



Welsh Wreck Web Research Project (North Cardigan Bay)

On-line research into the wreck of the
paddle-steamer:

‘MONK’



The vast expanse of sandbanks at Caernarfon Bar, showing the wreck of the
‘Grampian Castle’ in the distance.

The wreck of the paddle-steamer 'Monk', stranded and wrecked on the North Bank of Caernarfon Bar at the southern approaches to the Menai Strait.

Report Title: *Welsh Wreck Web Research Project (North Cardigan Bay)*

Note that the 'Monk' was wrecked in Caernarfon Bay, not Cardigan Bay.

On-line and practical research into the wreck of the paddle-steamer:

MONK

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1.0 Abstract

The Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit (MADU) currently has a database of 453 shipwrecks in the north end of Cardigan Bay in north west Wales. These wrecks date from 1590 to 1993 and very few have been investigated in any depth!

The author of this report is an amateur diver who has visited many of the shipwrecks around the Welsh coast between Barmouth and the Dee Estuary. He wrote and published 'The Essential Underwater Guide to North Wales, Volumes One and Two', and co-wrote 'Life and Death on the Royal Charter'.

He is also the licensee of the submarine 'Resurgam', a historic vessel that lies on the seabed off Rhyl after being lost in 1880.

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2.2 Contributors

Chris Holden; Richard Bufton; members of Chester Sub-Aqua Club.

2.3 Abbreviations used in this report:

MADU Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit

NAS Nautical Archaeology Society

Shipwreck Index of the British Isles. Larne. Volume 5

CPH Chris Holden

3.0 Introduction

The author became aware of this wreck while reading a book entitled ‘*MEMORIES OF SIR LLEWELLYN TURNER*’, the Welsh Politician, mayor of Caernarfon and founder of the Royal Welsh Yacht Club who took an active interest in the ships that plied their trade around the Menai Strait.

The discovery of a grave in Aberdaron churchyard holding the body of one of those lost in the disaster led to further research in the archives and newspapers.

The rocky mound that appears above water on the North Bank of Caernarfon Bar only on a very low spring-tide, may or may not be the ballast-mound of the ‘Monk’. ***It cannot be confirmed that this mound is the wreck of the ‘Monk’, so the names and stories of other vessels that were also lost here are given in this report.***

Note that the spelling of the town of Caernarfon varies in the early newspapers, so it may appear as ‘Carnarvon’ or ‘Caernarvon’.

Likewise Porth Dinllaen may appear as ‘Porthdinllaen’, ‘Portinllaen’, ‘Portynllaen’ etc. Wherever possible, I have used the spellings in use at the time of publication.

MEMORIES OF SIR LLEWELLYN TURNER SHIPWRECKS AND LIFE-BOAT EXPERIENCES.

THE “MONK” STEAMER.

The melancholy wreck of this craft has often stirred a curious, and to me, most interesting problem. She used to carry pigs from Porthdinllaen to Liverpool, and one fine day I was on that disgraceful excrescence, called the Victoria pier, at Carnarvon, which was answerable for so much injury to the Menai Straits, and the outer end of which I cut off. Standing above the vessel’s deck, I asked the master when he would be returning, being half-inclined to go with her, but reflecting that a pig-vessel would not be a pleasant craft, and not knowing what sort of night quarters there would be at Porthdinllaen, I decided not to go. When the Monk started on her return voyage with her decks covered with pigs, it was blowing hard from the southward. She had no pilot, but trusted to the knowledge derived from former passages. Had she hugged the bank, S.E., close to the red buoy, the chances were that she would have got in, but keeping too far to leeward, and not having great horse-power, she could not steam to windward, and went to pieces on the north bank under her lee. Now my feeling was this; knowing the bar as I most thoroughly did, had I been in her, I would under the circumstances have strongly urged keeping to windward, as close to the red buoy as possible, as I often did before, and after, in sailing-craft; but there was the chance that the captain might have been a positive fellow like the master of Commodore Littledale’s yacht mentioned at a later page, and the engines might not have proved sufficiently powerful to carry her in even with the windward vantage, although I believed they would; anyhow, the chances, I should say, would have been enormously in her favour had she kept sufficiently to windward, and I have often wondered whether if I had gone and returned on board of her I should have saved her, or been drowned with the rest of the crew. I have forgotten what the number was of the crew who were drowned, but if my memory serves me properly they all perished, and the mortality of pigs was enormous. Pig was plentiful all about the shore, inside and outside of the Straits.



4.0 Background

During 2005, Richard Bufton, one of the author's diving-buddies, was taking photos from a light-aircraft over the sandbanks around Caernarfon Bar when he noticed a prominent feature that emerged at low-water on a spring-tide. See the photo above. Richard and the author then visited the site on foot by wading out at low water some months later. Although a small anchor was found, this was most likely to have been lost by a modern pleasure-boat rather than from a 19th Century shipwreck, and no other man-made objects were noticed. The mound in question could be ballast-stones from the 'Monk', or it could be the remains of the cargo of a vessel such as the 'William', lost in this area in 1869. See Page 40 for details of this and other vessels wrecked here.

This location is marked as 'Wreck' on the 1844 and 1895 charts, and is marked 'Site of Wreck' in Glazebrook's sailing guide of 1961.

5.0 Research Methodology

Equipment used:

The Mark One Eyeball (The possible remains of the wreck appear at low-water springs.)

One light-aircraft and pilot.

Hand-held GPS.

Richard Larne's Shipwreck Index of the British Isles. West Coast and Wales.

Gwynedd Archives Record Office, Caernarfon.

Denbighshire Records Office, Ruthin.

British Library on-line newspaper records.

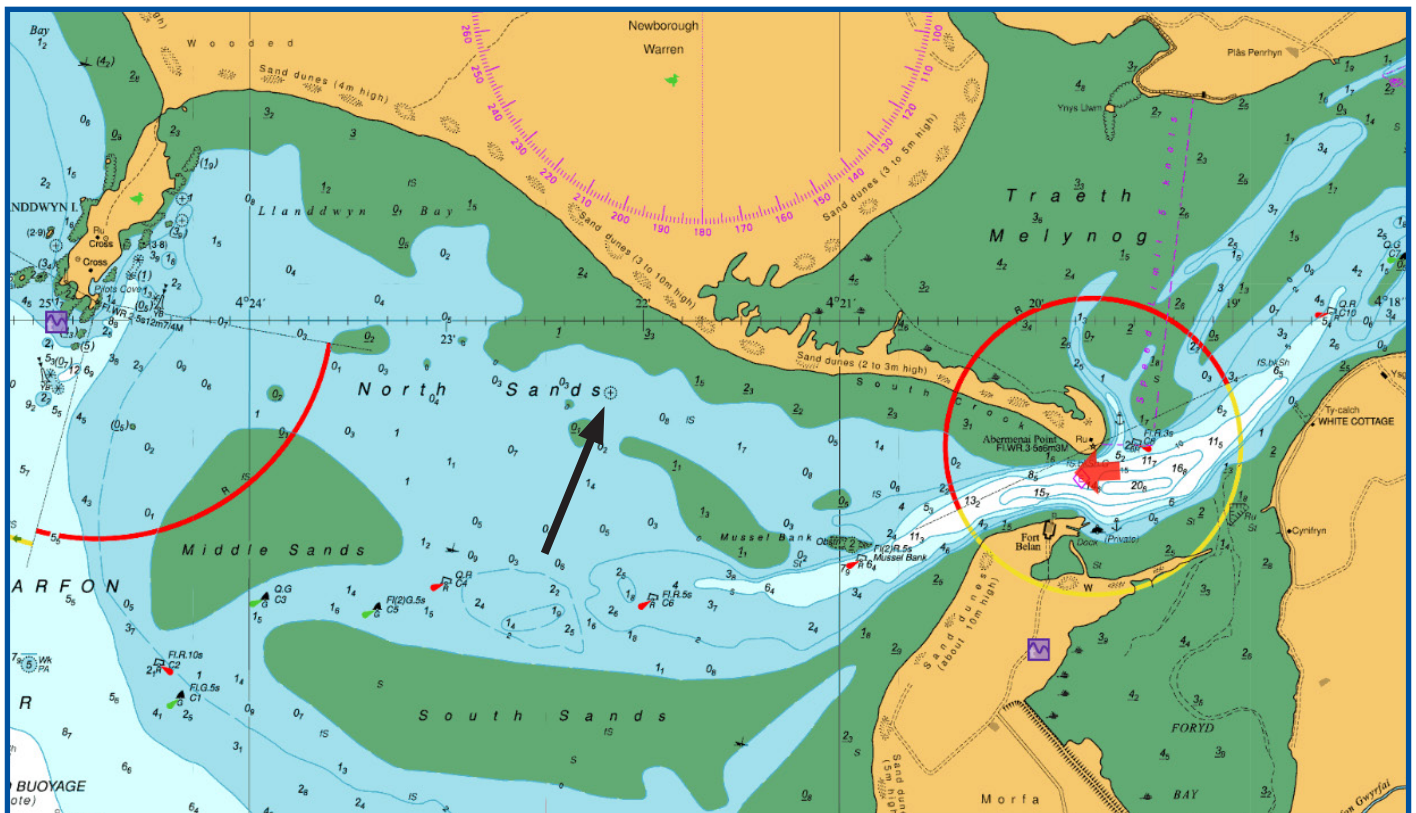
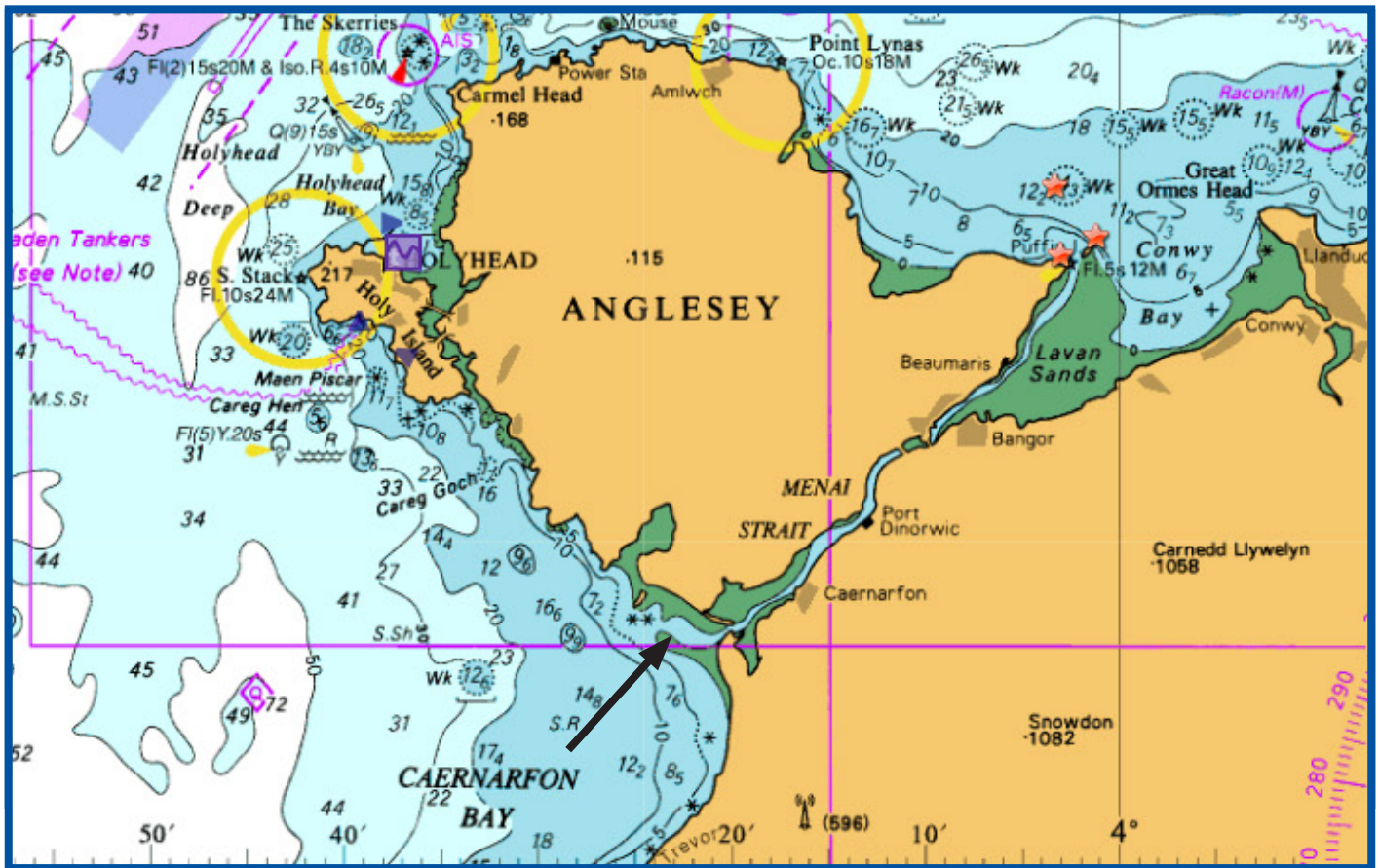
National Library of Wales on-line records.

