* (using a propeller or screw). As paddle steamers became less common, "SS" is assumed by many to stand for "steamship". Ships powered by internal combustion engines use a prefix such as "MV" for *motor vessel*, so it is not correct to use "SS" for most modern vessels.

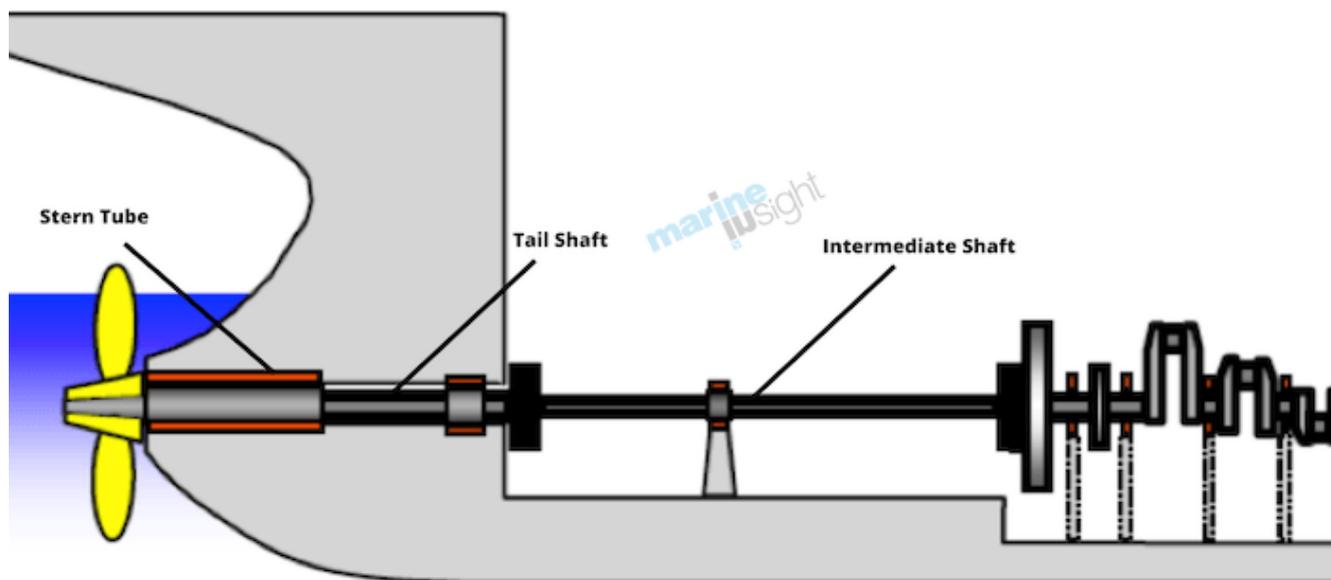
As steamships were less dependent on wind patterns, new trade routes opened up. The steamship has been described as a "major driver of the first wave of trade globalization (1870–1913)" and contributor to "an increase in international trade that was unprecedented in human history".

The key innovation that made ocean-going steamers viable was the change from the paddle-wheel to the screw-propeller as the mechanism of propulsion. These steamships quickly became more popular, because the propeller's efficiency was consistent regardless of the depth at which it operated. Being smaller in size and mass and being completely submerged, it was also far less prone to damage.

James Watt of Scotland is widely given credit for applying the first screw propeller to an engine at his Birmingham works, an early steam engine, beginning the use of a hydrodynamic screw for propulsion.

The development of screw propulsion relied on the following technological innovations.

Steam engines had to be designed with the power delivered at the bottom of the machinery, to give direct drive to the propeller shaft. A paddle steamer's engines drive a shaft that is positioned above the waterline, with the cylinders positioned below the shaft. SS *Great Britain* used chain drive to transmit power from a paddler's engine to the propeller shaft - the result of a late design change to propeller propulsion.

Fig. 2 Image of stern tube and propeller shaft

An effective stern tube and associated bearings were required. The stern tube contains the propeller shaft where it passes through the hull structure. It should provide an unrestricted delivery of power by the propeller shaft. The combination of hull and stern tube must avoid any flexing that will bend the shaft or cause uneven wear. The inboard end has a stuffing box that prevents water from entering the hull along the tube. Some early stern tubes were made of brass and operated as a water lubricated bearing along the entire length. In other instances, a long bush of soft metal was fitted in the after end of the stern tube. *Great Eastern* had this arrangement fail on her first transatlantic voyage, with very large amounts of uneven wear. The problem was solved with a lignum vitae water-lubricated bearing, patented in 1858. This became standard practice and is in use today.

Since the motive power of screw propulsion is delivered along the shaft, a thrust bearing is needed to transfer that load to the hull without excessive friction. *SS Great Britain* had a 2 ft diameter gunmetal plate on the forward end of the shaft which bore against a steel plate attached to the engine beds. Water at 200 psi was injected between these two surfaces to lubricate and separate them. This arrangement was not sufficient for higher engine powers and oil lubricated "collar" thrust bearings became standard from the early 1850s. This was superseded at the beginning of the 20th century by floating pad bearing which automatically built up wedges of oil which could withstand bearing pressures of 500 psi or more.

