

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



A similar schooner in Wexford harbour

Report compiled by:
Graeme Perks

Report Title:

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*Twin Sister***

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1.0 Abstract

The “www Research Project” is about, discovering by on line research details of ships, on the MADU data base of wrecks of North Wales, the circumstances of their loss, details of the owners and crew, the cargo carried and their history.

The schooner Twin Sister was built by Robert Sparrow at Wexford in 1857. The owners of Twin Sister were Fisher & Co. of Barrow in Furness comprised of a consortium of 27 local people led by James Fisher of Barrow, shipping agent. The Twin Sister operated as a coaster along the west coast of Great Britain and Ireland. The Twin Sister foundered in the Royal Charter storm of 25th- 26th October 1859 with some wreckage being washed ashore near Aberystwyth. The Twin Sister, master William Porter, was on a voyage from Newport, Mon. to Liverpool with coal and all the crew perished.

2.0 Index

2.1 Table of Contents		Page No.
1.0 Abstract	-----	3
2.0 Index	-----	4
2.1 Table of Contents		4
2.3 List of Pictures		5
2.4 Contributors		5
2.5 Abbreviations		5
3.0 Introduction	-----	6
4.0 Background	-----	6
5.0 Research Methodology	-----	9
6.0 Results	-----	10
7.0 Analysis	-----	30
8.0 Conclusions & Recommendations	-----	31
9.0 References	-----	32

Appendices:

Appendix A - Table of Lloyd's Registers entries for the Twin Sister	---	33
Appendix B - The Timeline for the Twin Sister	-----	34
Appendix C - Port Registration Twin Sister	-----	36

2.3 List of Pictures

Page No.

Front Cover: A similar schooner in Wexford harbour -----	1
Fig. 1 Robert Fitzroy -----	19
Fig. 2 Wexford Quay 1900 -----	28

2.4 Contributors

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2.5 Abbreviations

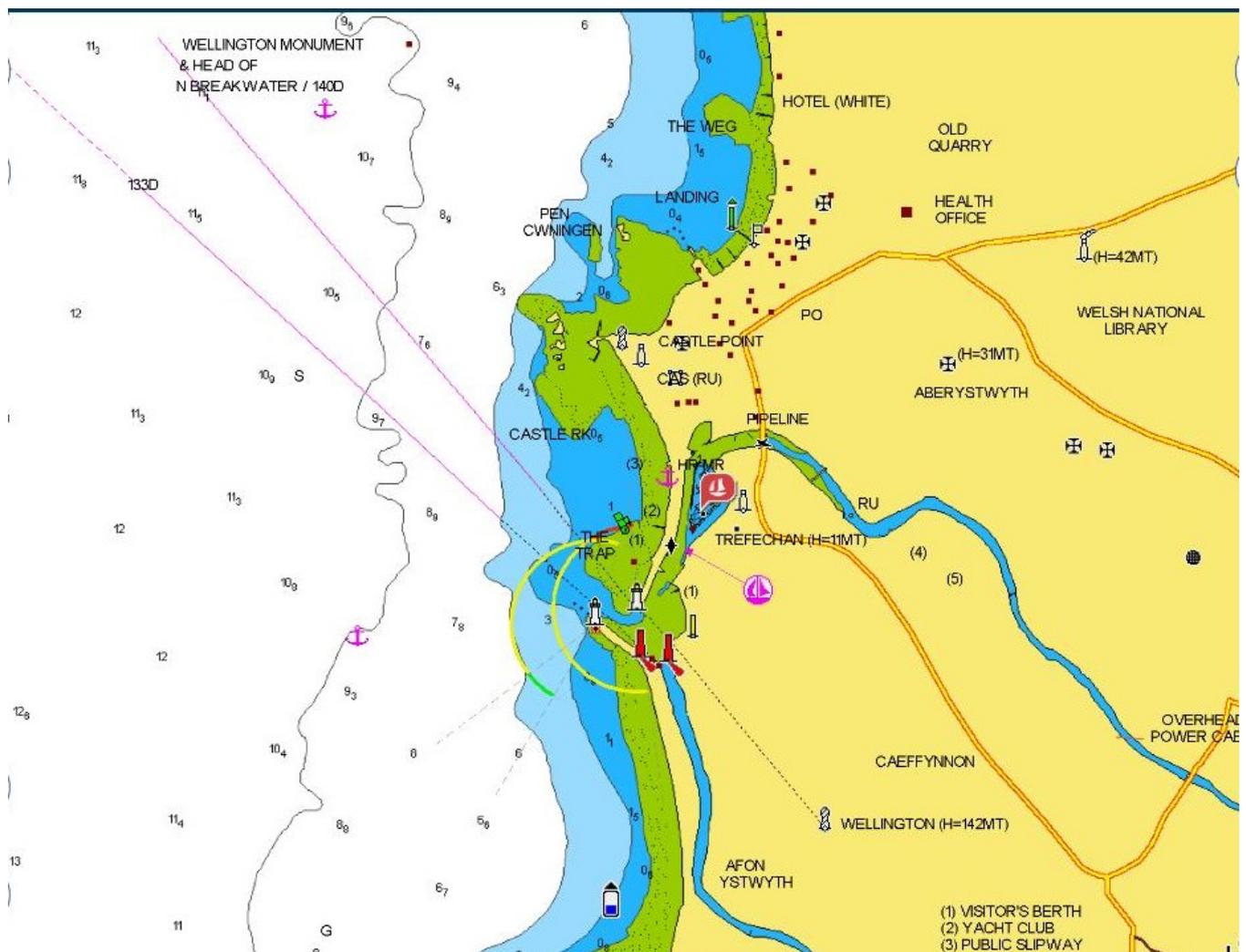
BNA	British Newspaper Archives
BOT	Board of Trade
LL	Lloyds List
LR	Lloyds Register of shipping
MADU	Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit
SMG	Shipping & Mercantile Gazette
NAS	Nautical Archaeology Society
NAW	National Archives of Wales
NPRN	National Primary Resource Number
WNL	Welsh Newspapers on Line
w/e	Week ending