Lloyd's List records.

'Packet to Ireland' M. Elis-Williams. Gwynedd Archives Service.

Anglesey & North Wales Pilot. Glazebrook, 1961.

Location.



6.0 Details.

Vessel Name MONK

Type: Paddle-steamer

Built in 1837.

Builder: W. Seddon, Liverpool.

Built for the Monk's Ferry Company to operate between Liverpool and Birkenhead.

Construction Materials: Wooden hull.

Weight: 70 tons New Register. 71 tons Old Register.

Engines: 45 or 50 horsepower (reports differ). Built by Messrs. Johnson & Co., Liverpool.

Draft of water - 4 feet 9 inches.

Location

A chart in Gwynedd Archives is marked with a wreck, probably that of the 'Monk', showing it on the North Sands almost exactly half way between Abermenai Point and Llanddwyn lighthouse and about the same latitude as Abermenai Point. The position taken from this chart is **53 07.500 N 004 22.000 W**

Position of a wreck taken from the 1895 Chart:

53 07.800 N 004 22.000 W

GPS position taken in 2005 by CPH of the mound of stone shown on page 10:

53 07.785 N 004 22.151 W



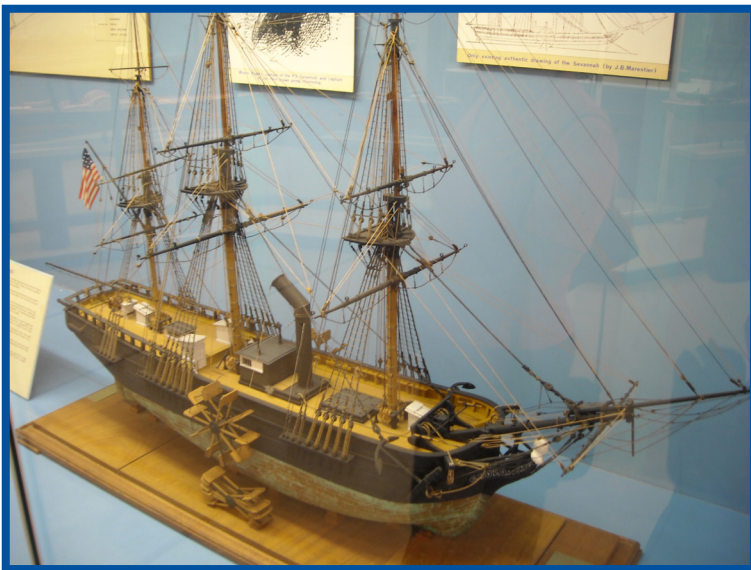
The site of the former Monk's Ferry on the Wirral side of the Mersey Estuary. The photo was taken in 2020 from Birkenhead Priory.

Overview.

The paddle-steamer 'Monk' was built in 1837 for use on the short ferry-route between Liverpool and Birkenhead, across the mouth of the River Mersey. Operated by the Monk's Ferry Company, she had a short working-life here, as a legal battle soon caused her to be sold off, after which she then moved to a less glamorous route to join the 'Dolphin', another former ferry of the Monk's Ferry Company. For the ship's new careers, their human cargoes were replaced by livestock and dairy produce.

Her new route from Porth Dinllaen on the north coast of the Lleyn Peninsula was much longer than the short, sheltered crossing of the Mersey, and she would now have to endure the open sea in Caernarfon Bay, the dangers of the sandbanks on Caernarfon Bar, the fast-flowing currents and the narrow channel of the Menai Strait, followed by the exposed passage along the North Wales coast to the shelter of the Mersey Estuary.

Although she did reach Porth Dinllaen without mishap, her return to Liverpool laden with livestock proved to be her last voyage, as she ran onto a sandbank near Caernarfon Bar and broke up with great loss of life, both human and animal. In all, six persons, one cow and six pigs survived the disaster, while twenty people, one cow and over a hundred pigs died that day.



On display at The Science Museum in London, this photo shows a model of the 'Savannah', the American paddle-steamer that in 1819 was the first vessel to cross the Atlantic Ocean partially under her own power.

to have been crucial in saving lives.

A letter published in 'The Welshman' shortly after the disaster suggests that 'Wreckers' were at work soon after the 'Monk' was lost, but little else has appeared in print on this subject, so this cannot be substantiated.

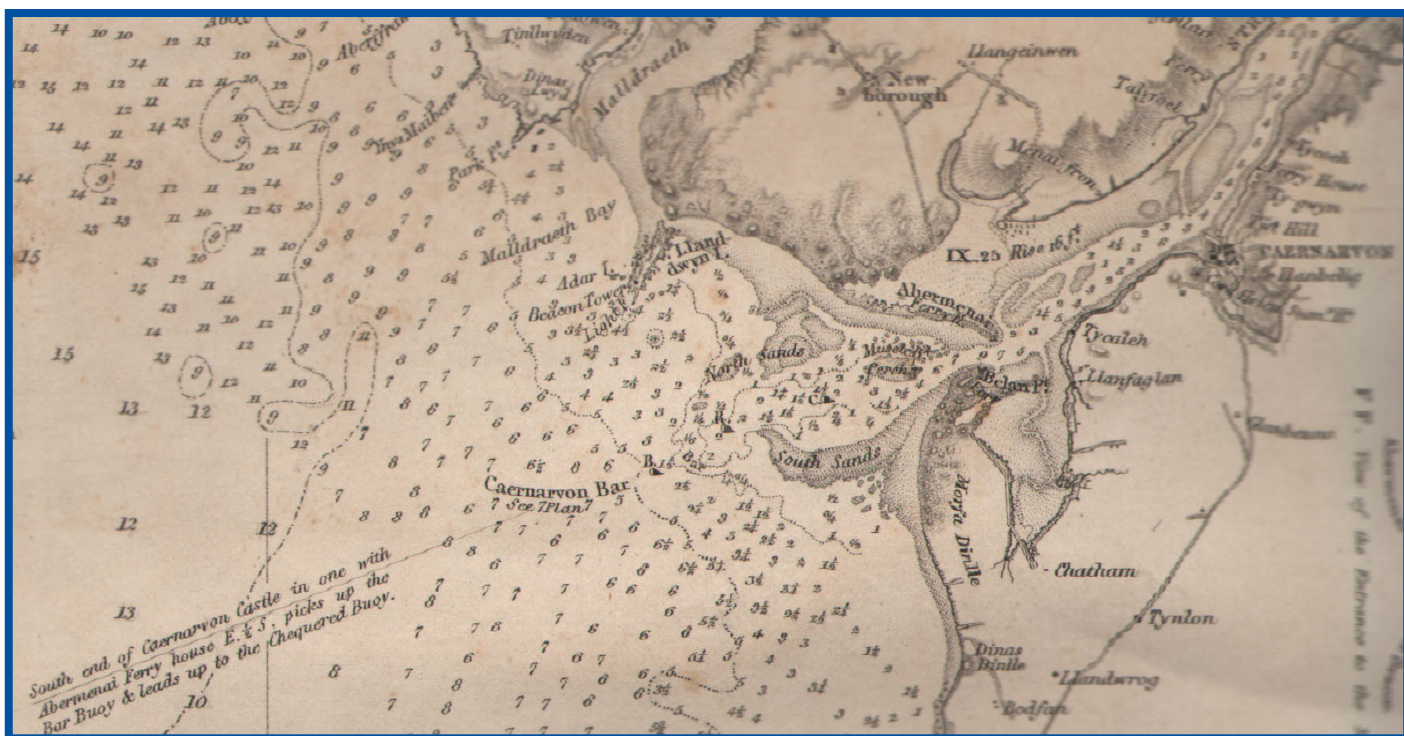
The author has investigated the area of Caernarfon Bar where the 'Monk' was lost, and has discovered a possible location for the wreck. However, other vessels have come to grief here, so the mound of stone that was examined may or may not be the last resting place of the wooden paddle-steamer 'Monk', so other possibilities are given in the text.