Additional information on the ship builder:

Howaldtswerke-Deutsche Werft (often abbreviated **HDW**) is a German shipbuilding company, headquartered in Kiel. It is part of the ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems (TKMS) group, owned by ThyssenKrupp. The Howaldtswerke shipyard was founded in Kiel in 1838 and merged with Hamburg-based Deutsche Werft to form Howaldtswerke-Deutsche Werft (HDW) in 1968. The company's shipyard was formerly used by Friedrich Krupp Germaniawerft until the end of World War II.

HDW was founded October 1, 1838 in Kiel by engineer August Howaldt and entrepreneur Johann Schwebel under the name *Maschinenbauanstalt und Eisengießerei Schwebel & Howaldt* (Machine Factory and Iron Foundry Schwebel & Howaldt), initially building boilers.

The first steam engine for naval purposes was built in 1849 for the Von der Tann, a gunboat for the small navy of Schleswig-Holstein. In 1850, the company built an early submarine, *Brandtaucher*, designed by Wilhelm Bauer. It had been intended to build the boat in Rendsburg but Danish forces advanced too close during the First Schleswig War, so construction was moved to Kiel.

The first ship built under the company's new name *Howaldtswerke* was a small steamer, named *Vorwärts*, built in 1865. Business expanded rapidly as Germany became a maritime power and, by the start of the 20th century, around 390 ships had been completed.

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In 1892 the company started a subsidiary in Austrian-Hungarian Fiume on the coast of the Adriatic Sea. The subsidiary closed ten years later but the yard remains open under the name 3. Maj.

With Kiel being one of the two main bases of the Kaiserliche Marine, the shipyard also benefited much from navy maintenance, repair and construction contracts. During World War I the company also built a number of U-boats. By 1937, the company had yards in Kiel and in Hamburg, and was taken over by the Kriegsmarine. During World War II, Howaldtswerke built 33 VIIC U-boats in Hamburg and 31 in Kiel.

After the end of World War II, Howaldtswerke was the only major shipyard in Kiel that was not dismantled.

Fig. 3 Lightship of the period. A light vessel, or light ship, is a ship that acts as a lighthouse. They are used in waters that are too deep or otherwise unsuitable for lighthouse construction.

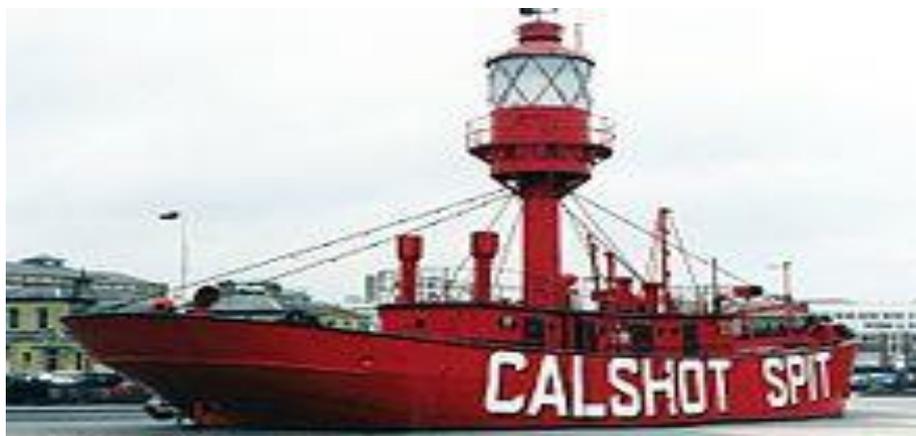


Table 2- Census Record for Cardigan Bay Light - 1861 census

Vessel name : Cardigan Bay Light

Vessel description : Light Vessel

Location at census :

Census record : Misc. Ships at Sea - Vessels - Cardigan Bay Light

* note that dob year is approximate as it's calculated from the year of census and recorded age

Name	Marriage status	Age	dob *	Position	Trade or Profession	Born at
Joseph Rees	Male Married	50	1811	Master		Bristol, Somerset
John Nicholas	Male Married	39	1822	Lamplighter		St Davids, Pembrokeshire, Wales
John Morgan	Male Married	34	1827	A B Seaman		Perche, Pembrokeshire, Wales
David Beynon	Male Married	28	1833	A B Seaman		Eglwysrwrw, Pembrokeshire, Wales
Joseph Jenkins	Male Widowed	21	1840	A B Seaman		Salrea, Pembrokeshire, Wales
John James	Male Single	27	1834	A B Seaman		Cardigan, Cardiganshire, Wales
David Morgan	Male Married	48	1813	Lamplighter		St Davids, Pembrokeshire, Wales

Until the later 20th century, all Trinity House vessels were permanently manned. An 1861 article in the Cornhill Magazine described lightshipmen as being paid 55 shillings a month (in addition to drawing 1 shilling and sixpence a week "in lieu of 3 gallons of small-beer"): the vessels were supplied, and the crews relieved, once a month. It was also noted that "a general tone of decent, orderly and superior conduct" was observed, that the men were "very respectable [...] swearing and profane language are [...] prohibited" and that every man was supplied with a Bible as well as "a library of varied and entertaining literature".