3.0 Introduction

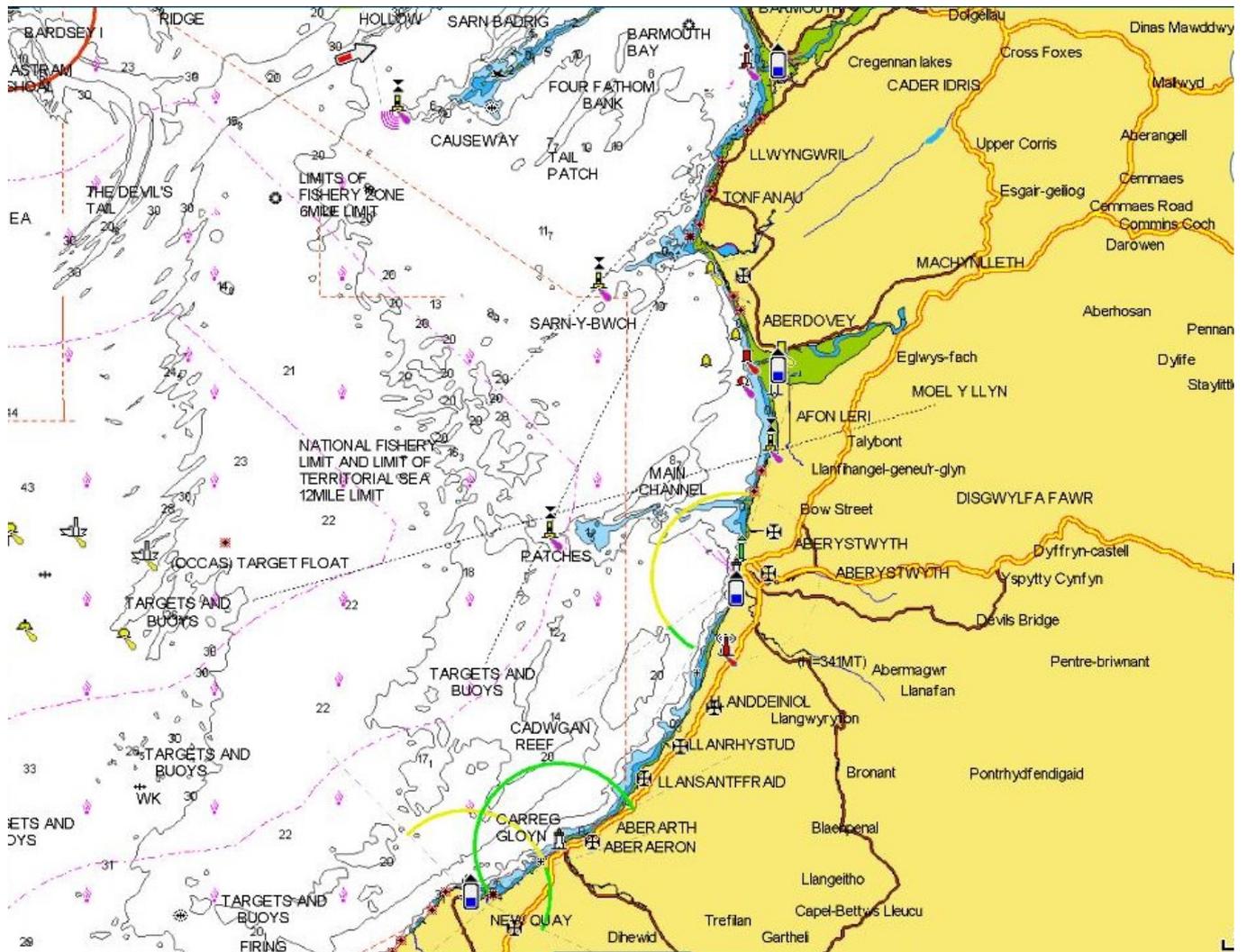
1. I selected Twin Sister to research because she was lost in the Royal Charter storm and wished to identify her and see how much information I could find about her. I also wanted to find out what happened and to discover:
2. The dimensions of the vessel, although for this period of time apart from the draught, they would have only been recorded in on line information if the Lloyd's survey was available or the vessel had been advertised for sale in a surviving newspaper. Who the builder was and when she was built and any other information available about her.
3. Information concerning the voyages, cargo's, any events affecting the vessel, details of its masters, crew and owners.
4. To find out the sequency of events leading up to the loss of the vessel, whenever that was and the event in 1859.
5. To discover the cause of the event in 1859 and if the vessel survived, the cause of its eventual loss.
6. The events that happened after the incident in 1859 and up to and after its loss if it survived.
7. If there were any previous research of the vessel for the 1859 incident and its story.
8. If there was a wreck site for Twin Sister and if it had been identified, dived and recorded.
9. If any salvage of the Twin Sister and its cargo had been carried out
10. If any previous reports had been produced for the Twin Sister.

4.0 Background

When I started this project it was reported that the Twin Sister was a wooden schooner of 100 tons built in 1856 involved in an incident at Aberystwyth on 26th October 1859



Aberystwyth and approaches



Aberystwyth & Cardigan Bay

5.0 Research Methodology

I used a Microsoft Pixel laptop with access to my home internet running windows 10 operating system. I also used my Apple I pad for research when I was away from the laptop and to assist in transcribing reports from the British newspaper archives. The new internet provider has now connected my home by a fibre connection so it is very much faster. The Lap top uses bling search engine but I also use Goggle which produces less advertisements and less Americanised content.

I searched Lloyds Register of Shipping (LR) for "Twin Sister " looking for details of her dimensions, master, builders and owners from 1857 with a match. I then searched yearly until 1861.

I searched LR ships, plans and survey reports for "Twin Sister " with no match. There is however a match for Twin Sisters which the BOT listed as lost by mistake for the Twin Sister.

I searched The British Newspaper Archives (BNA) for "Twin Sister", "Sister Porter", " and " schooner Twin Sister " looking for sailings, arrivals, a launch, owners, builders, mishaps and any details of her loss and found a number of matches. I searched "Twin Sister Launch" in Wexford with a match.

I searched Welsh newspapers on line for "Twin Sister " looking for sailings, arrivals, a launch, owners, builders and any details of her loss and a found match.

I searched Coflein site for "Twin Sister " looking for any details of the wreck and a chart with a match.

I searched wreckeu site for "Twin Sister " looking for any details of the wreck with a match.

I searched on Google "schooner Twin Sister" and found the www.peoplescollection.wales website with the Port of Lancaster registration for the vessel.

6.0 Results

Vessel	Name/s	Twin Sister	
	Type	Schooner	
		Cargo	
Built	Date	1857	
	Builder	Robert Sparrow	
		Wexford	
Construction	Materials	Wood	
	Decks	One	
	Bulkheads	None	
Propulsion	Type	Sail	
	Details		
Engine	Details	N/A	
	Boilers		
Drive	Type		
	Number		
Dimensions	Length	78 ft	0 ins
	Beam	21 ft	7 ins
	Draught	9 ft	1 ins
Tonnage	Gross	91.39 tons	
	Net		
Owner	First	Fisher & Co	
		Barrow in Furness	
	Last	Fisher & Co	
		Barrow in Furness	
	Others		
Registry	Port	Barrow	
	Flag	British	
	Number	20483	
History	Routes	Barrow in Furness	
		To west coast England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland	
	Cargo	Coal, Iron	
Final Voyage	From	Newport, Mon.	
	To	Liverpool	
	Captain	William Porter	
	Crew	4	
	Passengers	None	
	Cargo	coal	
Wrecking	Date	26 th October 1859	
	Location	Off Aberystwyth	
	Cause	"Royal Charter" Storm	
	Loss of life	5	
	Outcome	Foundered	

Wexford Independent - Saturday 05 December 1857

LAUNCH, Tuesday last were apprised by the firing of cannon and other preparations, dial the beautiful schooner the construction which have watched with interest for the last six months, in the building of our townsman, Mr. ROBERT SPARROW was to be launched. Four o'clock was the hour appointed, but long before that time, crowds might be seen winding their way to the yard and quays adjoining. All being arranged under the able guidance of the foreman, Mr J. Gaddern, whose abilities are well known, Miss Isabella Sparrow ascended the platform to perform the ceremony of naming the vessel. The word "all ready" being given, the signal gun was fired, the dog shores were struck. Miss Sparrow at the same time breaking the bottle, (which was tastefully decorated with flowers) against the finely moulded bows pronounced success to the "Twin Sister" The vessel

" Spurning with her foot the ground,
With one exulting joyous bound
She leaped into the ocean's arms,"

amidst the enthusiastic cheers of the assembled spectators. This is the second vessel launched within a year and the third which has been built for the Barrow and Fleetwood Company, showing plainly how Irish workmanship is appreciated by the Sister Country.

