

**Welsh Wreck Web Research Project
(North Cardigan Bay)
On-line research into the Grounding of:
MFV Boy Nick**



MFV Boy Nick BS 65 (1988)

**Report compiled by:
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Report Title:

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*MVF Boy Nick***

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1.0 Abstract

Since 2001 the Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit (MADU) has developed a database of vessels known to have wrecked around the coast of Wales.

This project is to discover information relating to the history of the MFV Boy Nick.

On Nov 22nd 1978, the MFV Boy Nick sailing from Beaumaris to Barmouth ran aground on Sarn Badrig, off Barmouth. The crew of two was saved by the Barmouth Lifeboat and the MFV Boy Nick later refloated. The coxswain Evan D. Jones of the Barmouth Lifeboat was awarded a bronze medal for gallantry and the crew awarded medal service certificates for the rescue.

The research has been conducted from information gathered from MADU and on-line sites as I do not reside in the U.K.

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2.4 Contributors

Ian Cundy MADU Archaeological Diving Unit,
 Nautical Archaeology Society (Regional co-ordinator for Wales)

2.5 Abbreviations

MADU Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit
MNL Mercantile Navy List
LR Lloyds' Registry

2.6 Appendices

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3.0 Introduction

The MFV Boy Nick was chosen as:

- it was a small local boat.
- the story of the saving of the crew by the Barmouth Lifeboat.
- I live overseas online information would be my priority research tool and similar to my previous research a ship from this period should be reasonably well documented online.

The following topics form the basis of the research:

- What were the vessel's specifications?
- What historical information is available relating to the vessel?
- Has any salvage, etc. been carried out?
- Have there been any previous reports produced relating to the vessel?

4.0 Background

Prior to starting this research the only known data available to me was from the MADU Master Wrecksite Database Listing (Table 1) supplied by Mr Ian Cundy.

Table 1: Extract from MADU Master Wrecksite Database

Date Wrecked	Name	Location 1	Location 2	Details	Vessel Type	Matls	Ref.
22/11/1978	Boy Nick	North Bank	Barmouth	Rudder broke whilst crossing Barmouth Bar	Fishing		rc

On No 22 1978, the MFV Boy Nick sailing from Beaumaris to Barmouth ran aground on San Badrig, off Barmouth. The Barmouth lifeboat The Chieftain was launched and rescued the 2 fishermen onboard. The MFV Boy Nick was later refloated.