Table 3- Newspaper Reports of the collision

Cardiff Times and South Wales Weekly News: Saturday September 22, 1900

INTERVIEW WITH THE GERMAN CAPTAIN. A representative of this journal had an interview on Wednesday with Captain Leisener, of the German Stormarn. at the Docks, Cardiff. He was comfortable and composed. looking little if anything the worse for his trying experiences of the last two or three days. He said "The *collision* occurred in *Cardigan Bay* about 11 O'clock on Sunday night. The *Gordon Castle* went down immediately. She was almost cut *in* two by the force of the *collision*, and her cargo of iron ore caused her to settle down at once. Directly the water rushed *in* there was an explosion in the boiler-room. There was a dense fog at the time, but we heard the report. We had no knowledge of the presence of the *Gordon Castle* until the *collision* occurred. The Storman was badly damaged at the bows, and the water rushed *in* at a great rate. I saw that she must go down shortly, and so ordered the boats to be lowered at once. All the crew got into the boats without attempting to save anything. Our boats pulled to the spot where the *collision* took place to search for the crew of the other steamer. They found Mrs Casey, the captain's wife, and four of the crew, but no more. The boats pulled around for over an hour, but no trace of any more of the crew or their bodies could be found. *In* less than an hour our ship went down, leaving no trace behind. We cruised about *in* the boats till 2 o'clock on Monday morning, when we were all picked up by the little schooner *Excelsior*, from London. At 6 o'clock *in* the morning we were hailed by the Norwegian steamer *Borregaard*, and Captain Jacobsen took everyone on board and did all he could for our comfort, especially that of Mrs Casey, and landed us yesterday morning at Burry Port. The position of Mrs Casey is very sad: for she has lost her husband and little baby. and all her possessions. Mrs Casey with four survivors of the *Gordon Castle* went on to the Sailors' Home at Newport. I brought our crew of 13 up to Cardiff, where Mr Krieger, the German Consul, did all he could for us. The crew were well cared for at the Sailors' Home, and the mate and myself stayed at the Imperial Hotel. The German Consul is making arrangements to send us on to London today. **MRS CASEY'S CONDITION.** Mrs Casey, whose husband, Captain Casey, and infant son were two of the 20 victims of the disastrous *collision*, passed a fair night on Tuesday. She is *in* Llanelli Hospital suffering from the effects of the terrible experience through which she passed, and is very depressed. **SURVIVORS AT NEWPORT.** Four of the crew of the ill-fated *Gordon Castle* reached Newport on Tuesday, and two of them, R. C. Ticborne, seaman, who was on look-out at the time, and J. Blke. assistant steward, were seen on Wednesday by one of our representatives. **STATEMENT OF THE LOOK-OUT MAN.** Ticborne, said :—" I was on the look-out at the time the German steamer came through the fog at us. I had been on the look- out, stationed on the look-out bridge, which was I built forward, for an hour and a half, from nine o'clock, the *collision* happening at 10.30 p.m. We were going slow, and the foghorn

was being continually sounded. The fog was very thick. The first I saw of the German steamer was that she suddenly appeared out of the fog at close quarters *in* front almost dead ahead. She came so quickly that there was no time to do anything. She must have been going at great speed. She struck us on the starboard bow, by the anchor, nearly stem on, cutting into us with a terrible crunching sound. I was knocked backwards by the force of the blow, but the rails behind me saved me from being pitched off the bridge altogether. When I regained my feet the first thing I did was to run for the boats. I went to the starboard boat (the jolly boat), but when I got to the spot where it ought to have been, I found that it had been smashed or knocked away by the *collision*, and that it was under the water, which rose as I looked round. In fact, the steamer's deck was going rapidly away from under my feet. I cannot swim, so I got hold of a piece of woodwork which I saw drifting by, and hung on to it until the German steamer's boats came and picked me up. I was a quarter of an hour *in* the water before I was rescued. I did not see anyone else *in* the water. The lifeboat picked me up and I became unconscious."

Evening Star- 5 November 1900

TWENTY LIVES LOST. The Norwegian steamer Borregaard arrived at Burry Port on September 18, and gave details of a disastrous collision in Cardigan Bay, resulting, it was feared, in the loss of twenty lives and the sinking of two steamers. On board the Borregaard were nineteen survivors, and they had a terrible tale to tell. The two vessels sunk were the Gordon Castle, a Glasgow steamer, and the Hamburg steamer Stormarn. The Gordon Castle was homeward bound from the West Coast of Africa with iron ore, and the German vessel was bound from Manchester to Hamburg with a general cargo. The collision occurred on the previous Sunday night, shortly before eleven o'clock, at a point about fourteen miles west of the Cardigan Bay lightship. At the fame of the disaster the sea, was smooth, but there was a dense fog. Immediately after the collision the Gordon Castle went down, while the Stormarn remained above water for nearly an hour, giving the crew time to get things together and clear away. The crew of the Stormarn succeeded in getting into their boats, and had picked up four survivors from the Gordon Castle. The whole party -was picked up by the Chester schooner Excelsior, and transferred to the Borregaard. The survivors express the opinion that many of the crew of the Gordon Castle must have been killed by the bursting of the boilers, and that the Gordon Castle was practically cut in two by the force of the collision.