We wish the Dockyard, and its spirited proprietor the prosperity well deserved, for this employment which it gives to more than 100 of our working mechanics, and a success to the purchasers of the Twin Sister.

Shipping and Mercantile Gazette - Monday 31 October 1859

ABERYBTWITH—Oct, 29; strong, showery. Bar.28 30; ther. 40. The weather continues stormy and unsettled. Last night blew a gale from the with heavy showers of rain. Bar. very low.

Came on shore seven miles SW of this port, shattered boat, with names Twin Sister, of Barrow, William Porter master."

The Welshman 4th November 1859

ABERYSTWITH.—DREADFUL SHIPWRECKS. In our last impression we stated that it was apprehended the result of the recent gale would be much more serious than was then known, and we regret to say that those fears have been realized—The loss of life and property on this coast during the late gale is unprecedented,

and a gloom has been cast over the town that will not soon be dissipated. Every post was watched with anxiety, and every post brought in some fresh intelligence of further disasters.

A boat marked Twin Sister came on shore seven miles south of this port, William Porter, master.

Preston Chronicle - Saturday 05 November 1859

THE SCHOONER TWIN SISTER.-A rumour has been afloat in Fleetwood during the last week, that the Twin Sister, schooner, of Fleetwood, Porter, master, had been wrecked, and all hands lost. On making inquiries we learn that the schooner's boat was washed ashore seven miles S. W. of Abberystwith, in a shattered condition, and for some days nothing has been heard of the vessel. The masts of five or six vessels can be seen in Abberystwith bay when the tide is low, which are supposed to have sunk during the late gale – *Fleetwood Chronicle*

The Pembrokehire Herald and General Advertiser 11th November 1859

THE GALE OF LAST WEEK. (From the Liverpool Telegraph) We believe we speak without exaggeration when we say that the 25th and 26th of October has engraved a melancholy line in the annals of maritime disasters. For the time the gale lasted it was, perhaps, the most destructive of any storm since the beginning of this century, the loss of vessels and life being most appalling whilst its devastating fury continued. We speak in reference to those whose fate is beyond conjecture, but, to swell the total, numbers of unfortunate craft have foundered with their crews, leaving only floating fragments for the mind to guess at a fate not to be revealed in time. The actual loss to the shipping interest on the 25th and 26th of October, 1859, is beyond all conception, and perhaps without parallel within living recollection. To give our readers some idea of the destructive fury of the gale in question, we give below, collected with great care, so as to be as accurate as possible, a list of the vessels that were totally lost only, in the now memorable late gale, with an account of the crews all drowned, partly saved, and all saved. We have omitted including the vessels that have suffered damage only by being driven on shore in that gale, for the reason that the list would then exceed more than double its present length, and far beyond our available space. As will be seen, the loss in human life during the 25th & 26th of last month is most melancholy indeed.

Ariadne, at Newhaven—all saved

Amais, at Newquay-all saved

Ann, at Newquay—all saved
Anna Maria, at Watchet—all saved
A brig, at Morte Bay-all drowned
A brig, at Yarmouth-all drowned
A sloop, at Newport-all drowned
Abbey, at Margate-all drowned
Anna Dorothea, at Yarmouth-all saved
Ann, at Bideford-all drowned
A schooner, at Aberporth-all drowned
Admiral Cator, at Hartlepool—all saved
A brig, on the Goodwin Sands-all drowned
Busy, at Fort Isaac-all saved
Beverly, at Bude -one drowned
Brigantine, at Penarth-all drowned
Brothers, at Porthcawl—all saved
Benjamin, at Bridlington-all drowned
Blanche Marie, at Guernsey-all saved
British Rover, at Dunbar-all saved
Beatrice Catherine, at Porthor Bay—all drowned
Bubona, at North Berwick-all drowned
Cuba, at Yarmouth—all drowned
C. G. Fryer, at Widmouth-all saved
Caroline, at Rye—three drowned
Charles Holmes, at Aberbach-all drowned
Carolina, at Porthgain—all saved
Catherine, at Cemaes-all saved
Claudia, at Porthor Bay—all drowned
Diana, at Douglas Head-all saved
Elizabeth, at Yarmouth, all saved
Enterprise, at Bridlington, one drowned
Elizabeth Lass, at Dartmouth, one drowned
Eleanor, at Northam Burrows, all saved
Edward Protheroe, at Sandy Mouth, all saved
Eliza Benyon, on the Mumbles, all saved
Ebenezer, on the Mumbles, all saved
Eliza, at Bardsey, all drowned
Ellen, at Newquay, all saved
Eliza, at Perthferin, all drowned
Favourite, at Padstow, all saved
Fame, at Mostyn, one drowned
Five Vessels, at Ilfracombe, all drowned
Friends, at Newport, all saved

Golden Grove, at Lowestoft, all saved
Hawkhill, at Hartlepool, all saved
Hope, at Port Llechog, all saved
Huntley, in the Mersey, all saved
Hope, at Newquay, all saved
Isa, at Plymouth, all drowned
Isabella, at Rye, all saved
Jane and Susan, at Minehead, all saved
Joseph, at Milford, all saved
John St Barbe, at Penarth, one drowned
John and Jane, at Spital Point, all saved
Kingston, at Penarth, all saved
Leo, at Folkestone, all saved
Louis Albert, at Penarth, all saved
Lord Douglas, at Lowestoft, all saved
Major Nanney, at Newquay, all saved
Mary Jane, at Newquay, all saved
Mary Ann, at Newquay, all saved
Morning Star, at Cardigan, all drowned
Martha Jane, at St Ives, all saved
Melanis, at Padstow, all saved
Mary Lauder, at Watchet, all saved
Mathildis, at Newport, all drowned
Marlborough, at Ilfracombe, two drowned
Mary, at Sully Island, all drowned
Messenger, at Penmon, all drowned
Mecca, at Hartlepool, all saved
Majestic, at Spital Point, all saved
Martha, at St David's, all saved
Margaret, at Newquay, all saved
Nancy, in the Channel, all saved
Norwegian schooner, at Rye, three drowned
Orion, at St David's, all drowned
Oriental, at Rhyl, all saved
Paragon, at Yarmouth, all saved
Providence, at Padstow, all saved
Primera Galan, at Dover, three drowned
Pilot, at Dover, all drowned
Percival, at Bristol, all saved
Priscilla, at Porthor Bay, all drowned
Queen, at Bristol, all saved
Royal Charter, at Red Wharf Bay, 459 drowned

Rosebud, at Watchet, all saved
 Robert, at Newquay, ail saved
 Sir R. Peel, at Portreath, all drowned
 Swift, at Bristol, all saved
 Susan, at Bideford, all saved
 Sultan Selina, at Bristol, all saved
 Silia, at Yarmouth, all saved
 Sprite, at Maluko, all drowned
 Syria, at Whitby, four drowned
 Ship, on the Cow and Calf Rocks, all drowned
 Thistle, at Morte Bay, four saved
 Trio, at Stratton, all saved
 True Bess, at Solva, three drowned
 Thames, at Penarth. one drowned
 Three Vessels, at Dinas Head, all drowned
 Two Sisters, at Grimsby, all saved
 Union, at Newquay, all saved
 William, at Lyme, all saved
 Watchet Trader, at Skyrawathers, all saved
 Wave, at Freshwater Bay, all drowned

On the bright side of this picture stands the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. It is only just we should acknowledge—and what place more fitting—the noble assistance it has rendered in the cause of humanity, for through its timely aid many of the crews recorded above as saved were snatched from death by its excellent boats. May the institution meet with all the support it so eminently deserves.