Only a few days after the loss of the 'Monk', her sister ship was mentioned by the Liverpool Standard and General Commercial Advertiser of Tuesday, 17th. January, 1843, with the comment "*Jan 14. The steamer, Dolphin, Jones, of Liverpool, is on shore on the beach at Portynllaen, considerably injured*", while on the same day, The Standard newspaper reported that she was "*expected to go to pieces.*"

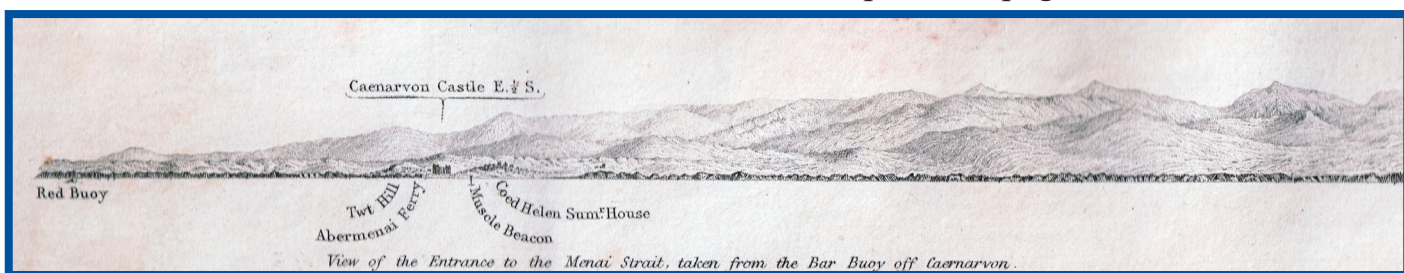
The subsequent investigation into the disaster suggests that the 'Monk' was overloaded, leaky, and was unsuitable for open-sea use. The Llanddwyn Pilots were initially criticized for having taken their boat to Caernarfon on that day, although it appears that this situation was proven



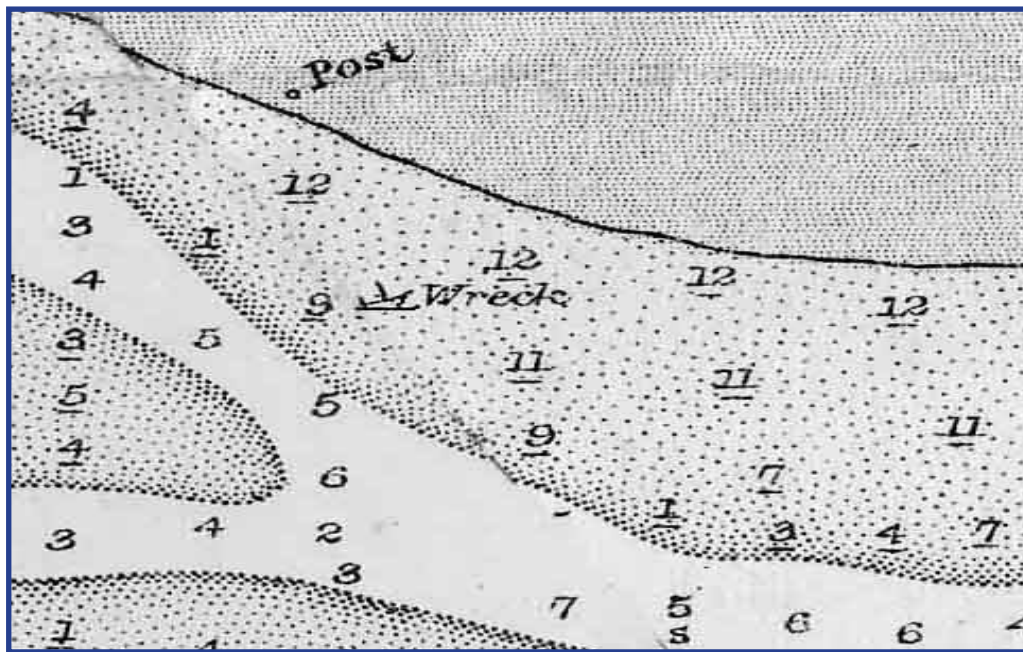
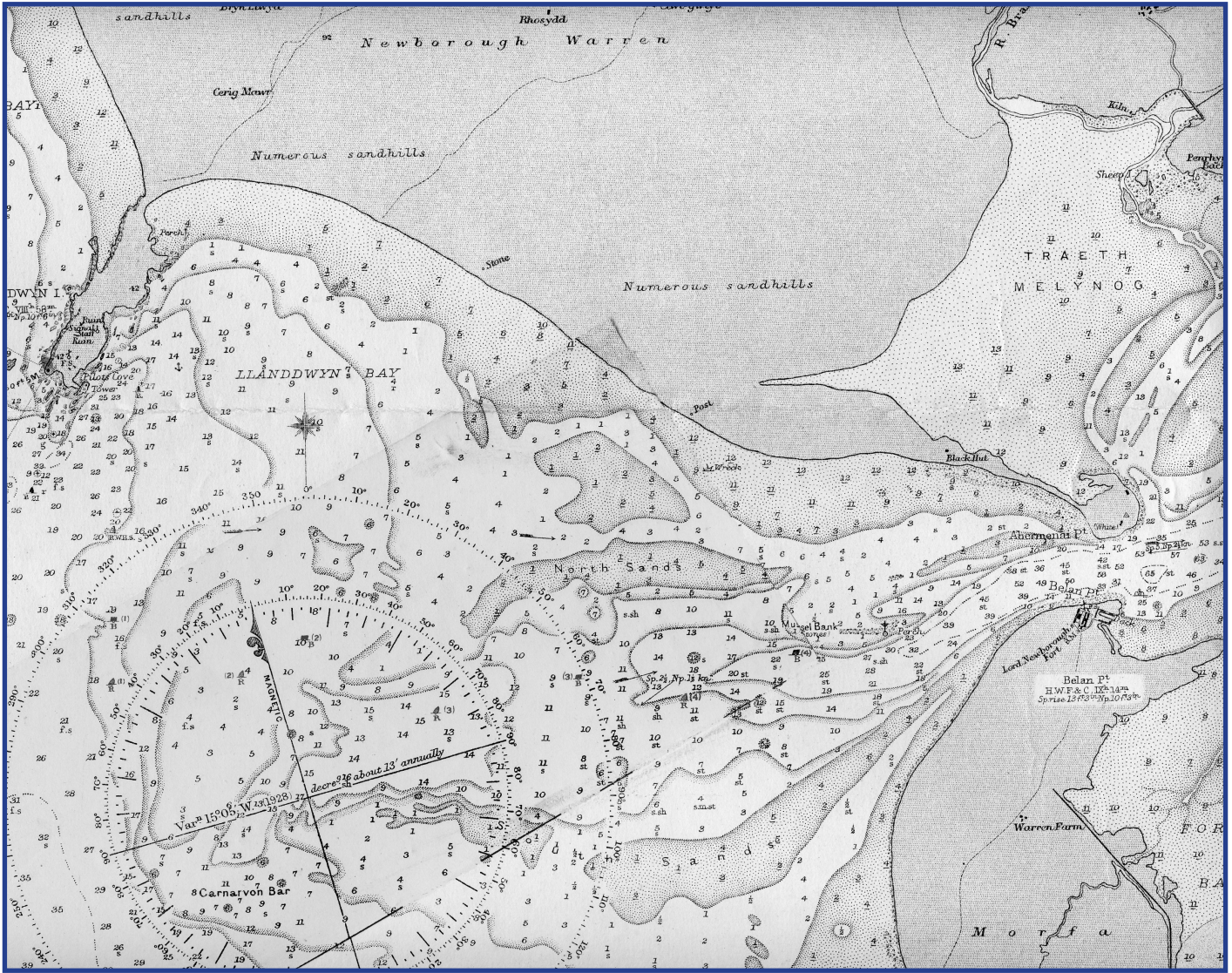
The author investigating the mound at low-water on a spring-tide during 2005.



Detail from the chart shown on the previous page.



Sailing directions into Caernarvon, as shown on the chart on the previous page.



This chart dated 1928 shows a wreck in a position about halfway between Llanddwyn Island and Abermenai. Henry Glazebrook's 'Anglesey and North Wales Coast Pilot', published in 1961, includes a chart marked here as 'Site of Wreck'.

This wreck may or may not be that of the 'Monk', but this data did lead to the investigation given in this report.

Newspaper Reports.

MONK'S FERRY.
BETWEEN WOODSIDE AND BIRKENHEAD.

THE DIRECTORS beg leave most respectfully to inform the Public, that arrangements for the permanent and efficient working of this FERRY being now completed, it is their intention to open the same, on FRIDAY, the 20th instant, on and after which day, Boats will leave the Ferry and George's Pier every Half-Hour, from Half-past Five in the Morning, until Ten in the Evening.