Fig 1: North Cardigan Bay



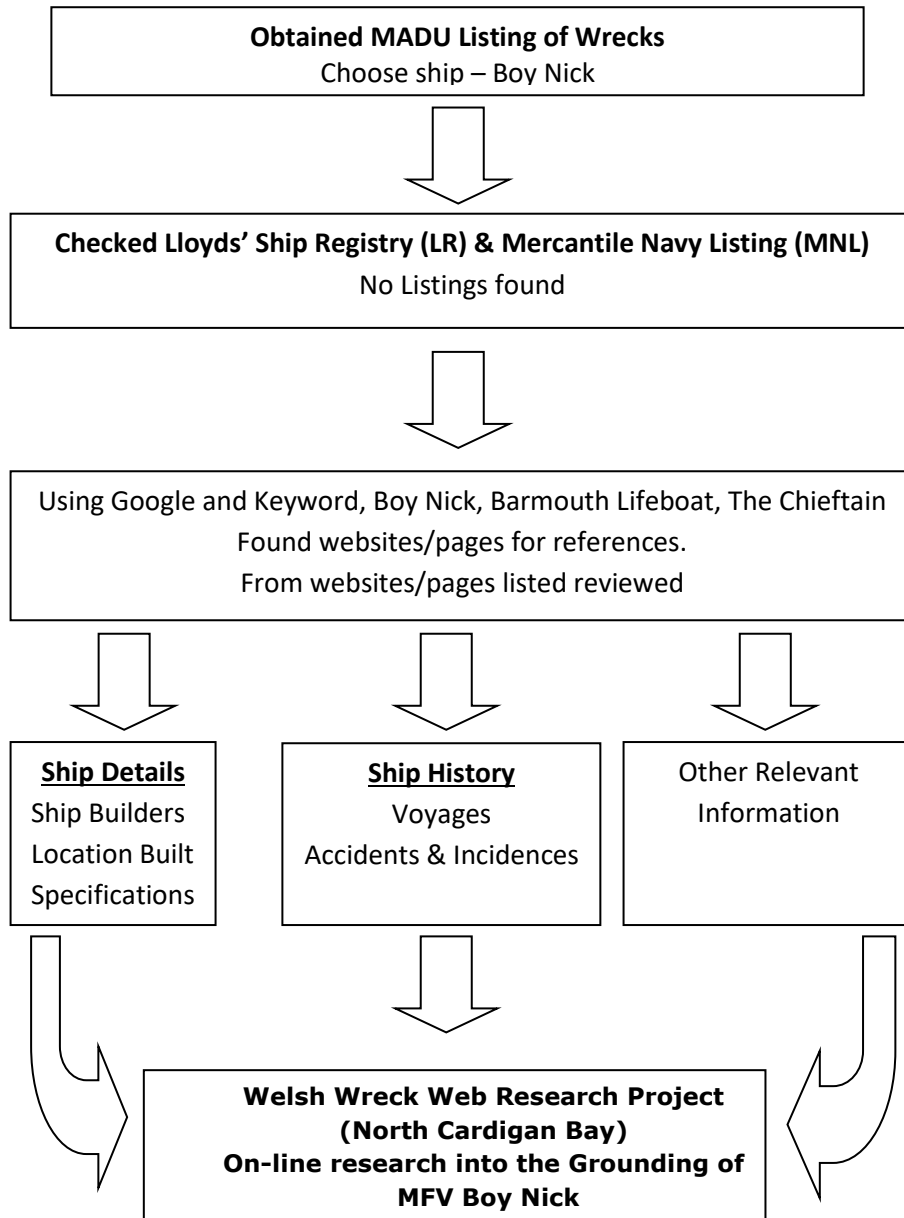
5.0 Research Methodology

Computer System

Acer Desktop 64 bit OS; 8 GB Memory, wireless connection.
Windows 10Pro
Microsoft Office 2007

Search engines used: Google Chrome

Methodology



See Section 9 for list of websites viewed

6.0 Results

Table 2: MFV Boy Nick Specification and History

Vessel	Name/s	Boy Nick
	Type	Motorized Fishing Vessel
Built	Date	1972, Worcester
Construction	Materials	?Fibreglass
Propulsion	Type	Engine
Engine	Details	80HP @ 1800rpm
Drive	Type	Propeller (85cm diameter)
	Number	1
Dimensions	Length	7.95m
	Beam	3.60m
	Draught	1.95m
Tonnage	Gross	N/A
Registry	Port	Beaumaris
	Number	BS 65
History	Routes	Fishing/Potting North Wales & Cardigan Bay
Final Voyage	From	Beaumaris
	To	Barmouth
	Crew	2
	Date	22/11/1978
	Location	Sarn Badrig (St Patrick's Causeway, off Barmouth
	Cause	Lost rudder crossing Sarn Badrig
	Loss of life	0
	Outcome	Refloated

N.B: Some of the information here is generic for a fishing/potter of the time.

Table 3: Specifications and History of the Chieftain Lifeboat, Barmouth

Vessel	Name/s	The Chieftain
	Type	Liverpool Class Lifeboat – non self righting
	Number	ON 864
Built	Date	1949
	Cost	£9,943
	Builder	Groves & Guttridge Cowes, IOW
Owner		R.N.L.I
Station		Barmouth, Merionethshire
Service/Launch/Lives Saved		1949 - 1982 / 113 / 132
Crew		7
Construction	Materials	Wood
Dimensions	Length	35ft 6ins
	Beam	10ft 8ins
Tonnage	Displacement	6-8 tons
Engine	Details	Twin engine: 2 x 18 hp (13 kW) Weyburn AE4 Petrol/20 hp (15 kW) Re-engined in mid 1960s with 47 hp (35 kW) Parsons Penguin diesels
Speed		6.5-7.5 knots
Range		70-120 nautical miles
Sold		April 1982