From: Huddersfield Daily Chronicle :Wednesday 19 September 1900

COLLISION IN CARDIGAN BAY. TWO STEAMERS AND 20 LIVES LOST. FEARFUL EXPERIENCES. Lloyd's agent at Pembrey. telegraphing on Tuesday afternoon, says the steamer Gordon Castle, of Glasgow, collided in Cardigan Bay with the steamer, Stormarn of Hamburg. Both vessels were sunk and 20 lives lost, those of the Gordon Castle including the captain and child. 'The Gordon Castle is owned by the Gordon Castle Steamship Company (Limited), of 21, Bothwell street, Glasgow, and was built in Glasgow in 1871. She was an iron screw vessel of 2,045 gross tonnage. She was 307 ft 7in. in length, 34ft. 3in. in breadth with over 25ft. depth of hold. She was a powerful boat for her size, the horse-power of her engines indicating 255. Although built in 1871 she was not registered at that port until

1897. A Glasgow correspondent telegraphs that the Gordon Castle was owned by McLay and McIntyre, Glasgow. According to a brief telegram received by the firm Captain Casey and 10 of crew were drowned. The following is a list of the crew : William Casey, master, married, of Maryhill. John Robb. first officer, married, Sandyford. Dugdale McAlister, second officer, unmarried, Rothenay. C. Kenberg, carpenter. P. Holbert, steward. W. Gibson, cook. M. Manson, boatswain. J. Easedale, seaman, Glasgow. H. Manson, seaman. W. Spence, seaman, Glasgow. R. Campbell, seaman. John Campbell, seaman. R. C. Titchborne, seaman. J. S. Chapman, first engineer, Glasgow. Mr. James, second engineer, Ayr. Matthew Lyle third engineer, Renfrew. JE. Donnelly, J. Voorwinde, A. MacIntyre, H. Lindsin, A. O'Hare, fireman ; and J. Blake, assistant steward. The names of the 10 drowned are not yet known. A Llanelli correspondent telegraphs that Norwegian steamer Borregard arrived in port on Tuesday and brought details of the disastrous collision in Cardigan Bay, resulting. it is feared. in the loss of 20 lives and the sinking of two steamers. On board the Borregard were 19 survivors, and they had a pathetic and terrible tale to tell. The colliding vessels, it appears, were the Gordon Castle, a Glasgow steamer, and the Hamburg steamer Stormarn. The Gordon Castle was homeward bound from the West Coast of Africa with iron ore for Barrow-in-Furness. while the German vessel was bound from Manchester to Hamburg with a general cargo. The collision occurred on Sunday night, shortly before 1 O'clock, in Cardigan Bay, at a point about 14 miles west of the Cardigan Bay Lightship. At the time of the disaster the sea was smooth, hut there was a dense fog. Immediately after the collision the Gordon Castle went down like a stone, while the Stormarn remained above water for the best part of an hour. giving the crew time to get their things together and clear away. As the Gordon Castle disappeared the crew of the Stormarn heard a loud report. caused no doubt by the blowing up of the boilers. About an hour after the collision there was nothing left to show what had occurred except a few stray pieces of wreckage. Meanwhile, the crew of the Stormarn had succeeded in getting into their boats, and they managed to pick up four survivors from the Gordon Castle. Among the latter was Mrs. Casey, wife of the captain, whose baby was torn from her breast by the rushing waters. The whole party was later on picked up by the Chester schooner Excelsior, and on Monday morning they were transferred to the Borregard, and by her were taken to Burry Port. The names of the survivors are as follows : - - From the Gordon Castle: Mrs. Casey, wife of the captain. Joseph Blake, Roger Tichborne, W. Spence, and Karl Kanuberg. a boy. From the Stormarn : Messrs. Leisenen, Wendt, Fehello, Newmann, Virber, Hesper, Prifa, Behrmann, Necaiminehrts, Arndt, Brockmann. Kligo. Schmidt, and Hair pen. Upon their arrival at Burry Port the shipwrecked party was taken charge of by the dock officials, and conveyed later in the day to Cardiff and Newport. Mrs. Casey, however, had to be taken to the Llanelli hospital, as it was found she was suffering from bruises and shock. Her plight was a pitiable one. She had no time to gather sufficient clothing, and in addition to losing her husband and baby she lost all her possessions. It is impossible to ascertain the names of the men drowned, as all the papers of the Gordon Castle went down with the vessel. The survivors express the opinion that many of the poor fellows mast have been killed by the bursting of the boilers. Captain Jacobsen, of the Borregard, is unable to throw any light on the terrible occurrence, because by the time be arrived on the scene all traces of the disaster had disappeared. He confirms the statement that there was a dense fog at the time. So he had to keep his own foghorn going the greater part of the night. Further enquiries among the survivors show that the Gordon Castle was practically cut in two by the force of the collision. Some wonderful stories of escape are

told. One member of the crew of the Gordon Castle had been engaged on Sunday afternoon ; painting his berth. So strong, however, was the smell of paint that he decided to spend the night on deck. To this he owes his life, as the berth was cut to pieces. Mrs. Casey arrived at the Llanelly Hospital in the evening in a very weak state. The poor woman had no clear notion of what occurred.