Three STEAM-BOATS, the **Monk**, Abbey, and Dolphin, will be constantly employed on the Ferry, the two former of which have been built expressly for the purpose, and every attention will be paid to their punctual departure, as well as to the general convenience and accommodation of the public.

Monk's Ferry, April 9, 1838.

Mr. WELSBY opened the pleadings. The declaration stated first that the plaintiff possessed an ancient ferry from Birkenhead to Liverpool, and that the defendants infringed it by carrying on that ferry; and secondly, that the defendant had infringed that ancient ferry by carrying near to it; to both counts the defendants pleaded not guilty.

LIVERPOOL, FRIDAY EVENING,
SIX O'CLOCK.

The trial of the right of the proprietors of the **Monk's** Ferry to sail packets between their station and Liverpool, came on at Chester on Tuesday, before Mr. Justice Vaughan. This litigation excited considerable interest, as the ferry is the property of a joint-stock company, consisting of a numerous body of shareholders. The question to be decided was simply this—Whether the exclusive right of ferry from that part of Cheshire was vested in the lord of the manor of Birkenhead (the adjoining station); or, whether the Monks Company had not an equal right to carry passengers across the Mersey? Mr. Temple, Queen's Counsel, was specially retained for the plaintiff, and Mr. Cresswell, Queen's Counsel, M.P., for the defendants. After a protracted and anxious investigation, which occupied the Court two days and a half, the jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff. This decision must ruinously affect the value of the property vested in the company.

ON SALE,
(And now lying in the Trafalgar Dock,)
The following well-known **Monk's** Ferry
STEAMERS:—

MONK, built by W. Seddon, Liverpool, in 1837; engine by Messrs. Johnson and Co. Liverpool, equal to 45 horse-power; 71 tons, old measurement; draft of water 4 feet 9 inches.

ABBEY, built by Messrs. Humble and Co. Liverpool, in 1838; engine equal to 50 horses, by Vernon and Co. Liverpool; 68 tons, old measurement; draft of water 4 feet 9 inches.

DOLPHIN, built at Dumbarton, in 1834; boilers made by Messrs. Johnson and Co. Liverpool; engine equal to 40 horses; 68 tons, old measurement; draft of water 4 feet 9 inches.

The above Boats are in excellent condition, and ready for immediate use.—For other particulars apply to Mr. H. F. PENNY, Royal Bank-buildings, or to

D. TONGE, Broker.

N.B. Persons having any claims against the above Company are requested to send in their accounts as above.
(One concern.)

The Monk's Ferry Company

This company operated a fleet of three vessels that plied between George's Pier in Liverpool and a landing-stage close to Birkenhead Priory. Their advert shows that the Monk and the Dolphin had been purchased specifically for the purpose, and that the ferries would leave their landing-stages every half-hour from early morning until late evening. It appears to have been very successful, but a legal battle began with the operators of the Woodside Ferry, which ran along an almost-parallel route.

The legal battle of August, 1839 featured prominently in the local and London newspapers, and centred on whether or not the Monk's Ferry Company had a legal right to operate on that route. Evidence from the reigns of Edward III, Henry VI, Henry VIII, Charles I and Charles II was produced, so the case lasted several days, with judgement being made against the 'Monk's Ferry Company, a result which ruined the company.

Copied from Gore's Liverpool General Advertiser of Thursday, December 3rd., 1840, this advert had been running for at least the previous six months in an attempt to find a purchaser for all three of the Monk's Ferry vessels.

Note the comment in the advertisement - 'Persons having any claims against the above Company are requested to send in their account as above.' This could suggest that the Monk's Ferry Company was in financial distress, and needed to sell their assets.

The Times. Wednesday, January 11, 1843.

A STEAMER WRECKED — DREADFUL LOSS OF LIFE. 'The steamer Monk, from Portynllaen (near Carnarvon) to Liverpool, with pigs and butter, was lost during a heavy gale on Saturday night last, near the Fairway buoy, Carnarvon Bar. Four men saved themselves in their boat, two more were saved by the lifeboat, and the remaining 20 perished, owing to the heavy sea washing over them. The latter two men were saved by the exertions of Captain Jones, of the smack Diligence, who, on seeing the signal lights of distress, immediately obtained a horse, and galloped several miles to the lifeboat station, mustered a crew, and was alongside the wreck in a very short time. The sea was running very high, and it was only by great exertion that the above two were saved. The Monk was a small steam-vessel, and but a short time on the Carnarvon and Liverpool station.

ANOTHER ACCOUNT. The steamer Monk, with engines of 50-horse power, Hughes, master, sailed on Saturday morning last from Portynllaen, having on board 140 pigs and a considerable quantity of butter (said to be worth £600), the property of persons residing in that neighbourhood. She was bound for Liverpool, and passed the black and red buoys on Carnarvon Bar about 6 o'clock p.m., when she appears to have missed the course, and struck on the North Bank in about three minutes afterwards. The crew consisted of eight men, and there were at least 18 persons more on board, the owners of the cargo. Six only from the whole have survived the catastrophe.

Hugh Jones, the engineer, is the only one belonging to the vessel who is saved. The survivor and three others, soon after she struck, launched the punt, which could carry no more than six men, and reached a bank, along which, for a considerable distance, they had to drag the boat and cross two other channels before they reached the main land.

They informed the Llanddwyn life-boatman of the accident, who went towards the wreck about 8 o'clock; but after two hours' fruitless exertions they could not reach the steamer, and was forced to return, in consequence of the be heavy swell then running over the bar. It was a trying thing for the survivors, though now aware of their own safety, to reflect upon the scene of misery they had recently left, which is represented as of a most heart-rending description. Many in despair and fear had lost all control over themselves, others were engaged in fervent prayer, and all seemed too timid or overawed to avail themselves of the example of the engineer and his party to launch a more powerful boat on board, by means of which a great number, if not the whole, might have been saved. The captain declared from the first that he would not leave the ship while a plank stuck together.

About 11 o'clock p.m. the vessel was breaking up, at which time the unfortunate sufferers on board had crowded into the rigging, from which one after another was seen to drop off as nature became exhausted. Fifteen unhappy beings who clung to the weather-shrouds were washed off at one fell swoop.

On Sunday morning, the shores of the Menai were strewn with carcasses of pigs and masses of butter; the owner of the latter was saved with another person by the lifeboat, after enduring the most trying hardship all the night of Saturday. The corpse of Captain Hughes has been washed ashore at Belan. None of the others have as yet been found.

CARNARVON, Jan. 8. — We are sorry to state the Monk (steamer), Hughes, with pigs, butter &c., from Portynllaen to Liverpool, struck on the North Bank of Carnarvon Bar, about 6 p.m. yesterday, when the engine became immediately disabled. She soon stuck fast on the sands, it being then within an hour of low water. The master being in hopes she would float

off with the flood tide, endeavoured to pacify the passengers to await the event, but made signals to the lifeboat station, by exhibiting lights and burning a tar barrel, in hopes they would come off.

The lifeboat, however, which is directed to attend the first Saturday in each month at Carnarvon, had been here that day, and, being unable to return to her proper station, had been unfortunately left in a position where she proved to be unavailable in this case, as when she made the attempt against a strong tide and head wind, she found it impossible to reach the vessel; they were therefore left in the most pitiable and melancholy condition, without hopes of obtaining any assistance, and without the knowledge of the extent of their suffering or danger, and not anticipating the dreadful catastrophe that followed!

Daybreak, however, exhibited shattered fragments of the broken vessel and portions of her cargo of pigs and butter strewed about the coast, with the dreadful certainty that at least 22 individuals had perished, four only having saved themselves in a small punt after much danger and exertion, having been once capsized on approaching the bank, but fortunately securing the boat, they hauled her on the bank, and launched her a considerable distance over it to get into the channel between it and the main, which they were enabled to reach by the use of the bottom boards, having lost the oars when she capsized. We have just this moment also learned that in addition to the above, two others were taken off part of the wreck about 9 a.m. this day, by the Llanddwyn life-boat. The body of the master is the only one yet found. This was the first trip of the vessel on this coast, and it is feared that no one sufficiently acquainted with the bar was on board of her.

The following is a list of the persons saved—viz. Mr. Owen Williams, Gefalygam, Thomas Davies, Portynllaen; Shyli Jones, engineer: and Thomas Jones, Caerdur, by the ship's boat: Griffith Jones Ellis and William Owen Bodlas by the lifeboat.

Liverpool Mercury. January 13, 1843.

Wreck of a Steamer and Loss of Life—As one of the calamities connected with the late heavy gales, we have this week to announce the wreck of the steamer Monk, with the loss of about twenty lives. The vessel, which formerly plied on our river, between George's pier and the Monk Ferry, had recently been purchased for the Welsh trade, and, it is stated, was then on her first trip. She had on board from twenty to thirty passengers, one hundred and forty pigs, besides butter and other cargo. It is stated that a considerable number of the unfortunate persons on board perished (some of them, it is said, in the hold) from exposure to the weather and the waves. The greater part, it is added, were the owners of the pigs, butter, &c, which they had left their homes to dispose of in this market. The intelligence reached this port on Monday last, when the following announcement was posted at the Exchange-rooms: "The Monk (steamer,) from Portynllaen for this port, with pigs and butter, was lost during a heavy gale on Saturday night, near the Fairway Buoy, Carnarvon Bar. Four men saved themselves in their (the vessel's) boat; two men were saved by the life-boat; and the remaining twenty persons who were on board perished, owing to the heavy sea washing over them. The two men alluded to were saved by the exertions of Captain Jones, of the smack Diligence, who, on seeing the signal-lights of distress in the steamer, immediately obtained a horse, and galloped several miles for the life-boat, succeeded in mustering a crew, and was alongside the wreck in a very short time. The sea was running very high, and it was only by great exertions that the two men were saved."