7.0 Analysis

- Nov 22nd 1978, the MFV Boy Nick sailed from Beaumaris for Barmouth with 2 people aboard.
- 21:05hrs, the MFV Boy Nick was observed from Barmouth to be seaward of the bar and it was assumed the MFV Boy Nick was standing off until the weather cleared and it could enter the harbour at Barmouth.
- 21:40hrs, the MFV Boy Nick fired off a red flare. At about the same time a phone call from the Porthdinllaen Station informed the Barmouth Lifeboat Station of a boat in trouble on the bar.
- 21:43hrs, a maroon to muster the lifeboat crew was fired and The Chieftain Lifeboat launched at 21:50hrs with Coxswain Jones in control into a westerly strong breeze, force 6, gusting to near gale, force 7. Very rough seas were breaking over the bar as it was nearly two hours after low water neaps.
- The position of the MFV Boy Nick could be seen from her green starboard light and the lifeboat headed down channel to a position south of MFV Boy Nick.
- The light on the MFV Boy Nick went out but hand flares fired to the east (to leeward) of the casualty allowed the position to be fixed. The lifeboat's searchlight picked up the MFV Boy Nick lying with her bows facing south east and her life raft made fast to the bows, but these sightings were only occasional because of the seas breaking over the lifeboat and the fishing boat.
- An attempt to go into the MFV Boy Nick resulted in the lifeboat grounding but by going full astern the lifeboat found regained the main channel.
- In order to reach the life raft, the lifeboat was driven at full throttle at the bar and although grounding several times and continuously being flooded to the top of her lockers the Chieftain reached the life raft which was now cast adrift from the MFV Boy Nick and picked up the two fishermen.
- While attempting to get back to deeper water the Chieftain was picked up by the sea and became firmly stuck on the bar.
- With bows heading NW, the seas breaking over her port side and rocks to starboard the coxswain turned slightly to starboard and with the seas lifting the boat managed to regain the main channel after 25 minutes.
- With no damage the lifeboat returned to shore and was rehoused and ready for service at 23:45hrs.
- The cause of the grounding of the MFV Boy Nick was due to the crown of Boy Nick's rudder sheering off as she was crossing the bar. The MFV was carried onto Sarn Badrig and had flooded within minutes. Although flooded and with no crew the MFV Boy Nick was later refloated and not wrecked as reported. A listing of boats shows the MFV Boy Nick registered at Beaumaris from 1972-1996.
- In a letter of thanks written on behalf of Boy Nick's skipper and himself, the fishing boat's crew, Keith Allday, spoke of the lifeboat approaching: 'Through this notoriously dangerous stretch of sand bars and shoaling water, the rescue was an extremely difficult operation and conditions were some of the worst I have ever encountered. I cannot praise the tenacity and bravery of Coxswain Jones and his crew too highly. Without their prompt action we should almost certainly have lost our lives.'
- For this service the bronze medal for gallantry was awarded to Coxswain Evan D. Jones. Medal service certificates presented to Acting Second Coxswain John H. Stockford, Motor Mechanic Dewi Wyn Davies, Assistant Mechanic Evan E. K. Griffith, Honorary Medical Adviser & Crew Member Dr Robert A. Haworth and Crew Members John Hopcroft and Peter H.

Coxswain Evan David Jones (Evan Davy) 1967-1979

Evan David Jones (Evan Davy) was born in Barmouth in 1921. Son of a boatman, he grew up on the quay where he helped his father on the ferry and on trips up the Mawddach estuary. At the beginning of World War Two, Evan volunteered as a regular in the Royal Navy. In December 1941 his ship, the HMS Repulse, was bombed and torpedoed by the Japanese, off the east coast of Malaya. Evan was captured by the Japanese and interned as a Prisoner of War remaining in captivity until he was released on 23 September 1945. On returning to Barmouth after the war, Evan found work as a postman and painter, and joined the crew of the lifeboat in 1947. In 1963 Evan served as second coxswain to 'Rhys Davy', becoming coxswain himself in 1967, a position he held until 1979. Evan was appointed Harbour Master in the 1970s and was a very popular and respected member of the harbour community. Evan was awarded the RNLI's bronze medal for his 'outstanding skill and courage' in the rescue of the Boy Nick in November 1978.

8.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

The project took approximately 2 working days with 1 day of that time spent on on-line research.

Having read the report, sufficient information has been collated to compile a comprehensive history of the MFV Boy Nick.

The most detailed report on the MFV Boy Nick was found in an RNLI Magazine which described the rescue of the 2 crew members.