York Herald Saturday: 22 September 1900

DISASTROUS COLLISION IN CARDIGAN BAY. TWO STEAMERS AND TWENTY LIVES LOST. Lloyd's agent at Pembrey, telegraphing on Tuesday afternoon, says:— The steamer Gordon Castle, of Glasgow, collided in Cardigan Bay with the steamer Stormarn, of Hamburg. Both vessels were sunk, and twenty lives were lost on the Gordon Castle, including Captain and Child. The Press Association adds: — The Gordon Castle is owned by the Gordon Castle Steamship Co., Ltd., of 21, Bothwell-street, Glasgow, and was built in Glasgow in 1871. She was an iron screw vessel of 2,045 gross tonnage. She was 307 ft. 7in. in length, 34ft. 3in. in breadth, with over 25ft. depth of hold. She was a powerful boat for her size, the horse-power of her engines indicating 255. Although built in 1871, she was not registered at that port until 1897. A Glasgow correspondent telegraphs that the Gordon Castle was owned by Mclay and Mcintyre, Glasgow. According to a brief telegram received by the firm, Captain Casey and ten of the crew were drowned. The following is a list of the crew : —William Casey, master, married, of Mary-hill ; John Robb, first officer, married, Sandy 'ford; Dugdale Mcalister, second officer, unmarried, Rothesay; C. Kenberg, carpenter; P. H<lberg, steward; W. Gibson," cook; M. Monson, boatswain; J. Eadale, seaman, Glasgow; H. Manson, seaman; W. Spence, sea- man, Glasgow; R. Campbell, seaman; John Cairopbell, seaman; R. C • Tich-bonne, seaman ; J. S. Chapman , first ' engineer, Glasgow; Mr. James, second engineer, Ayr ; Matthew Lyle, third engineer, Renfrew ; E. Dcrnelly, J. Voorwinde, A Macintyre, H. Lindsin, A. O'Hare, fireman, and J. Blake, assistant steward. The names of the ten drowned are not yet known. A Llanelli correspondent telegraphs : — The Norwegian steamer Borregard arrived in port on Tuesday, and brought details of a disastrous collision in Cardigan Bay, resulting, it is feared, in the loss of twenty lives and the sinking of two steamers. On board the Borregard were nineteen survivors, and they had a pathetic and terrible tale to tell. The colliding vessels, it appears, were the Gordon Castle, a Glasgow steamer, and the Hamburg steamer, Stormam. The Gordon Castle was homeward bound from the West Coast of Africa with iron ore for Barrow-in-Furness, while the German vessel was bound from Manchester to Hamburg with general cargo. The collision occurred on Sunday night, *shortly before eleven o'clock* in Cardigan Bay, at a point about fourteen miles west of the Cardigan Bay lightship. At the time of the disaster the sea was smooth, but there was a dense fog. Immediately after the collision the Gordon Castle went down like a stone, while the Stormarn remained above water for the best part of an hour, giving the crew time to get things together and clear away. As the Gordon Castle disappeared the crew of the Stormarn heard a loud report, caused, no doubt, by the blowing up of the boilers. About an hour after the collision there was nothing left to show what had occurred, except a few stray pieces of wreckage. Meanwhile the crew of the Stormarn had succeeded in getting into their boats, and they managed to pick up four survivors from the Gordon Castle. Among the latter was Mrs. Casey, wife of the captain, whose baby was torn from her breast by the rushing waters. The whole party was later on picked up

by the Chester schooner *Excelsior*, and on Monday morning they were transferred to the *Borregard*, and by her were taken to Barry Port. The names of the survivors are as follows: — From the *Gordon Castle* — Mrs. Casey, wife of the captain ; Joseph Blake, Roger Tichborne, W. Spence, and Carl Kaniuberg, a boy from the *Stormarn*, Messrs. Leisanen, Wendt, Fehelm, Newmann, Virbea, Hesper, Frits, Behrmaun, Necaimisehrs, Arndt, Brockmann, Kligo, Schmidt, and Hasper. Upon their arrival at Barry Port the shipwrecked party was taken charge of by the dock officials and conveyed later in the day to Cardiff and Newport. Mrs. Casey, however, had to be taken to the Llanelli Hospital, as it was found she was suffering from bruises and shock. Her plight was a pitiable one. She had no time to gather sufficient clothing, and in addition to losing her husband and baby has lost all her possessions. It is impossible to ascertain the names of the men drowned, as all the papers of the *Gordon Castle* went down with the vessel. The survivors express the opinion that many of the poor fellows must have been killed by the explosion of the boilers. Captain Jacobsen, of the *Borregard*, is unable to throw any light on the terrible occurrence, because by the time he arrived on the scene all traces of the disaster had disappeared. He confirms the statement that there was a dense fog at the time, and he had to keep his own foghorn going the greater part of the night. Further inquiries among the survivors show that the *Gordon Castle* was practically cut in two by the force of the collision. Some wonderful stories of escape are told. One member of the crew of the *Gordon Castle* had been engaged on Sunday afternoon in painting his berth. So strong, however, was the smell of paint that he decided to spend the night on deck. To this he owes his life, as the berth was cut to pieces. Mrs. Casey arrived at the Llanelli Hospital on Tuesday in a very weak state. The poor woman had no clear notion of what occurred, and persists in saying she saw her husband swim ashore, and that he is safe. The spot, however, where the disaster took place is more than twenty miles from land. When picked up she was in an almost nude condition, and for the time being she has lost the use of one of her limbs.