Lloyd's List - Friday 18 November 1859

BARROW Nov. 16th

Portions of a wreck and a boat in a shattered state, supposed to belong to the TWIN SISTER of this port, from Newport to Liverpool with coal, have come ashore near Aberystwith ; the Twin Sister was last seen off Bardsea Island on the night of the storm.

The Aberystwith Observer 21st January 1860

HARBOUR OF REFUGE IN CARDIGAN BAY.

(From the Shipping and Mercantile Gazette.)

When the Refuge Harbour Commissioners were employed in the examination of the various localities on the West Coast, we took occasion to reiterate our opinion, frequently expressed before, that no system of Asylum Harbours for that portion of our seaboard would be complete that did not give one or more of such Harbours to Cardigan Bay. It was, therefore, with some regret that we saw the Commission close its labours without even a visit to the bay in question, and it is with still greater regret that we have recently seen the necessity of works for which we contended, fully and fatally established. It is true we have a Refuge Harbour at Holyhead, that Milford cannot be surpassed as a natural Harbour, and that the Commissioners have recommended the expenditure of a sufficient sum in St. Ives Bay and at Padstow to render those places available as Harbours of Refuge; but Cardigan Bay, taking the line of embayment, from Bardsey Islands to Strumble Head, embraces a line of coast of probably 150 miles, and along the whole of that coast there is not at the present moment a single place where a vessel driven by a gale at any point from S.S.W. to N.N.W. can find shelter, and yet there are two or three places within the bay, and near the lowest point in the bight, where a Refuge Harbour might be constructed at a comparatively trifling expense. We are happy to perceive that a local stir has been made on this important subject. The Directors of the Newquay Mutual Ship Insurance Society have held a meeting a few days since, at which a series of resolutions were adopted, embodying a list of the vessels wrecked, stranded, or otherwise damaged within the Harbour of Newquay and its immediate vicinity, in the gale of the 25th and 26th of October last, and attributing the loss of life and property on that occasion, along the shores of Cardigan Bay, to the want of a Harbour of Refuge in the locality. In 1858 there were ten casualties to vessels in Cardigan Bay, of which seven were total wrecks. In the gale of the 25th and 26th October last there were eighteen casualties reported at Newquay alone, six at Cardigan, and several more at Fishguard, Aberaeron, and other places. It is quite true that the gale in question was one of unusual, perhaps of unexampled, severity, but it is such a gale that tests the value of a Harbour of Refuge, or illustrates fearfully the consequences of its absence. The loss of life during the recent gale has been estimated, and it is an appalling estimate. The loss of property probably never will be; but it is quite certain that the shores of Cardigan Bay have had their share of the victims and the spoil, and it is truly sad to reflect that this great calamity might have been deprived of its most terrible features if means had been taken to provide Harbours of Refuge in suitable places, when the necessity for those constructions was first pointed out. The position of Cardigan Bay

entitles it to such special attention as a locality for a Refuge Harbour, that we are at a loss to comprehend how it could have been passed over by the Commissioners. The vast Commerce inwards and outwards of the Port of Liverpool passes it, and the Coasting Trade of the locality is very large. Vessels coming from the westward, if from any Port above the 40th parallel of north latitude, commonly make Cape Clear as a landfall, and keep the Irish coast aboard until they pass the Tuskar; but ships coming from south ward of that parallel make the Land's End or Scilly Islands as their landfall, and commonly sight St. David's Head and Bardsey. These are the vessels, to say nothing of the outward-bound and coasters, which may at any moment have occasion to deplore the want of a Refuge Harbour in Cardigan Bay. Such is the extent of Cardigan Bay that any wind from S.S.W. to N., and even to N.E., may make a lee shore of some spot or other between Bardsey Island and Strumble Head. But, perhaps, considering the prevalence of westerly and N.W. winds in these latitudes, the most dangerous locality in the bay is in the neighbourhood of the Port of Cardigan or Newquay. At the latter place there is, it is true, a Pier, but it has been proved by the number of casualties that occurred, actually within the Harbour of Newquay during the gale in last October, to be utterly inadequate to the purposes of efficient protection. One of the resolutions adopted at the meeting to which we have already referred, presses this fact upon the Newquay Harbour Board; it urges the expediency of extending the Pier into deeper water, and of raising it some seven feet higher at least. We shall be most happy to hear that this suggestion has been adopted, and that local efforts are continued for securing so desirable and so necessary an object; but we are still of the opinion, long since formed, that a Harbour of Refuge in Cardigan Bay, to be of the required utility for the protection of Shipping navigating that part of the coast, will involve an expenditure too large to be met by local contributions, however liberal, and should be a national work, paid for out of the public purse. Session after session sees sums of money voted, almost without a question, for the continuance of works the value of which is at least questionable, and the interruption of which would be of no material consequence; while we find any proposal for a sum of money, sufficient even to commence undertakings which Parliamentary Committees and Royal Commissions agree are absolutely necessary to the protection of life and property in the navigation of our shores, is coldly received, or unhesitatingly postponed. Now, we hold it to be the sacred duty of the gentlemen who represent the Shipping Interest in Parliament, and especially of those who have served on recent inquiries respecting Harbours of Refuge, to press with all their energy, in the approaching Session. for such a share of the public money as will give effect to their recommendations, or will provide, at least, for the commencement of the necessary works, without further delay. Nor do we see that, although the necessities of Cardigan Bay have been overlooked by the Commissioners, those necessities do not of themselves

constitute a legitimate subject for Parliamentary discussion. The efforts of Mr. J. LLOYD DAVIES in this direction are not forgotten; and although that gentleman no longer represents his constituency in Parliament, he may do good service in pressing, in common with the people of the Cardigan burghs, upon their member, the propriety of bringing the unprotected nature of the coast of Cardigan Bay before the notice of the House of Commons, and of thereby repairing the unfortunate oversight of the Refuge Harbours Commissioners. The tribunal that is competent to decide upon the report of that body is surely competent to sanction any judicious amendment that may be proposed.