The following letter has also appeared on the subject:—

DEAR SIR, — I have just learned that the Skinner got aground near Beaumaris Point, and has been obliged to discharge her pigs; but notwithstanding that, she is likely to be ashore until the next spring. The Vale arrived here safe at the Bridge, and I hope the Snowdon reached Liverpool without damage or less. It has been awfully otherwise with the Monk. In steaming from Portynllaen yesterday, she struck on the North Bank at about six o'clock, it being nearly low water at the time. The engine immediately became disabled, and disaster struck. They shortly after, being apprehensive of danger, showed lights and burnt a tar barrel as signals to the Llanddwyn lifeboat, but she having been at Carnarvon yesterday, in returning they were obliged to leave her at Abermenai so that when the signals were observed, and an attempt was made to reach the vessel, it was found impossible to do so against a strong flood-tide and head-wind, and the melancholy consequence is, that the vessel going to pieces, twenty-two or twenty-four have perished, and only six were saved. The pigs, cows, butter, and wreck are strewn about the Straits.

Four of the persons saved got into a small boat, about two hours before she struck, and although they were once capsized, eventually got safe on shore. Two others were saved this morning on part of the wreck, by the lifeboat. The body of Captain Hughes is, as yet, the only one found. He jumped overboard to endeavour to swim on shore, although the lifeboat was seen, and was overpowered, after getting into shallow water scarcely sufficient to cover him, and was, at the time, on his hands and knees, most probably in a state of insensibility. I believe he had no person on board acquainted with the bar.

Perhaps you will have inquiries about the circumstance.

I give you the names of those saved.

PER SHIP'S BOAT.

Mr. Owen Williams, Gafail y Garn, who is now with me; Thomas Davies, Porthdinllaen, father to little Tom Vale; Hugh Jones, engineer. Thomas Jones, Calrdur.

PER LIFEBOAT. Griffith Jones Ellis, driver for Mr. O. Williams. William Owen, Bodlas. Among those drowned is a son of Mr. James, the officer of Porthdinllaen, and Mr. Matthew James, master of a large vessel belonging to Liverpool.

I am, dear Sir, yours truly, N. PAYNTER.

The following is another account of the melancholy circumstance:— The steamer Monk, with engines of 50-horsepower, Hughes, master, sailed on Saturday evening last from Porthdinllaen, having on board 140 pigs, and a considerable quantity of butter, (said to be worth about £600) the property of persons residing in that neighbourhood. She was bound for Liverpool, and passed the black and red buoys on Carnarvon Bar about 5 pm., when she appears to have missed the course, and struck on the North Bank in about 30 minutes afterwards. The crew consisted of 8 men, and there were at least 18 persons more on board, the owners of the cargo. Six only from the whole have survived the catastrophe. Hugh Jones, the engineer, is the only one belonging to the vessel who is saved. The survivor and three others soon after she struck, launched the punt, which could carry no more than six men, and reached a bank, along which for a considerable distance they had to drag the boat, and crossed two other channels before they reached the main land. They informed the Llanddwyn life-boat-men of the accident, who went off towards the wreck about eight o'clock, but after two hours' fruitless exertions they could not reach the steamer and were forced to return in consequence of the tremendous swell then running over the bar. It was a trying thing for the

survivors, though now aware of their safety, to reflect upon the scene of misery they had recently left, which is represented as of a most heart-rending description. Many in despair and fear had lost all control over themselves, others were engaged in fervent prayer, and all seemed too timid or overawed to avail themselves of the example of the engineer and his party, to launch a more powerful boat on board, by means of which a greater number if not the whole might have been saved. The Captain declared from the first that he would not leave the ship while a plank stuck together. About eleven o'clock p.m., the vessel was breaking up, at which time the unfortunate sufferers on board had crowded into the rigging, from which one after another they were seen to drop off as nature became exhausted and benumbed from the cold. Fifteen unhappy beings who clung to the weather shrouds were washed off at "one fell swoop"!!

Carnarvon & Denbigh Herald. Price 5d. Saturday, January 14th 1843

Awful Shipwreck with loss of more than Twenty Lives.

A truly awful and distressing wreck took place on the evening of Saturday last on Carnarvon Bar, of the particulars of which we have, at considerable pains, endeavoured to obtain a faithful and accurate report. The 'Monk', steamer, of Liverpool, Hughes master, left Porthdynllaen about half-past two on the afternoon of Saturday for Liverpool, with a cargo of about one hundred and forty pigs, two cows, and four hundred pounds worth of butter. She had on board, as correctly as can be ascertained, seventeen passengers and a crew consisting of nine persons including Captain Hughes. It appears from several circumstances that the vessel could not have been in a state of perfectly seaworthy. Indeed, the men were employed at the pumps from her first departure from Porthdynllaen until she struck (a very unusual occurrence) and it was observed that, on approaching the Black Buoy on the bar, a sea passed clean over her stern in such a way as to induce a belief that she was likely to become unmanageable, although there was no immediate apprehension of danger. The vessel had passed the Red Buoy about half-past 5 o'clock pm, and then first struck on the North Bank. This probably arose from the thick darkness that was coming on, and from the steersman keeping too far to the northward in his course; circumstances which might have existed without there being adequate grounds to charge either the master or the steersman with blame. There is a rumour that the rudder-chain broke before the vessel struck, but of the truth of this we have no direct allegations or accounts that can be relied on. The vessel was off and on the bank several times before she sustained any very material injury; but her engines becoming disabled, it soon became too evident that she could not weather the storm. The terror and confusion which now prevailed must have been most appalling. With their imminent peril thus fearfully revealed, the stoutest hearts must have quailed. The survivors, however, are not able to express their deep sense of danger; and it is not our wish to adorn a tale of truth with the habiliments of fiction. Hope springs eternal in the human breast, and the anticipation of succour from the land, there being a lifeboat stationed at Llanddwyn, was not likely to be lost sight of.

Accordingly, tar-barrels were set on fire, the poor mariners and passengers trusting that the light would be a signal for immediate assistance. Lights were also hoisted in the rigging. The light was sufficient to induce among the people on shore a belief that the vessel was actually on fire, but alas, it was all unavailing for its purpose, the lifeboat being far from its proper station. It had, strange to say, been taken over to this town (Carnarvon) in the course

of the day for 'exercise', or for market use, and could not be taken back to Llanddwyn in the wind then blowing. It was therefore left at the above-named place, remote from its allocated sphere of beneficial utility. The circumstances will be duly commented on elsewhere. Our object is as little as possible to break the thread of our narrative by reflection or remarks. We must however pause to express our astonishment and regret at one most extraordinary fact. It being low-water about 7 o'clock, and the wreck being nearly dry and within about one hundred yards of the dry bank, it is surprising that no attempt was made (except in the instance we are about to narrate) either on the part of the crew or passengers to gain the shore. For, with the exception of small gutters which might have been easily crossed, no obstructions at that time existed. We would not willingly imagine the possibility of the people being inebriated; and would rather account for their not making the attempt by taking into due consideration the utter confusion and dismay that must have prevailed; and their natural, their clinging hope of a speedy rescue by means of the Llanddwyn Lifeboat—a hope which, false a delusive as it proved to be, would in their circumstances be a constant, an enduring and a certain prospect. Poor wretches! It is awful, it is heart-rending to reflect that, in the very crisis of their fate, they should be mocked by a delusive hope, and bereft of that sole reliance on their own unaided energy which, had it been exerted, might yet have saved them! But to resume:- Finding no help approaching them from the shore, Mr. Owen Williams, one of the survivors and chief proprietor of the cargo, persuaded three others to join him in the forlorn hope of launching a small boat, a mere punt, and risking their lives in a daring effort to gain the land. This was about nine o'clock. The vessel was then hard and fast on the bank, but had not begun to break up, and was free from any water in the cabin. Despite the entreaties of several of their friends and Captain Hughes, who said that he would remain in the vessel to the last (an assertion too sadly verified), and who seems to have been impressed with an idea that the returning tide would float her off the bank in safety, Mr. Williams took to the boat. The exertions which they made, and the sufferings they endured 'ere they reached the shore are almost beyond description. Having, with some difficulty, gained the nearest bank, they had to tow the boat into another small channel. They then lost their oars, after which they were obliged to use the bottom boards. The boat then capsized, with Mr. Williams underneath it, and it was two o'clock next morning when they reached Abermenai. 'When we reached the shore', Mr. Williams says, 'we were almost senseless, and being exhausted with fatigue were almost unable to proceed. We had three miles to walk to Abermenai, where we obtained shelter and repose.'

In the meantime, the lifeboat was attempted to be taken by first being towed, and afterwards steered to the wreck; but being so leeward of it, the effort was unavailing, and the poor creatures were reluctantly abandoned to their fate. We now return to those who remained on board, twenty-four in number. The fire was continued as long as it could be maintained, but to expect correct notions of time in the account given by the survivors of so horrible a scene would be absurd. Their situation was truly awful—and they were surrounded by wretches in the same state of agony as themselves. The heart-rending cries of so many human-beings anticipating instant and inevitable destruction must be conceived rather than described. Some calling for help, and many, it is to be hoped, in prayer, whilst a few were desperately determined to make an effort for their lives, and lashed themselves to the mast to perish there if not rescued. Sometime in the darkness of the night — but none of the survivors can say precisely when — fifteen of those poor unfortunates were washed off the paddle-box by one

tremendous sea.

‘And loud one universal shriek there rushed’
Louder than the loud ocean, like a crash,
Of echoing thunder, and then all was hushed,
Save the wild wind, and the remorseless dash,
Of billows.’