Shields Daily Gazette - Wednesday 19 September 1900

COLLISION CARDIGAN BAY TWO STEAMERS SUNK. Twenty Lives Lost The Norwegian vessel *Borregard* arrived at Llanelly yesterday and brought details of a disastrous collision in Cardigan Bay, resulting, it feared, the loss of 20 lives and the sinking of two steamers. On board the *Borregard* were 19 survivors, and they had a pathetic and terrible tale to tell. The colliding vessels, it appears, were *Gordon Castle*, Glasgow steamer, and the Hamburg steamer *Stormarn*. The *Gordon Castle* was homeward bound from West Coast of Africa, with iron ore for Barrow-in-Furness, while the German vessel was bound from Manchester to Hamburg with general cargo. strong, however, was the smell of paint he decided to spend the night on deck. To this owes his life, the berth was cut to pieces. Mrs Casey arrived the Llanelli Hospital last evening in very weak state. poor woman had no clear notion of what occurred, and persist* saying she saw her husband swim ashore, and that is safe. The spot, however, where the disaster took place was more than twenty miles from land. When picked she was in almost nude condition, and for the time being she has lost the use of one her limbs. The *Gordon Castle* is owned by the *Gordon Castle Steamship Company (Limited)*, of 21 Bothwell Street. and built in Glasgow in 1871. She was iron screw vessel 2,045 gross tonnage. She was 307 ft. 7in. in length, 54ft.

3in. in breadth, with over 25ft. depth of hold. She was a powerful boat for her size, the horse-power of her engines indicating 255. Although built in 1871 was not registered at that port until 1897. THE LOSS OF THE GORDON CASTLE. Considerable regret was expressed North Shields this morning on the receipt of the news the foundering of the Glasgow steamer Gordon Castle, and this heavy loss of life. Captain Casey, who is, unfortunately, among the list given having perished, was very well known in North Shields, and for many years was regularly employed in the trade, sailing out of port in local steamers. Captain Casey passed his examination for master while staying at the Tyne Sailors' Home, and was a general favourite among associates. Another boarder the Home steward, Peter Holdborg. who joined the ill-fated vessel some considerable time ago, but it is unknown whether he is among those who drowned.

Jersey Independent and Daily Telegraph - Saturday 22 September 1900

THE DISASTROUS COLLISION IN BAY. Mrs Casey, whose husband, Captain Casey, and infant child were among the 20 victims of the disastrous collision in Cardigan Bay, passed a fair night. She is in Llanelly Hospital suffering from the effects of the terrible experience through which she passed and is very depressed describing the disaster which retailed in the foundering of both her husband's vessel, the Gordon Castle, and the Hamburg steamer Stormarn. Mrs Casey says it was all over in a minute, immediately after the impact the Gordon Castle went down like a stone. She was blown off the deck of the sinking steamer after an explosion, and found herself in the sea. Some members of the crew were also hurled into the sea by the force of the explosion, but none of them were able to do anything for her. She shouted for assistance, and by means of some wreckage she managed to keep herself afloat. She managed like this for an hour and then lost consciousness, for the next thing she remembered was coming to, on board the schooner. Mrs. Casey added that when the collision occurred, she had her 18 month old baby in her arms, but it was torn from her by the rush of water. Just before the catastrophe her husband came into the cabin for his top coat then went on deck again, this being the last time she saw him.

Translations from French newspapers reporting this incident:

La Croix, 20 sep.1900

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k219200q/f4.image.r=gordon-castle%20storman?rk=107296;4>

Pembrey, le 18 septembre.—Le vapeur Gordon-Castle de Glasgow, a eu une collision, dans la baie de Cardigan, avec le vapeur Stormarn de Hamburg. Les deux navires ont sombré. Gordon-Castle a eu 20 morts, dont le capitaine.

Pembrey, September 18. Glasgow's Gordon-Castle, collided with Hamburg's Stormarn steamer in Cardigan Bay. Both ships sank, Gordon-Castle had 20 deaths, including the captain.

Le Peuple Francais, 21 sep. 1900

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k29473923/f2.image.r=gordon-castle%20storman?rk=321890;0>

Le steamer norvégien « Boregaard », qui vient d'arriver à Burry-Port, apporte des détails au sujet d'une collision qui s'est produite dans la baie de Cardigan, outre les steamers « Gordon-Castle », de Glasgow, et le steamer « Stormarn », de Hambourg.

La collision s'est produite dimanche soir, vers onze heures, à quatorze milles environ du bateau-phare de la baie de Cardigan. Le « Gordon-Castle » coula immédiatement ; le « Stormarn » surnagea pendant près d'une heure, donnant à l'équipage le temps de se sauver. Au moment où le « Gordon-Castle » fût englouti, l'équipage du « Stormarn » entendit une violente détonation produite sans doute par l'explosion des chaudières.

L'équipage du « Storman » put recueillir quatre personnes du « Gordon-Castle », parmi lesquelles Mme Cassey, femme du capitaine de ce vaisseau. L'enfant de cette dame lui avait été arraché des bras par une vague.

Les naufragés furent recueillis par le schooner « Excelsior » et transbordés lundi matin sur le « Boregaard », qui les a amenés à Burry-Port.

On estime à vingt le nombre des victimes.

Le « Gordon-Castle », d'après le récit des survivants, a été coupé littéralement en deux.

The Norwegian steamer "Boregaard", who has just arrived at Burry-Port, provides details about a collision that occurred in the Cardigan Bay, in addition to the steamers Gordon-Castle of Glasgow and the steamer "Stormarn" of Hamburg.

The collision occurred on Sunday evening, at approximately 11 p.m., about fourteen miles from the flagship of Cardigan Bay. The "Gordon-Castle" sank immediately; the "Stormarn" survived for nearly an hour, giving the crew time to escape. When the "Gordon-Castle" was engulfed, the crew of the "Stormarn" heard a violent detonation probably produced by the explosion of the boilers.