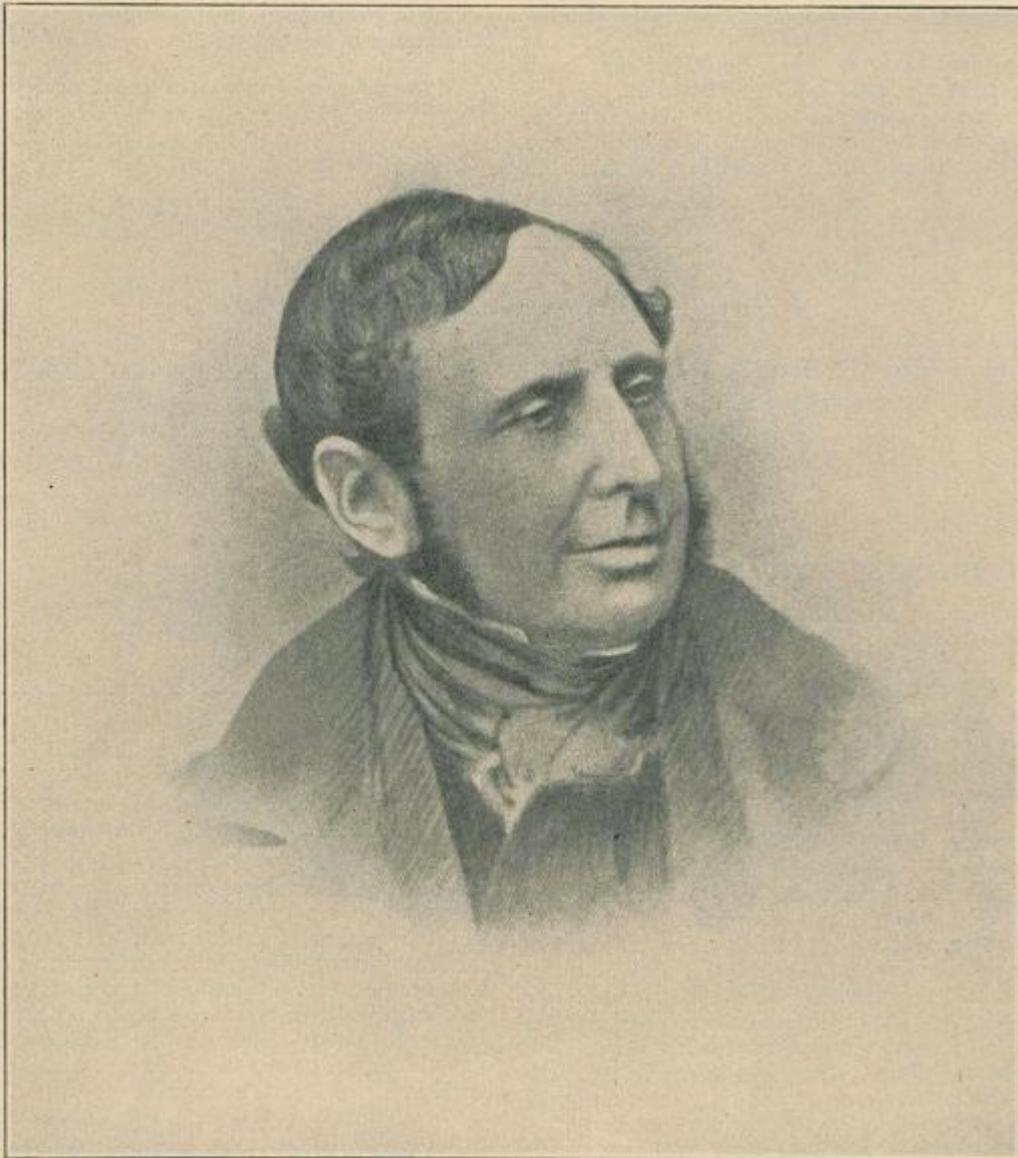
On the night of 25th/26th October 1859 a severe and slow moving storm struck the British Isles. It was considered to be the most severe storm to hit the Irish Sea in the 19th century. The storm depression was first noted in the Bay of Biscay near Cape Finisterre on 24th - 25th. The centre progressed northwards over Britain from Cornwall to the Yorkshire Coast and the strongest winds in the system developed as a rather narrow stream from the N or NNE over the Irish Sea. The winds reached hurricane force 12 on the Beaufort Scale and were estimated at well over 100mph. Wind speeds recorded in the Mersey were higher than any previously recorded.

The Royal Charter Gale and the world's first National Forecasting Service

The storm took 800 lives and 133 ships with a further 90 badly damaged. Twice as many people were lost at sea around the British Isles than in the whole of 1858. The most famous ship to founder during the night was the steam clipper Royal Charter, which foundered on the north coast of Anglesey. The ship was on the last leg of her two month journey from Melbourne to Liverpool. She was one of the fastest and most famous emigrant ships operating during the years of the Australian Gold Rush and could carry up to 600 passengers and some cargo.

The wreck gained much coverage in the national press and focused attention on the need for storm warnings to reduce further such losses. Robert FitzRoy, founder of the fledgling Meteorological Office, which had been collecting observations from around the British coastline since 1854, believed that his department could provide such a service. He produced a detailed report with charts to prove that the storm could have been tracked and its path predicted. Through his analyses of the Royal Charter and other storms FitzRoy demonstrated the validity of his models and proposed a national storm warning system. There was much doubt amongst the scientific establishment that the weather could be predicted in any meaningful way but the government permitted

FitzRoy to test his new science of weather forecasting and to establish a Storm Warning service.



Vice-Admiral Robert FitzRoy, C.B., F.R.S.

Fig. 1 Robert Fitzroy

On 1st September 1860 weather reports began to be collected at the Meteorological Office in London via electric telegraph and on the 5th February 1861 the first storm warning was issued. This used a combination of cones and drums hoisted on a staff to warn ships both in harbour and along the coast of an approaching gale. On the Tyne the warning was disregarded and many lives were lost however the accuracy of the warning meant that further warnings were heeded and the scheme was widely popular. FitzRoy became a hero to many in the maritime community, including the RNLI. He also produced a guide to assist with interpreting changes in the barometer, this was especially useful to fishermen operating from smaller ports without access to warning signals.

After the death of Fitzroy in 1865 the storm warning service was discontinued due to the ongoing debate about its scientific accuracy but the inevitable increased loss of life caused a public outcry and a campaign in press and in parliament saw the restoration of storm warnings in 1867. The service continues to this day and is now known as the iconic Shipping Forecast.

In 2002 sea area Finisterre was renamed FitzRoy – after Robert FitzRoy, the first professional weather forecaster, captain of HMS Beagle and founder of the Met Office.

Monmouthshire Merlin 25th October 1862

DREADFUL GALE AND LOSS OF LIFE.