Initially it was thought that the MFV Boy Nick had sunk but a photo of a fishing/potter boat with the same name dated 1988 at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/abermaw/> suggested that the MFV Boy Nick had been refloated. A check with Mr Hugh Griffith Roberts the owner of the photo confirmed the photo was of the MFV Boy Nick involved in the 1978 rescue.

As stated earlier very little was found on the internet for the MFV Boy Nick but a number of interesting sites with regards to The Chieftain lifeboat were found. These have been included in the Section 9.1.

Again it is important to state the endless tireless and voluntary work that the R.N.L.I conducts to keep people safe at sea and on the coastline of Great Britain.

9.0 References

9.1 Online WebPages

The following websites and pages have been used in the compilation of this report:

<http://www.barmouthlifeboat.co.uk/History%20page.htm>

<http://www.barmouthlifeboat.co.uk/History%20page%204.htm>

www.barsailinst.org.uk

http://www.barsailinst.org.uk/webdocs/I25_06_2019.pdf

https://www.bfdc.co.uk/1978/souvenir_covers/barmouth_lifeboat_station.html

<https://boats-from.co.uk/not-specified/former-rnli-barmouth-lifeboat-chieftain-liverpool-class-restored-330397>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/abermaw/>

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

<https://lifeboatmagazinearchive.rnli.org/volume/46/467/mfv-boy-nick?searchterm=M.F.V.+Boy+Nick&page=1>

<https://www.lifeboatsonline.com/RNLILiverpool.html>

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

<https://sites.google.com/site/ukboatsgycouk/beaumaris-registered-boats>

https://web.facebook.com/whitstablevintagelifeboattrips/?_rdc=1&_rdr

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liverpool-class_lifeboat

<https://www.wrecksite.eu/wreck.aspx?169325>

<https://www.macduffshipdesign.com/ship-design/8-00m-potter/>

9.2 Personal Correspondences

I would like to thank Mr Ian Cundy for supplying the initial information and other information with regards to the research project.

I would like to thank Mrs Janet Griffiths (Hon Secretary), Mr Ian Haynes, Mrs Meriel Haynes, Mr Trevor Roberts and the Barmouth Sailors Institute for allowing parts of their historical report to be used in this research.

I would like to thank Mr Hugh Griffith Roberts of Barmouth (www.flickr.com/photos/abermaw/) for allowing photos from his site to be used in this research.

9.3 Publications

Barmouth Sailors' Institute – Newsletter Issue Twenty Five (June 2019)

Appendices:

Appendix A: The Chieftain, 1978

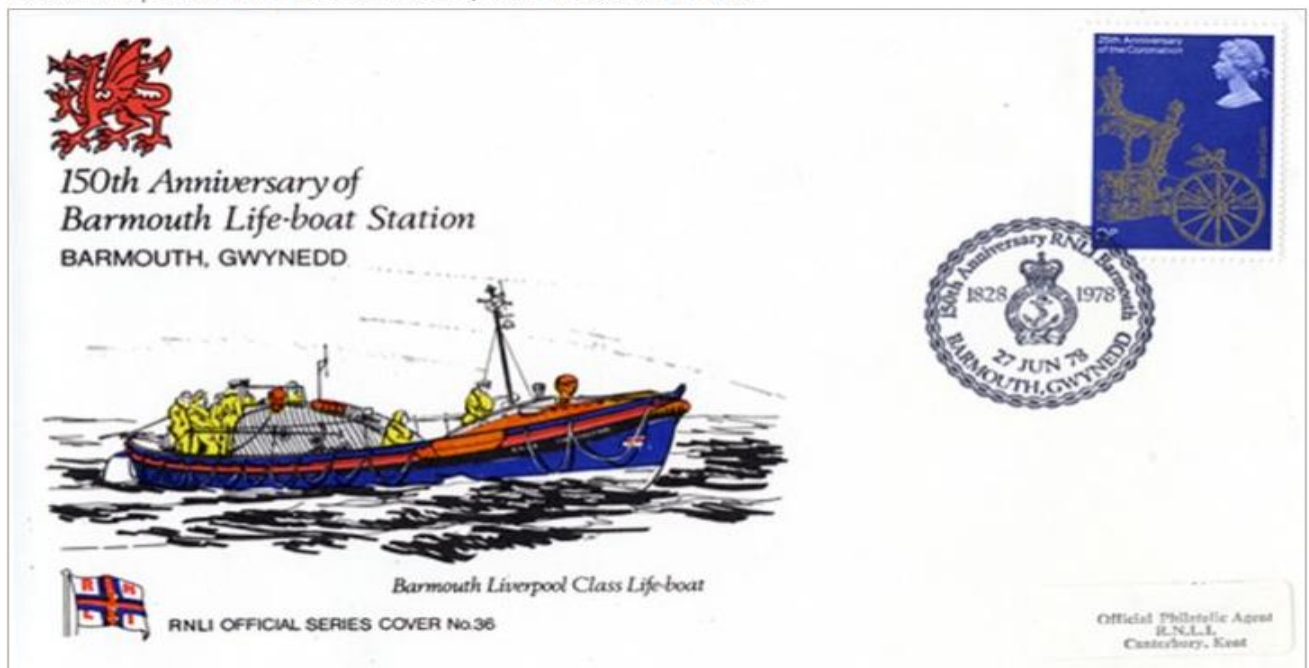


Appendix B: 150th Anniversary of Barmouth Life-boat Station, 1978

Barmouth Liverpool Class Lifeboat Stamps

sold out

27.06.1978 | Barmouth Lifeboat Station, Postmarked at Barmouth



Appendix C: The Chieftain at Sea



Note how low the lifeboat sits in the water

Appendix D: Newspaper Announcement of Medal Awards

Triple medal award for lifeboat hero

LIFEBOAT hero Brian Bevan (32), the coxswain of the *Hammer* boat, was presented with the RNLI gold, silver and bronze medals by the Duke of Kent in London yesterday.

It is the first time a lifeboatman has been given all three medals on the same occasion and the first award of the Gold medal — the "lifeboatmen's VC" — for 13 years.

Bevan has been a lifeboatman for 11 years ... but has never learned to swim. "Our jobs are pretty quiet and would fall out of my hands", he said.

He won his gold medal for a rescue during a fierce North Sea gale in February when winds reached Force 10 and there were 25ft waves.

He brought his lifeboat alongside a sinking freighter 20 times before the crew of four could be rescued. As he tried to take off the captain, the freighter rose 20ft above the lifeboat and began to crash down, threatening the crew, but Brian managed to pull clear by a few inches.

* Aberdeen harbour boatage charges are to be increased by 12% from June 1, Aberdeen Harbour Board have announced.

The captain disappeared under the waves, but by diving the lifeboat again, Brian was able to save ten minutes before the freighter sank.

Other crew members who are full-time and live in a specially built village at Spurn Point — Michael Hurry, Peter Jordan, Sydney Ralston, brothers Harry and Ronald Bapers and Derek Doherty and his son Dennis — were awarded the bronze medal.

Bevan said it had certainly been the worst conditions for rescue he had known. But he had not felt afraid — he was too busy.

The night after the gold medal rescue the *Hammer* boat spent 10 hours escorting a freighter to safety, a mission which earned Brian the bronze medal. The silver medal was won in December, 1978, for the rescue of six crew from a Dutch coaster.

Also honoured at the Royal Festival Hall ceremony was Coxswain John Peth, of 31.

Guernsey Peter Fort, Guernsey, who was presented with the third bar to his bronze medal. He won the award for a search for survivors from a Greek freighter in January.

Guernsey Evan Jones of **Guernsey** Wales, won a bronze medal for rescuing the crew of two from a fishing boat.

The last two women **Guernsey** helpers in Britain were awarded gold badges. Mrs Doris Turt and Mrs Joan Bates helped launch the **Guernsey** until early this year when the launching method changed.

BACK TO NORMAL

Guernsey production is back to normal despite the huge cost of building them, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's chairman reported yesterday.

Mr Owen Ralph Parrott said the RNLI's annual meeting in London that 11 new lifeboats were being built compared with five at the time last year. This followed a pause in the programme for some years ago by inflation.

Lives saved by the service in 1978 totalled 689 — 394 by offshore vessels and 295 by inshore craft.

* The *Station Spindrift*, the biggest pilot boarding vessel in European waters, is on her way from the Channel Islands where she was completed to the Sullom Voe oil terminal in Shetland. The 65 ft vessel is the product of a recently-formed consortium of West of Scotland firms, although she was completed by the Guernsey Boatbuilding and Engineering Co.