The crew of the "Storman" was able to collect four people from the "Gordon-Castle", among them Mrs. Cassey, wife of the captain of this ship. This lady's child had been torn from her arms by a wave.

The castaways were collected by the schooner "Excelsior" and transferred on Monday morning to the Boregaard, which brought them to Burry-Port.

Victim count is estimated to twenty.

The "Gordon-Castle," based on the survivors' account, was literally cut in half.

L'Ouest-Éclair, 19 sep. 1900

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6390148/f3.image.r=gordon-castle%20storman?rk=21459;2#>

Pembrey, 18 septembre.

Une collision s'est produite dans la baie de Cardigan, entre les vapeurs Gordon-Castle et Storman.

Les deux bâtiments ont sombré aussitôt. Le Gordon-Castle doit avoir vingt hommes noyés, dont le capitaine.

Pembrey, September 18.

A collision occurred in Cardigan Bay between the Gordon-Castle and Storman steamers.

Both buildings sank immediately. The Gordon Castle must have twenty drowned men, including the captain.

Le Pays, 21 sep. 1900

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k4679495t/f1.image.r=gordon-castle%20storman?rk=42918;4#>

Naufages en mer

Londres, 20 septembre.

Le steamer norvégien Boregaard, qui vient d'arriver à Burry-Port, apporte des détails au sujet d'une terrible collision qui s'est produite dans la baie de Cardigan entre les steamers Gordon-Gastle, de Glasgow, et le steamer Storman, de Hambourg

Le Gordon-Castle, chargé de minerai de fer, était parti de la côte ouest de l'Afrique pour Barrowin-Jumess,

Le Stormarn allait de Manchester à Hambourg.

La collision s'est produite dimanche soir, vers onze heures, à quatorze milles environ du bateau-phare de la baie de Cardigan.

Au moment de la catastrophe la mer était calme, mais il régnait un brouillard très épais.

Le Gordon-Castle coula immédiatement : le Storman surnagea pendant près d'une heure, donnant à l'équipage le temps de se sauver.

Au moment où le Gordon-Castle fût englouti, l'équipage du Storman entendit une violente détonation produite sans doute par l'explosion des chaudières.

L'équipage du Storman put recueillir quatre personnes du Gordon-Castle, parmi lesquelles Mme Casey, femme du capitaine de ce vaisseau.

L'enfant de cette dame lui avait été arraché des bras par une vague.

Les naufragés furent recueillis par le schooner Excelsior et transbordés lundi matin sur le Borregard, qui les a amenés à Burry-Port.

On estime à vingt le nombre des victimes.

Le Gordon-Castle, d'après le récit des survivants, a été coupé littéralement en deux.

Shipwrecks at sea

London, 20 September.

Norwegian steamer Boregaard, which has just arrived at Burry-Port, provides details about a terrible collision in Cardigan Bay between Glasgow steamer Gordon-Gastle and Hamburg steamer Storman

The Gordon-Castle, loaded with iron ore, had set out from the west coast of Africa for Barrowin-Jumess,

The Stormarn went from Manchester to Hamburg.

The collision occurred on Sunday evening, at approximately 11 p.m., about fourteen miles from the flagship of Cardigan Bay.

At the time of the disaster the sea was calm, but there was a very thick fog.

The Gordon-Castle sank immediately: the Storman survived for nearly an hour, giving the crew time to escape.

When the Gordon-Castle was engulfed, the Storman crew heard a violent detonation, probably caused by the explosion of the boilers.

The Storman's crew was able to collect four people from the Gordon-Castle, including Mrs. Casey, wife of the ship's captain.

This lady's child had been torn from her arms by a wave.

The castaways were collected by the schooner Excelsior and transferred on Monday morning to the Borregard, which brought them to Burry-Port.

Victim count is estimated to twenty. The Gordon-Castle, according to the survivors' account, was literally cut in half.

Others:

The same article appeared in the following newspapers with slight changes to the title.

Figaro, 19 sep. 1900

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k285268d/f4.image.r=gordon-castle%20storman?rk=150215;2>

Journal des débats politiques et littéraires, 20 sep. 1900

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k4699944/f2.image.r=gloria%22baie%20de%20Cardigan%22?rk=21459;2#>

Le Rappel, 20 sep. 1900

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k7545353f/f3.image.r=gordon-castle%20storman?rk=171674;4>

Gil Blas, 19 sep. 1900

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k7535882m/f3.image.r=gordon-castle%20storman?rk=193134;0#>

Le Journal, 19 sep. 1900

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k76232691/f1.item.r=gordon-castle%20storman>

La Politique Coloniale, 20 dec. 1900

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k29972427/f2.image.r=gordon-castle%20storman?rk=386268;0#>

L'indépendant, 20 sep. 1900

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k52626744/f1.image.r=gordon-castle%20storman?rk=64378;0>

7.0 Analysis

The newspaper reports recording the incident all stated that the Gordon Castle sank straight away but the Stormarn stayed afloat for about an hour and was able to pick up 4 survivors from the Gordon Castle.

The reports all largely carried the same account of the events and the reasons for the loss of life, notably the bursting of the boilers.

It would be worth trying to obtain copies of any accounts in German newspapers. It is unclear if any crew members from the Stormarn were lost, as the newspaper reports only mention 20 victims in total.