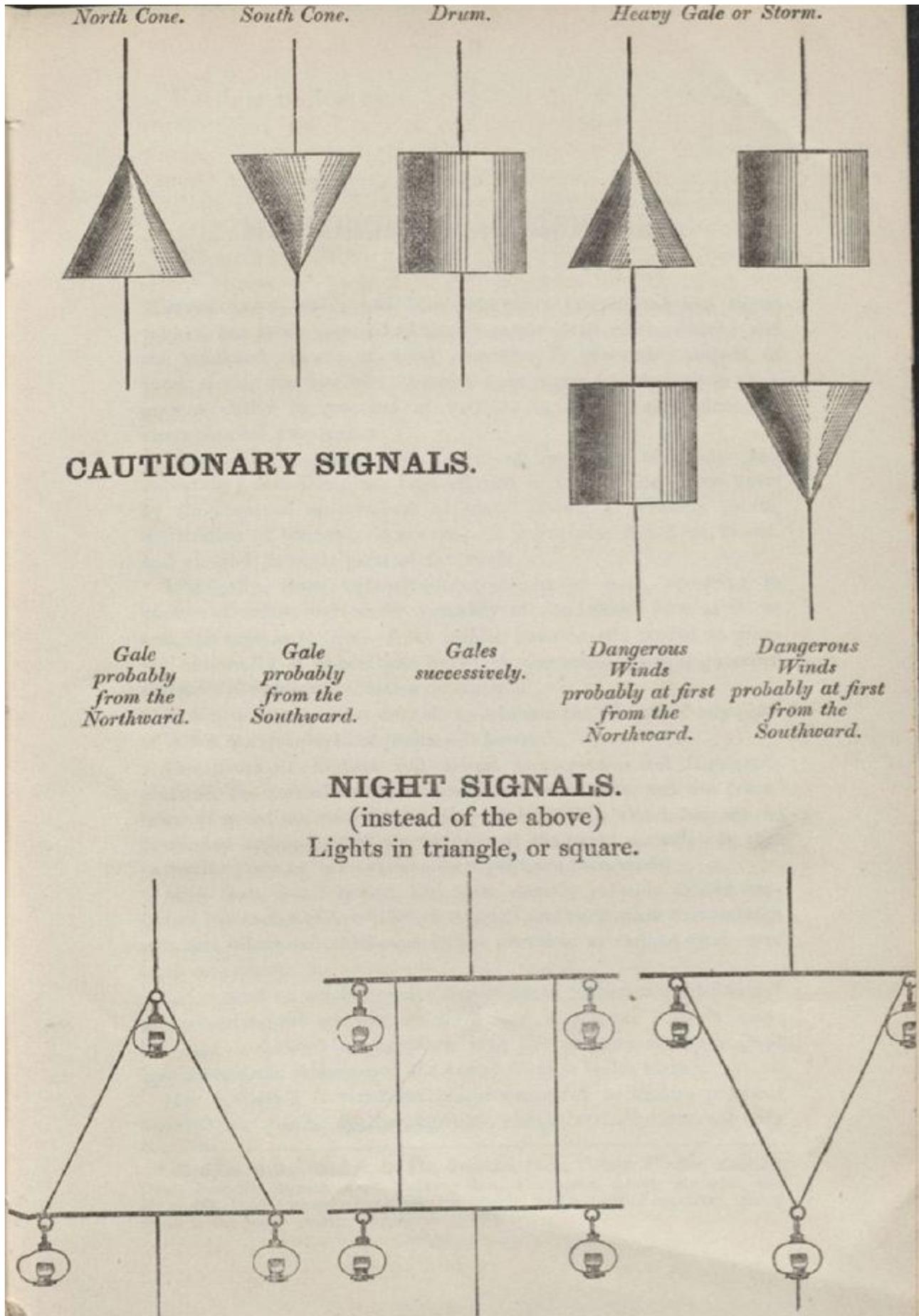
SHIELDS, MONDAY AFTERNOON.—On Saturday after-noon, Admiral Fitzroy sent a storm warning down to the Tyne, that dangerous winds might be expected from the southward. But, notwithstanding this warning, a considerable number of collier vessels put out to sea, and fearfully have they paid for their temerity, for, since nightfall yesterday, we have been visited by one of the most terrible hurricanes experienced on this coast for many years. Fortunately, however, it blew off the coast The storm came on between nine and ten o'clock last night, and was at its height at midnight. About nine o'clock last night, signals were made at sea that vessels were in the offing, and a powerful steamer took out a number of Tyne pilots. The vessels drifted away when the gale came on, but there is no cause for alarm with regard to them. The havoc that has been caused in the Tyne is fearful. A barque is sunk off Wallsend four of her crew perished. Three vessels are also sunk off Heburn, and two boys are reported drowned.

Great damage has been done amongst the factories in that neighbourhood. The body of a ship captain has just been washed ashore at Shields. A lead manufactory has been entirely blown down, between Heburn and Jarrow. Messrs. Palmer's large iron shipbuilding yard, at Jarrow, has been considerably injured. In the Northumberland Dock the damage done to shipping by the gale will amount to many hundreds of pounds. A large full-rigged ship broke her moorings and drove down the dock, sweeping all before her. The Sylph, of Scarborough, Ellen, of London, and Sylph, of London, and a number of other vessels, are sunk in the Northumberland Dock, and many ships are damaged in the Tyne Dock. Three vessels are sunk in Shields harbour, and a steamer—the Trump—is smashed to pieces there. SHIELDS, MONDAY NIGHT.—The gale continues, but the loss of life has been less serious than was expected. The brig August, of Inverness, has gone down. The damage to shipping is most serious. Twelve ships are injured in the Tyne Dock, and twenty in the Northumberland Dock. Extensive damage has also been done in the harbour. The Mary, of Weymouth, the Ruby, and the Robert and Mary have sunk in the harbour. A telegram states that the Hugh, of North Shields, has foundered on Sizewell Bank, and that three of her crew were drowned. The master and remainder were injured. Thirty pilot boats have been damaged.

Among other storms to be noticed in a more detailed manner, two alone will probably suffice as types shown in synchronous charts. The *Royal Charter* gale, so remarkable in its features, and so complete in its illustrations, I may say, from the fact of its having been noted at so many parts of our coast, and because the storm passed over the middle of the country, is one of the very best to examine which has occurred for some length of time. I would, therefore, ask for attention to this particular instance. It occurred on the 25th and 26th of October 1859. The lowest barometer and a corresponding or simultaneous central *lull* prevailed over areas of ten or twenty miles successively. But at the time that this comparative lull existed, there were violent winds around this central space (by some called a vortex, but which can hardly be thus *appropriately* termed, because there was no central disturbance), while there were only variable winds or calms in the middle of the area, which was from ten to twenty miles across. The wind attained a *maximum* velocity of from sixty to one hundred miles an hour, at a distance of twenty to fifty miles from this comparatively quiet space, and in successive spiral eddyings seemed to cross England towards the north-east, the wind blowing from all points of the compass consecutively around the lull; so that while at Anglesea the storm came from the north-north-east, in the Irish Channel it was northerly, and on the east of Ireland it was from the north-west; in the Straits of Dover it was from the south-west; and on the east coast it was easterly —at the *same minute*.

Thus there was an apparent circulation, or cyclonic commotion, passing northwards from the 25th to the 27th, being two complete days from its first appearance near the “chops” of the Channel; while outside of this circuit the wind became less and less violent; and it is very remarkable that, even so near us on the west coast of Ireland, there was fine weather, with light winds, while in the Bristol Channel it blew a northerly and westerly gale. At Galway and at Limerick, on that occasion, there were light winds only, while over England the wind was passing in a tempest, blowing from all points of the compass in irregular succession around a central variable area.*

Description of the Royal Charter Storm in the Tenth Number of Meteorological Papers 'Storms of the British Isles' written by FitzRoy



CAUTIONARY SIGNALS.

Gale probably from the Northward.

Gale probably from the Southward.

Gales successively.

Dangerous Winds probably at first from the Northward.

Dangerous Winds probably at first from the Southward.

NIGHT SIGNALS.

(instead of the above)
Lights in triangle, or square.

Four lanterns and two yards, each four feet long, will be sufficient—as only one signal will be used at night.

These signals may be made with any lanterns, shewing either white, or any colour, but *alike*. Red is most eligible. Lamps are preferable to candles. The halyards should be good rope,

This is the information booklet produced by FitzRoy to enable ship captains to understand and interpret his storm warning signals. He also produced a guide to assist with interpreting changes in the barometer, this was especially useful to fishermen operating from smaller ports without access to warning signals.

Mr. Robert Sparrow, shipbuilder

Dublin Daily Express - Saturday 27 April 1861

The New Draper Wreck.—An attempt was made today raise this tine brig from the position in which she was wrecked, just opposite the mouth the harbour of Wicklow. Mr. Sparrow, of Wexford, an eminent shipbuilder, has undertaken the raising of the wreck.

Dublin Evening Mail - Friday 03 May 1861

Our townsman, Mr. Robert Sparrow, shipbuilder, has succeeded—after many other parties had tried and failed—in lifting the brig New Draper, which lately sunk outside Wicklow, and bringing her into the harbour. She was drawn in amid the cheers of a large number of spectators.— *Wexford Constitution*.