Morn came, with its despair. There were seven still on the wreck (which parted about five in the morning), but of these, only three were alive. The lifeboat was again brought into requisition, and after a considerable effort, reached the wreck at about eleven o'clock in the forenoon of last Sunday. But alas! Two only were alive. The third, Captain Hughes, half delirious from cold and exhaustion, as though distrusting the arrival of the boat, and thinking he had yet strength to gain the shore, plunged recklessly into the maddened sea, and was picked up by the lifeboat just dead. A few minutes sooner, and another witness of the catastrophe would have been spared; but it was otherwise decreed. The two survivors were taken to Abermenai, where they received warmth and food. Let our readers picture to themselves the suffering that had been endured by these men. They had been for seventeen long, weary hours in a state of anxiety, deepening through every immediate grade of anguish and of agony to the very verge of madness. Their own natural fear exacerbated by the cries and groans of their companions; their spirit crushed by that sense of desolation and of death which fell upon them when their companions no longer responded to their cries: their bodies wet, cold and famished, the keen wind whistled through their nerves; and the ‘sickness of hope deferred’ paralysing the vital instincts of the soul. What physical strength, what tenacity of life have they not exhibited. We close our own melancholy narrative with lists of the lost and the survivors, which we believe to be correct.

This ill-fated vessel was on her first trip from Liverpool, on this station to join the ‘Dolphin’. She had been for a long time on the Monk ferry in the Mersey, and was registered about 70 tons, with a single engine of fifty horsepower. Considerable expense had been lately incurred in the addition of a mast, and in general repairs. Still, the general impression is that she was scarcely seaworthy, her timbers being unsound. It is by far, too common a practice in accidents of all kinds, and particularly in those that excite so intense and general an interest as this does, to attach blame to those in command. This unkind and disingenuous practice we will endeavour to avoid. Our narrative is a mere statement of fact. We cannot, however, but record our astonishment that, at such a time of the tide (it being then full four hours of ebb) with a hard gale from the north-west, and with night approaching, it should have been deemed advisable to venture the bar.

Of the animals on board, six pigs and one of the cows managed to swim ashore. The carcasses of the remainder were strewn along with the butter, along the beach from Llanddwyn to Dinas Dinlle and down the Straits as far as Port Dinorwic. The practice of ‘wrecking’, so prevalent along the western coasts of Great Britain (of the eastern, we cannot speak knowingly) was in this instance carried on to an extent beyond description. Some of the details are too disgusting to be re-printed— it is to be regretted that the iron hand of the law is not grasping some of these desperate marauders and inhuman wretches.

The Cambrian. 14th January 1843 .**WRECK OF A STEAMER—TWENTY-TWO LIVES LOST.**

Carnarvon, Jan. 8. 1843.

We are sorry to state the Monk (steamer), Hughes, with pigs, butter, &c., from Portinllaen to Liverpool, struck on the north bank of Carnarvon Bar, about six P.M. yesterday, when the engine became immediately disabled. She soon stuck fast on the sands, it being then within an hour of low water. The master, being in hopes she would float off with the flood tide, endeavoured to pacify the passengers to await the event, but made signals to the life-boat station by exhibiting lights and burning a tar barrel, in hopes they would come off. The life-boat, however, which is directed to attend the first Saturday in each month at Carnarvon, had been here that day, and, being unable to return to her proper station, had been unfortunately left in a position where she proved to be unavailable in this case, as when she made the attempt against a strong tide and head wind, she found it impossible to reach the vessel; they were therefore left in the most pitiful and melancholy condition, without hopes of obtaining any assistance, and without the knowledge of the extent of their suffering or danger, and not anticipating the dreadful catastrophe that followed.

Daybreak, however, exhibited shattered fragments of the broken vessel and portions of her cargo of pigs and butter strewed about the coast; with the dreadful certainty that at least twenty-two individuals had perished, four only having saved themselves in a small punt, after much danger and exertion, having been once capsized on approaching the bank; but, fortunately, securing the boat, they hauled her on the bank, and launched her a considerable distance over it to get into the channel between it and the main, which they were enabled to reach by the use of the bottom boards, having lost the oars when she capsized. We have just this moment also learnt that in addition to the above, two others were taken off part of the wreck about nine A.M. this day by the Llanddwyn life-boat; the body of the master is the only one yet found. This was the first trip of the vessel on this coast, and it is feared that no one sufficiently acquainted with the bar was on board of her.

The following is a list of the persons saved, viz.:

Mr. Owen Williams, Gefalygam; Thomas Davies, Portinllaen; Hugh Jones, engineer; and Thomas Jones, Caerdur, by the ship's boat.

Griffith Jones Ellis and William Owen Bodlas, by the life-boat.

—Shipping Gazette.

North Wales Chronicle and Advertiser for the Principality. 17th January 1843

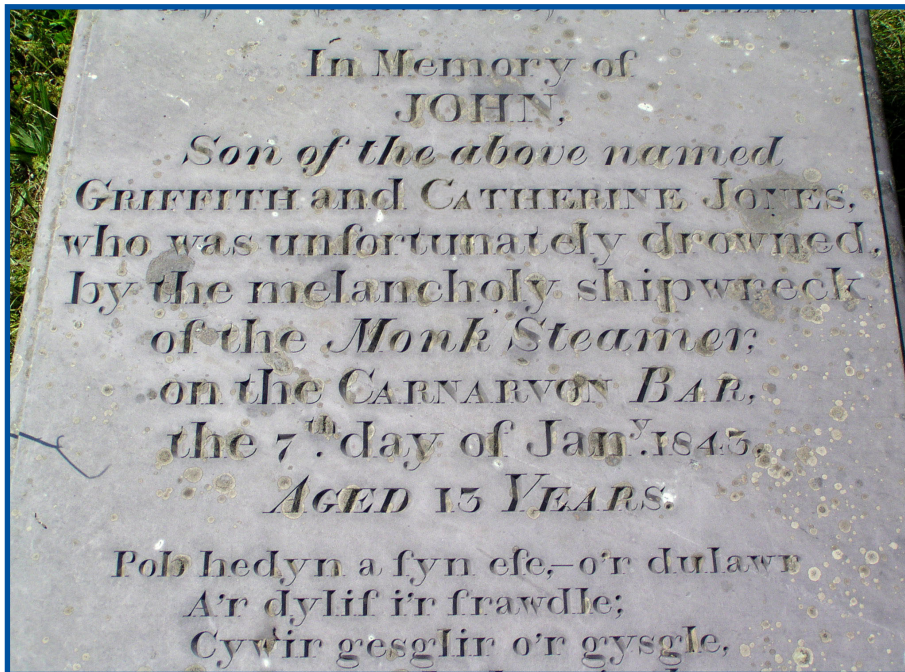
WRECK OF THE MONK. The details of the wreck of the steamer 'Monk,' with the loss of the greater portion of the crew and passengers, appeared in The Chronicle of last week. We subjoin some further particulars. It appears from several circumstances that the vessel could not have been seaworthy. Indeed the men were employed at the pump from her first departure from Porthdynllaen till she struck.

Saved in the small boat –

Mr. Owen Williams, of Birmingham, provision dealer; Hugh Jones, engineer of the vessel, the only one saved belonging to the vessel; Thomas Jones, Tai-dwr, Llaniestyn, Mate of the 'Nevin'; Thomas Davis, publican, Porthdynllaen.

Saved by the life-boat on Sunday morning -

Wm. Owen, farmer, Bodlas, Lleyn; Griffith Ellis, servant of Mr. Owen Williams.



Lost —

Captain Hughes; the crew, seven in number, excepting the engineer; Captain Matthew James, son of Mr. James, Principal Coast Officer of Customs, Porthdynllaen, (Capt. James had been visiting his relatives at Porthdynllaen, and was returning to Liverpool to join his vessel); John, son of Griffith Jones, Pen-y-caerau, Lleyrn; Thomas Jones, Ty-cerrig, Aberdaron; John Griffiths, Ty'n-llan, Bryncroes; John Williams, Pen-craig-fawr, Bryncroes; John Jones,

The gravestone of John Jones, in Aberdaron churchyard. Cefn-gwyn, Bryncroes; Thomas Jones, Bodheulog, Edern, the steersman of the vessel, and, we understand, engaged to pilot her to Carnarvon; Richd. Jones, Glan Llynau, Lleyrn; James Harrison, Llangwnadle; William Thomas, Smith, Carnarvon, who had been to Porthdynllaen to see his friends; Robert Owen, Tymawr, Bodfaen; Phillip, son of William Parry, saddler, Llaniestyn.

Heart-rending as this calamity must prove, it is rendered still more painful from the conviction which generally prevails that had the Llanddwyn life-boat been at her proper station, the loss of life, at all events, might have been prevented. A strict inquiry into the circumstances will no doubt take place.

North Wales Chronicle and Advertiser for the Principality. 17th January 1843.

On the night of the 12th instant, the Marine Barometer fell as low as 27.98, intimating a storm, and about midnight, it blew a hurricane for several hours from S.W.

North Wales Chronicle and Advertiser for the Principality. 24th January 1843

INQUEST UPON THE BODIES OF CAPTAIN HENRY HUGHES, AND SIX OTHERS.