Due to the depth in which both vessels sank and the fact that their exact position has not been confirmed, it is unlikely that any salvage work has been carried out. The lightship has since been de-commissioned and I have been unable to locate its exact position at the time of the collision.

8.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

1. The majority of this research has been carried out online. Much of the information is from newspaper archives which are an excellent source. However, one must be aware that some of the reported details may be inaccurate and one needs to cross-reference them to ensure the facts are certified by more than one source.
2. Archaeological remains associated with the loss of this vessel are not confirmed as present at this location, but may possibly be in the vicinity.
3. The announcements that are reproduced from Lloyd's List or official Lloyd's agents are usually accurate but the journalists are not mariners and sometime elaborate on eye witness accounts and are sometimes in flowery language or in a sensational style.
4. The fact that both vessels had sunk by the time the rescue ship Excelsior and subsequently the Borregard, arrived means there are no additional objective reports of the collision itself.
5. The wreck does not appear to have been visited since the collision.
6. It is worth noting that this wreck does not appear on the wreck locations map in Fig.6 and I have not been able to find any map showing wrecks in the southern part of Cardigan Bay.
7. It may be worth trying to find any German newspaper reports of the collision which may include more information on the SS Stormarn.
8. I have spent approximately 8.5 hours researching this incident.

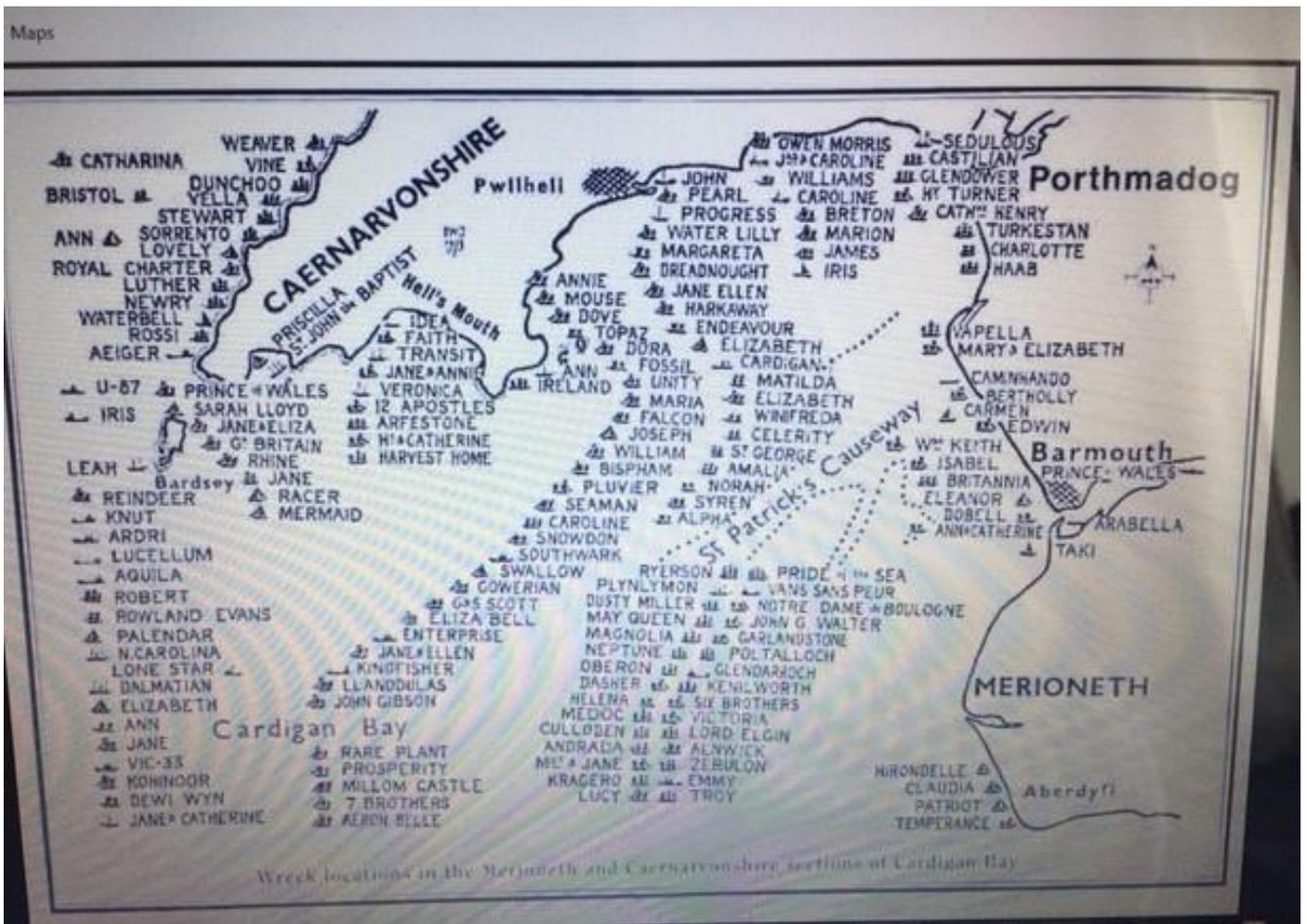


Fig.4 Wreck locations in the Merioneth and Caernarvonshire sections of Cardigan Bay

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