Wexford Independent - Wednesday 16 November 1864

COURT OF BANKRUPTCY AND INSOLVENCY.

IN BANKRUPTCY.

In the Matter of Robert Sparrow, of the Town of Wexford, Shipbuilder, a Bankrupt.

THE Judges of the Court of Bankruptcy and Insolvency will sit at the said Court, Four Courts Dublin, on Friday, the 25th day of November, 1864, the hour of Eleven o'clock in the forenoon, for the surrender of the said Bankrupt, Proof of Debts, and choice of an Assignee in this matter, of which sitting all persons concerned are to Take Notice

All Persons indebted to the said Bankrupt in any sum whatever, or who have any

of his Estate or Effects, are not to pay or deliver same except to Charles Henry James, Esq., 30, Upper Ormonde-quay, Dublin, the Official Assignee. And all Persons knowing of the concealment of any Property of the said Bankrupt are requested to give Notice thereof to the Agents.

Dated this 11th day of November, 1864.

. HUGH DOYLE, Deputy Assistant Registrar,
. D & J FITZGERALD, Agents to the Bankruptcy,
30, St Andrew street, Dublin

Wexford Independent - Wednesday 18 January 1865

COURT OP BANKRUPTCY, DUBLIN — Friday. (Before Judge Lynch.)

In re Robert Sparrow.

The Bankrupt in this case had been extensive trade shipbuilder in the town of Wexford. He came for final examination, which was opposed.

Mr. Martin, instructed by Messrs. D. and T. Fitzgerald, solicitors, appeared behalf Mr. Allen, the trade assignee, to oppose the passing of the final examination, on the alleged ground that the bankrupt had not returned all the property on his schedule, and also on the ground that he made a false statement in reference to his farm, some property claimed by his children. It was also charged against him that did not give sufficient information to his creditors in respect of an execution which had been levied on his farm.

The Bankrupt was examined, and deposed that he had made truthful statement of his affairs to his creditors before the case went into court, when he hoped the creditors would consent to a compromise and take eight shillings in the pound, secured, which was offered. He had also made out accurate lists of all his property, including what had been claimed by the children.

Judge Lynch—What is the value of the amount claimed by the children ?

Mr. Leachman—About £20, lord, and not more.

Mr. James, official assignee, stated that the furniture sold for £100.

Mr. Martin said the question was whether the property claimed by the children was included in the schedule filed the bankrupt. He also complained that the bankrupt had been guilty of breach of trust.

Judge Lynch inquired how the bankrupt had been guilty of breach of trust ?

Mr. Martin said he had collected rents for other parties, and that possibly his creditors might have been deluded by supposing that those rents were his own.

Judge Lynch said that would not establish that he had been guilty a breach of trust. If man was suddenly made bankrupt of and had money belonging to other parties which he had collected in his hands, he could not be reasonably supposed

to hand that over to the assignees. It might happen a bankrupt would have that money in his hands, and yet have acted most fairly.

Mr. Martin said he considered the fact of the trust money being his possession was calculated to mislead his creditors, who might think it was his own.

Judge Lynch inquired whose rents were they that the bankrupt had collected ?

Mr. Martin, in reply, said that Mr. Allen, the trade assignee, was not very well acquainted with the facts.

Judge Lynch said he did not understand why it should be put forward as an objection to the passing of the final examination that the bankrupt had received trust-money.

Mr. Martin said he pressed it on the ground that it might affect the opinion of his creditors in respect of his means. Mr. Allen also complained of the conduct ! of the bankrupt in reference to a creditor named Keogh, who furnished the bankrupt with sails for a vessel, which vessel he subsequently sold, and never paid Keogh. Mr. Kernan, Q.C., said that was quite a mistake, Mr. Keogh had received part payment, and did not appear himself to oppose.

Mr. Martin said the creditors also complained of the bankrupt having put in circulation a large number of bills.

Judge Lynch said great number of statements were made but there was no evidence given to sustain them. He certainly considered people should have more carefully investigated the matter before they came forward to make such statements in Court.

Mr. James, the official assignee, considered the bankrupt had most fully vouched his schedule, and satisfactorily accounted for every item. Mr. Martin said there was no doubt a great difference of opinion between Mr. James and Mr. Allen.

Mr. James said he certainly could not agree in opinion with the opposing creditor.

Judge Lynch considered it most irregular on the part of the opposing creditor not to have carefully investigated all the matters he complained of before the complaints were made in court.

Mr. Martin said the trade assignee had not an opportunity of doing so.

Judge Lynch said a number of complaints and charges were made against the bankrupt without the least investigation having been made as to whether they were well founded. Mr. Martin then examined the bankrupt in reference to his farm, and he gave evidence in respect of it to satisfy the court.

Mr. Leachman, solicitor for the bankrupt, said the case originally came before the court on a petition for arrangement, when he had a majority of votes in his favour, the bankrupt offering to pay eight shillings in the pound, secured, which was refused,

Mr. Martin said that was a mistake.

Mr. Leachman said it was no mistake.

Judge Lynch said he saw grounds whatever in the case for refusing to pass the final examination. A creditor's assignee had a perfect right to come into court to

prefer complaints against a bankrupt, but certainly not at the last moment to come in to make complaints upon matters capable of the fullest explanation, and which would have been explained if there had been the slightest previous explanation. Utterly reckless charges were being made against the bankrupt without any investigation before the case came into court, to whether they were true or false. The other business was of the usual routine. they were true or false. Statements were put forward in the present case against the bankrupt which were utterly disproved ; and unless he (Judge Lynch) were to punish every man who came into that court unable to pay his debts, he could not reasonably refuse to pass the bankrupt's final examination. His books were properly kept, and he had vouched every item to the satisfaction of the official assignee. There was nothing really in the case to show he had been guilty of misrepresentation, or had done anything improper. He would therefore pass the final examination. Mr. Larkin appeared for the bankrupt children, who claimed portion of the assets as being their exclusive property. The bankrupt swore the property , claimed never belonged to him.

Judge Lynch ordered the claimants should retain it, the claimants not pressing any other objections.



Schooner lying off the quays, c. 1900. (Detail from Laurence Collection)

Fig.2 Wexford Quay

Coflein

TWIN SISTER was a wooden schooner built at Wexford in 1857. Technical and configuration specification are given as: 91.39 tons; 78ft length x 21.6ft breadth x 9.1ft depth in hold; 1 deck, 2 masts, schooner rigged, round stern, carvel built, female bust head, framework wood; official number 20483. The schooner was registered at Lancaster (17 in 1857). It owned by a consortium by a consortium of people from Barrow, Fleetwood, Ulverston, Lancaster, Broughton in Furness and Hawkshead, led by James Fisher of Barrow, shipping agent. The nominated master was William Porter. At time of loss during the Royal Charter Gale 25-26 October 1859, it was carrying a cargo of coal from Newport to Liverpool. It was last seen off Bardsey on the night of the storm. One of its boats marked 'TWIN SISTER OF BARROW Wm Porter', was washed up on the coast 7 miles south of Aberyswyth leading to speculation that it may have been wrecked on the Sarn Gynfelin (Outer Patches) off Aberystwyth. For some reason, the Lancaster registration of the schooner had not been recorded with the central Registrar in London. Hence, in the Board of Trade statistical reporting of losses for the year, the TWIN SISTERS of Liverpool, official number 17779, was shown.