Subjoined is a circumstantial account of the evidence taken before William Jones, Esq., coroner for the county of Anglesey, at an inquest held in Newborough, on Monday the 9th inst., on the bodies of Captain Henry Hughes, and six others, lost by the wreck of the Monk steamer, on the night of Saturday, the 7th inst., off Carnarvon Bar. Griffith Jones, of Pwll Melin, parish of Bryncroes, Carnarvonshire, pig drover, one of the survivors, proved that on Saturday, at half-past 2 o'clock, he left Porthdynllaen on board the Monk steamer, with the intention of going to Liverpool; that the steamer contained a cargo of 140 pigs, some tons of butter, 2 fat cattle, and other articles. So far as he knew, everything went on well until the steamer came near to the Black Buoy, at the entrance of the Carnarvon Bar, which was about 5 o'clock, when the chain of the wheel broke. That the captain called upon the engineer to come up to the quarter-deck, and asked him if the water was overpowering them below. He did not hear what answer the engineer gave, but he perceived several persons up to their

middle bailing out the water. Observing that the vessel was fast sinking, he went up to the captain and begged him to run her into Llanddwyn, when the latter cursed him and pushed him away. That he went to the man at the helm, and told him he had better run the steamer into Llanddwyn. Upon this, the man at the helm spoke to the captain, and advised him to do so, but he would not permit him. Very soon after this, the steamer struck on the North Bank, and it was then about half-past five p.m. That from Portdinllaen until they reached the Black Buoy, the management of the vessel was left entirely to the pilot, or person at the helm, and about the latter place, the captain took the charge upon himself. In about half an hour after the vessel struck, four persons, viz., Owen Williams, of Birmingham, Thos. Davies, and Thos. Jones, who were passengers, and the engineer, Hugh Jones, went off in the small boat, leaving himself and 21 more on board the steamer. That they put up a lantern at the mast head, and also burnt a tar barrel as signals of distress. About 12 o'clock the same night, the vessel split across the middle, when the hind part went to pieces, and all, with the exception of myself and four others, were swept away and drowned. That he and the four remaining clung to the mast on the fore part of the wreck, which held together. That they continued in this situation until about 9 o'clock on Sunday morning, when the life-boat came to our rescue; but just a little before they reached us, the captain had thrown himself into the sea, with the intention of swimming ashore, when he perished in the attempt, and two others, viz., John Williams and James Harrison, having just before ceased to live, leaving only myself and one William Williams, and we were taken into the life-boat and saved, that between 7 and 8 o'clock on Sunday morning, he observed some person upon horseback on the sands opposite the wreck, and who endeavoured to come up to us, but finding the water too deep, he returned and went off in the direction of Aber Menai; and that this person, whom he afterwards ascertained to be Captain John Jones, of Newborough, returned again to us in the life-boat. So far as I can judge, the people of the life-boat made no attempt to save them, and I believe they would not have come out when they did on Sunday morning, but for Capt. John Jones. The bodies then shown to him lying in the parish church of Newborough, he identified as being those of John Jones, of Cefngwyn, Bryncroes; Richard Lewis, of Glanllyna, Llaniestyn; William Thomas, of Carnarvon, blacksmith, Captain Henry Hughes; the steward; that of one of the firemen of the steamer; and that of one he believed to be James Harrison.

Hugh Jones, of Birkenhead, Cheshire, stated that he was engineer on board the Monk steamer on Saturday the 7th instant, on her voyage from Portdinllaen to Liverpool. That the vessel made a good deal of water whilst at Portdinllaen, but not so much but that he would have trusted himself to go in her a voyage to Liverpool, or any other place. That the steamer had about six inches of water in the hold on leaving Portdinllaen, and in about ten minutes after going to sea, she was as dry as they could get her with the pumps. That they left Portdinllaen at half past two o'clock, p.m., and in about an hour and a half after leaving there, the fireman came up and told him the water was rising. That he (Hugh Jones) immediately went below, and found that the suction pipe was choked. That he went and told the Captain, who said they must work the deck pump; upon this, he went forward and called three sailors from the fore-castle, who immediately went and started the deck pump. In about an hour and a half, the captain called him upon the poop, and asked if the water raised any higher, and he told him it did, but not very fast; That he then asked the captain how long it would take to run the vessel to Carnarvon, when he replied, it would take a long time, but did not say how long, That the water was then clear of the fire-man, but very soon after the deck pump stopped, when he

found, on enquiring of the men at the pump, that the leather was off the bucket, and that they could pump no more, That he (Hugh Jones) went again to the captain, and told him that the water was gaining, and asked if there was any place he could run her (the steamer) into, when the captain told him there was no place but Carnarvon, and that he should run her aground there. On this, he (Hugh Jones) got the men to bring the bucket into the scuttle coming down into the engine-room to bail out the water, and made room through the platform for the bucket to go through. That the men had bailed for about ten minutes, when the vessel struck. That there was a person of the name of Thos. Jones, mate of the brig George IV, (a passenger) who stood upon the larboard paddle-box, and who directed the course of the vessel, and likewise made out the buoys. That this person, just before the vessel struck, called out, "Port the helm, or else we shall be ashore", but whether this was done or not, he (Hugh Jones) could not tell. That the captain was on the poop all the while, but whether he took the charge of the vessel upon himself or not, he could not say. For anything he knew, the captain was sober. One Richard Parry, formerly a Liverpool pilot, acted as mate upon this voyage, and the person at the helm was a stranger we picked up at Portdinllaen, but whether he was a pilot or not, he could not tell. That there was on board this voyage 10 hands, viz., the captain, Richard Parry, the mate, 2 firemen, 3 seamen, the steward, the man at the helm, and himself and there were also on board 16 passengers. That the sea was very heavy on Saturday, and it blew a strong gale. That he acted as engineer on board the Monk steamer for the last three years, and that he was never out on such a rough day. That this was her first voyage from Portdinllaen, and that there was on board besides the passengers and crew, a cargo of 140 pigs. 2 fat cows, some tons of butter, and a quantity of beef and bacon. That the Monk was 70 tons new register, and was built four years last March for the Monk's Ferry. Since he had been with the Monk, he did not know of her ever having so heavy a cargo as she had on Saturday last. That it was his opinion she was overloaded, and not fit to go out in such weather, but still he thought she would have made port on that day had she been properly managed. When the vessel struck she thumped very heavily, and the engine stopped; and that no attempt was made to lighten the vessel by throwing any portion of the cargo overboard. That the vessel struck at about half-past five p.m, and he remained on board until about 7 o'clock, when the small boat was launched, and himself and three others got into it and made for shore, which they reached with some difficulty. About half an hour after the vessel struck, a tar barrel was burnt on deck as a signal, the bell was rung, and a lantern put up at the mast-head, but no assistance came. On reaching the shore, as before stated, he and the three others went to Aber Menai for the life-boat, which one of his comrades, Thomas Jones, manned, and they went out, but were unable to reach the vessel, when they were obliged to return, after being out about two hours. John Jones, of Bodiorwerth, Newborough, master mariner, states, that having observed signals of distress off Carnarvon Bar on Saturday night, he went out at break of day on Sunday morning towards the spot; and he reached the beach about 7 o'clock. That he rode on his pony into the sea as near as he could to the wreck, and on coming within about three cables length, he saw some persons on the wreck, and heard them calling out. That he returned to the beach, but finding there were no oars in the small boat lying there, he made second attempt to get near the wreck on his pony, but failed, there being too much water, and the tide coming in fast. On this, he galloped off to Aber Menai for the life-boat, and prevailed upon some of his neighbours who had come down to the beach, to assist him, along with the crew of the life-boat, in towing it to within a quarter of a mile of the wreck.

That the boat was then manned by a double crew, he (John Jones) acting a steersman; and in going towards the wreck in very shallow water, they picked up the body of the captain (Henry Hughes), who, to all appearances, had just died, and that on pulling within yards of the wreck, being unable to get any nearer in consequence of such a quantity of the fragment floating about. One of the two men threw down a rope, and by this means they both got into the life-boat and were saved. There were two others on the wreck who had just died. The Coroner having summed up, the Jury in each case returned a verdict of Accidentally Drowned, expressing their opinion that the steamer was not sufficiently seaworthy, and ought not to have been placed upon the station, and that great blame was attached to those having charge of her in leaving on the day in question.

The Welshman. 27th January 1843

THE MONK STEAMER.—The Coroner's Jury, in each case, returned a verdict of "Accidentally Drowned," expressing their opinion that the steamer was not sufficiently seaworthy, and ought not to have been placed upon the station, and that great blame attached to those having charge of her in leaving Porthdynllaen on the day in question.

North Wales Chronicle and Advertiser for the Principality. 31st January 1843

Carnarvon Harbour Trust.

At a special meeting of the Trustees of the Harbour of Carnarvon, held at their Committee Room, on TUESDAY the 24th JANUARY, 1843, for the purpose of making a strict investigation into all the circumstances connected with the conduct of the Crew of the Life-boat, stationed at Llanddwyn, on the occasion of the recent melancholy and disastrous loss of the Monk steamer, on Carnarvon Bar.

R. M. PREECE, Esq., Mayor, in the Chair.

The following resolutions were unanimously passed:

That the thanks of the meeting be presented to Captain John Jones, of Newborough, for his attendance here today, and for his satisfactory evidence as to the circumstances connected with the melancholy loss of the Monk steamer.

Moved by Wm. BULKELEY HUGHES Esq., M.P.,
and seconded by FRANK J. WALKER JONES Esq.

1st. That it appears to this meeting that it has been the usual custom for the last three months for the Crew of the Life-boat, stationed at Llanddwyn, to come to Carnarvon, on the first Saturday in the month, in the course of their practice, but that, in the instance in question, the Crew had special orders to the contrary from Mr. John Jackson, Clerk to the Trust.

2nd. That it appears from the evidence of Capt. J. Jones, that under the circumstances of darkness and danger, and the wreck being inside of the North Bank, the boat was not less favourably situated at Abermenai than it would have been at Llanddwyn, and that, had it been at the latter, the two persons saved from the wreck, would, in all probability, have been lost.

3rd. That the practice of coming to Carnarvon with the life-boat is not advisable, and ought to be discontinued, and that, under the circumstances of wind and weather, the pilots were highly culpable in coming in, but that their subsequent conduct and exertions, for upwards of four hours, in attempting to reach the wreck, were highly praiseworthy, and that there are no grounds for charging the men with drunkenness; on the contrary, it has been fully proved that they were sober.

North Wales Chronicle. January 31, 1843.

LIFEBOAT. As will be seen in our advertising columns, an investigation into the circumstances of the absence of the Lifeboat from its station on the occasion of the wreck of the "Monk" Steamer took place at Carnarvon on Tuesday last. The meeting was held in the large room in the Harbour office and was attended by near thirty of the Trustees as well as by a deputation from the "Anglesey Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck" — affording the strongest proof that the interests of humanity are not slightly estimated in this country.