Sources include:

Board of Trade Wreck Return 1859, Table 19, pg26, House of Commons
Parliamentary Papers Online, document 2623

Port of Lancaster Shipping Register 1855 - 1867, Lancashire Archives SS 5/5,
Folio 39

Troughton, W, 2006, Ceredigion Shipwrecks, pg94

Maritime Officer, RCAHMW, January 2013.

7.0 Analysis

The Harbours of Refuge argument went on without result in Wales, and Liverpool shipowners resorted to employing steam tugs to tow their sailing vessels from the western approaches to Liverpool and return, until steam vessels were able to make voyages to India, Africa and the America's. A RNLB Lifeboat was also positioned at Aberystwyth in 1861 after public subscription and the existing boat sold.

The Royal Charter storm was the catalyst for some safety improvements but not for the Government of the day to take real action. The start of the publication of storm warnings was the only national reaction and that was caused by campaigns in newspapers and proved its worth after many lives were lost on the Tyne after it was ignored. The scientific establishment did not like it and it paused after Roberts Fitzroy's death but was reinstated by public demand two years later after further loss of life.

The BNA provided most of the records of voyages and events affecting the Twin Sister with the WNL providing the rest. Google searches provided the remaining information with the Royal Charter Storm generating a number of records for vessels lost with www.peoplescollection.wales providing details and offering teaching materials. The Met office website providing the details of Robert Fitzroy.

The Twin Sister was in use for a short time, less than two years before foundering in the Royal Charter storm in October 1859. The Lancaster port registration record shows the 27 owners with all but one who owned 8 shares, owning between 1 and 4 shares each. There is no information on line to indicate if Twin Sister was insured.

The Board of Trade's report into shipping losses for the year 1859, states the Twin Sister was registered at Liverpool and another schooner Twin Sisters official Number 17779 was registered there but she sank in August 1872, so not the correct vessel.

8.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

I have spent about 10 hours on this project with about 95% spent on line.

The Twin Sister was in use for a short time with few details of the crew or master or cargo carried. The list of owners is on the www.peoplescollection.wales website with the Port of Lancaster registration for the vessel and it is possible to read some of them on line although copying it for this report does not. There is no doubt the Twin Sister was lost in the October 1859 storm but no further details are known.

The Twin Sister operated for so short a time with no other incident apart from her loss, there is little information to produce any further publication.

The Coflein website and Wreckeu provide details of her loss.

9.0 References

<https://coflein.gov.uk/>

<https://www.google.com/>

<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

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<https://hec.lrfoundation.org.uk/>

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<https://newspapers.library.wales/>

<https://www.peoplescollection.wales/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/>

Appendices:

Appendix A – Table of Lloyd’s Registers entries for the *Twin Sister*

	YM.56,c.f.									56
19	Thomas Sr	J. Bartlett	46	Apldre	1857	Skntlbery	Fowey	Bid. Coaster	9	A 1
	ptI.B.									8
20	Tom Sr	J. Gates	85	Livrp'l	1857	Wilkinsn	Liverp'l	Liv. Coaster	9	A 1
	I.B.									8
21	Tempest Sr	E. Rowe	92	Milfrd	1857	Whitty &	Wexfrd	Mil. Coaster	8	A 1
22	Tasso Bk	G. Jinman	336	Rye	1857	Holmw'd	London	Rye Nwflnd	12	A 1
	YM.57overptI.B.		258							10
23	Thomas Fer- zuson Bn	J. Gray	67	N Brns	1857	H. Oakes	Invrnss	Shl. Coaster	3	A 1
	I.B.			R P HL & S						10
24	Telegram Sr	J. Mabley	52	Pdstw	1857	Vercoe & C	Fowey	Pad. Coaster	7	A 1
	I.B.									11
25	Tryst Sr	A. Wright	61	Fndhn	1857	Anderson	Invrnss	Abn. Baltic	7	A 1
	I.B.									11
26	TwinSister Sr	W. Porter	91	Wxfrd	1857	Fisher & C	Barrow	WexCoaster	9	A 1
	ptI.B.									12
27	Treva Sr	Henwood	64	Nwq'y	1858	Hitchen	st. Ives	Fal. Coaster	10	A 1
	I.B.									1, 58
28	Troas Y	S Holmes	663	Sndrld	1857	T. Parke	Sndrld	Sld. China	13	A 1
	7.c f.									2, 58

Lloyd's Register of Shipping 1857 ☆ 🔗
 by Lloyd's Register Foundation, Heritage & Education Centre

1858, 1859, 1860 No change

1861 no entry

Appendix B – The Timeline for the *Twin Sister*

1857

December 2 Wexford launched schooner *Twin Sister*

December 20 Wexford sailed *Twin Sister*, Porter for Barrow

1858

February 18 1858 Ardrossan arrived *Twin Sister*, Porter from Fleetwood

February 23 1858 Ardrossan sailed *Twin Sister*, Porter for Fleetwood

April 10 1858 Morcombe sailed *Twin Sister* for Barrow - ballast

June 14 1858 Lancaster arrived *Twin Sister* from Cardiff - iron

June 16 1858 Lancaster sailed *Twin Sister* for Barrow – ballast

July 9 1858 Barrow arrived *Twin Sister*, Porter from Liverpool

July 21 1858 Portinllaen sailed *Twin Sister*, Porter for Newport

July 24 1858 Newport, Mon. arrived *Twin Sister*, Porter from Barrow

August 2 1858 Newport, Mon. sailed *Twin Sister*, Porter for Liverpool

August 6 1858 In Huskisson dock *Twin Sister* 91, Porter for Newport

August 10 1858 In Huskisson dock *Twin Sister* 91, Porter

August 13 1858 Barrow arrived *Twin Sister*, Porter from Liverpool

August 21 1858 Barrow sailed *Twin Sister*, Porter for Newport

September 16 1858 Newry arrived *Twin Sisters*, Porter from Newport – iron

September 23 1858 Newry sailed *Twin Sister*, Porter for Ardrossan

September 25 1858 Ardrossan arrived *Twin Sisters*, Porter from Newry

October 10 1858 Barrow arrived *Twin Sister*, Porter from Fleetwood

November 4 1858 Barrow sailed *Twin Sister*, Porter for Newport

December 5 1858 Barrow arrived Twin Sister, Porter from Liverpool

1859

February 24 1859 Belfast sailed Twin Sister, Porter for Clyde

February 25 1859 Ardrossan arrived Twin Sisters, Porter from Belfast

w/e 12 March 1859 Fleetwood sailed Twin Sister for Barrow - light

March 7 1859 Barrow arrived Twin Sister, Porter from Fleetwood

March 9 1859 Barrow sailed Twin Sister, Porter for Birkenhead

March 18 1859 Barrow arrived Twin Sister, Porter from Birkenhead

w/e April 16 1859 Fleetwood arrived Twin Sister, Porter from Ardrossan

April 20 1859 Barrow sailed Twin Sister, Porter for Newport

April 30 1859 Barrow sailed Twin Sister, Porter for Newport

September 13 1859 Fleetwood arrived Twin Sister, Porter from Glasgow

September 17 1859 Fleetwood sailed Twin Sister, Porter for Barrow

September 22 1859 Barrow loaded and remain Twin Sister, Porter for Newport

September 28 1859 Holyhead arrived Twin Sister, Porter from Barrow

October 13 1859 Newport, Mon. arrived Twin Sister, Porter from Barrow