At the Commencement of the meeting there was on unanimous expression of disapproval of the, to say the least, very hasty and unsupported animadversions in the Carnarvon Herald, and not a few gentle hints were given to our contemporary to be more careful for the future. At first there appeared to be very conflicting opinions as to the conduct of the Pilots, which caused the investigation to be a most searching one — but as the truth was elicited from the examination of a number of witnesses, the whole gradually converged to the opinions expressed in the resolutions advertised, and which were ultimately carried unanimously — thus affording the best proof that there was no "Cushioning" or concealing of the real truth. The most interesting part of the enquiry, and that which was most warmly investigated was the question "Had the Boat been at its station, would more people have been saved?" No pains were spared to get the best evidence and the opinions of the most experienced seamen. They all agreed that physically speaking, it was easier to get from Llanddwyn than from Abermenai, but that under the circumstances of the darkness of the night, no Boat whatever would have ventured into such a place to thread a narrow channel in the dark with a frightful surf tumbling all around. The Harbour Surveyor, Mr, Robert Roberts, one of the most gallant men that ever was in a boat, declared emphatically that under the circumstances, "no mortal man in his senses would think of such a thing", an opinion that was in the end assented to by every seaman present, though many were at first of a different opinion.

Captain Jones, of Newborough, who witnessed every part of the transaction and distinguished himself by his energy and activity in rescuing the two survivors from the wreck, gave a most lucid account of the whole and received the cordial thanks of the meeting for his conduct on that occasion, as well as for the valuable information furnished to them. He was the first person who made it out in the grey of the morning that there were any human beings still alive on the wreck, and being on horseback, he was enabled to collect sufficient assistance to tow the boat along the edge of the Bank, and thus to reach the wreck a few minutes before the flood tide would have swept off the survivors. Had the Boat been at Llanddwyn, this could not have been effected. One of the witnesses exclaimed emphatically "it was by the merciful interposition of God that the Boat happened to be at Abermenai, and was thus enabled to save those who survived."

The Pilots were however severely reprimanded for coming into Carnarvon that day, and at the same time praised for their subsequent good conduct. Arrangements we understand were made to meet for the future difficulties and emergencies suggested by the present occasion. We have been told by experienced seamen that no one unacquainted with the locality can form any idea of the terrific surf that runs on these banks during W.N.W. Gales, some affirming that they curl over at a height of not much less than thirty feet! In daylight a Boat may by great skill and coolness get out of their way, but in the darkness of night, it is next to impossible that any boat should live half an hour in it. The performance of the same boat and

crew in saving 17 persons from the ship "Mountaineer", in very nearly the same spot, and a similar Gale, in October, 1841, but in broad daylight, was generally considered by nautical men as a most skilful as well as most gallant act.

North Wales Chronicle and Advertiser for the Principality. 31st January 1843.

A new black coat, folded up in a black silk, handkerchief, was picked up during the week, by William Parry, Tywyn, Newborough, — no doubt the property of one of the unfortunate passengers on board the Monk steamer.

The Welshman. 10th February 1843

WRECKERS.

SIR,-A great deal has been said about the character of the Welsh—and the degree they have taken in the scale of civilization. Upon this point, a few lines at this time will not be out of place. During the late storm, great has been the loss of life and property, both here and elsewhere - the details are harrowing. But when perusing in the public papers the account of the wreck of the Conqueror on the French coast, the treatment of the dying sufferers and of the bodies that were washed on shore (dead or alive - who knows?) — the shameful - the wholesale - the horrid depredation of property belonging to the shipwrecked sufferers — the whole presents a scene disgraceful to human nature, whether savage or civilized. Compare this with the situation of the Spaniards wrecked on the Welsh coast at Llanon, near Aberystwyth. Every attention has been paid them, which the most ardent benevolence could suggest. Morfa-mawr was a hospitable asylum for the unfortunate castaways: and there they are at the present moment - both themselves and their property - landed and protected, and not a shilling's worth of property missing. In North Wales the recent disgraceful case of the Monk wreckers is painful to contemplate. So is that of the Mary Elizabeth, of Pwllheli, which was driven ashore at Llanddwyn, during the late storm, and that poor David Morris, the captain, the sole survivor was saved by taking refuge in the rigging, and was not rescued until about 2 o'clock on the following day. During the morning of Saturday, scores of young men from the neighbourhood, congregated along the beach, and in utter absence of all sympathy towards a fellow-being, for aught they knew, in the bitter pangs of death, amused themselves, *by playing at foot-ball*. Will not the teachers of Merioneth cry aloud in their various circles against the barbarities of the wrecking system, and its revolting adjuncts?

I claim, Sir, for South Wales, a noble superiority, not only to the North, but even to France itself, with all its civilization.

Aberystwyth. B. B.



Llanddwyn Island, viewed from the south. The 'Monk' was wrecked in a location at the far right of this photo.



The author's boat moored at Pilot's Cove, Llanddwyn Island.

Timetable (Based on the Newspaper Reports)

- ‘On Saturday, at half-past 2 o’clock, he left Portynllaen.’
- Sunset - around 4.30 p.m.
- ‘Passed the black and red buoys on Carnarvon Bar about 6 o’clock p.m., when she appears to have missed the course, and struck on the North Bank in about three minutes afterwards.’
- **OR** ‘Passed the black and red buoys on Carnarvon Bar about 5 pm., when she appears to have missed the course, and struck on the North Bank in about 30 minutes afterwards.’
- ‘Struck on the North Bank of Carnarvon Bar, about 6 p.m. yesterday, when the engine became immediately disabled. She soon stuck fast on the sands, it being then within an hour of low water.’
- ‘About half an hour after the vessel struck, a tar barrel was burnt on deck as a signal, the bell was rung, and a lantern put up at the mast-head, but no assistance came.’
- ‘It being low-water about 7 o’clock, and the wreck being nearly dry and within about one hundred yards of the dry bank.’
- ‘He remained on board until about 7 o’clock, when the small boat was launched, and himself and three others got into it and made for shore, which they reached with some difficulty.’
- ‘They informed the Llanddwyn life-boatman of the accident, who went towards the wreck about 8 o’clock; but after two hours’ fruitless exertions they could not reach the steamer, and was forced to return.’
- ‘Launching a small boat, a mere punt, and risking their lives in a daring effort to gain the land. This was about nine o’clock.’
- ‘The boat then capsized, with Mr. Williams underneath it, and it was two o’clock next morning when they reached Abermenai.’
- ‘There were seven still on the wreck (which parted about five in the morning),’
- ‘About 11 o'clock p.m. the vessel was breaking up.’
- Sunrise - around 8.30 a.m.
- ‘9 o’clock on Sunday morning when the life-boat came to their assistance, but just before it reached the vessel, the captain threw himself into the sea.’

The State of the Tide on Caernarfon Bar.

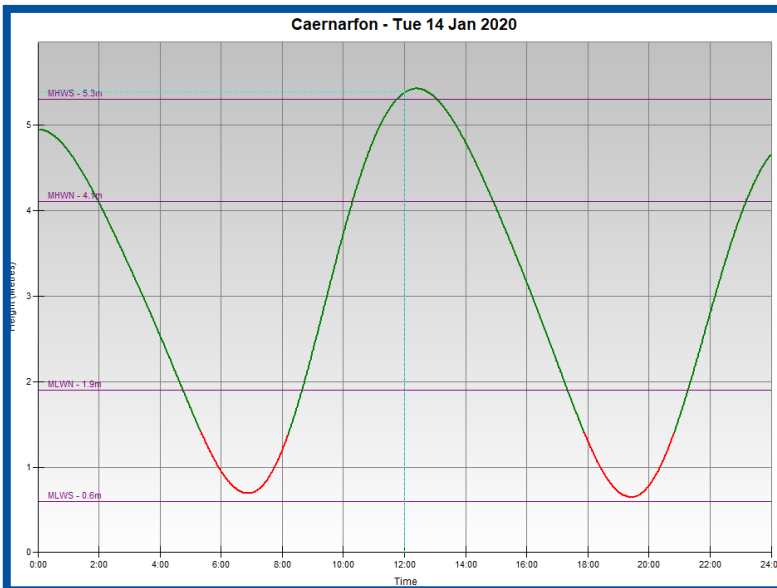
TIDE TABLE.									
HIGH WATER at BRISTOL, during the week.									
	Morning		Evening		Cumberl. Gates.		Bathurst Gates.		
	H.	M.	H.	M.	FT.	INC.	FT.	INC.	
Jan.	7	10 47	11	2	25	5	14	2	
	8	11 17	11	28	23	8	12	5	
	9	11 53	—	—	22	4	11	1	
	10	0 13	0	48	21	2	9	11	
	11	1 28	2	19	20	7	9	4	
	12	2 54	3	41	21	9	10	6	
	13	4 8	4	50	23	11	12	8	

EQUATION OF THE TIDES.—These equations, applied to the above table, will give the approximate times of HIGH WATER AT THE FOLLOWING PLACES:—

	H.	M.		H.	M.
Aberystwith.....	add	0 15	Holyhead.....	add	2 45
Carmarthen-bay..	sub.	1 5	Liverpool.....	add	4 46
Cardigan-bar....	sub.	0 15	Lundy Isle.....	sub.	1 30
Cardiff-roads....	sub.	0 55	Milford Haven...	sub.	1 30
Caernarvon.....	add	1 45	Newport, Mon....	sub.	0 45
Chepstow.....	sub.	0 13	Swansea-bar....	sub.	1 45
Fishguard-bay....	sub.	0 30	Thames' mouth..	sub.	5 45

The 'Welshman' newspaper for Friday the 6th of January 1843 published the tide-tables shown here, giving high-water at Bristol at 10.47 on the following day. They also state that high-water at Caernarfon / Carnarvon occurs one hour and forty-five minutes later to give a high-water time there of 12.32pm on Saturday the 7th of January, 1843. Low-water at Caernarfon Bar would therefore be at around 7.00 p.m., a fact confirmed by the newspaper report stating: 'It being low-water about 7 o'clock, and the wreck being nearly dry...'

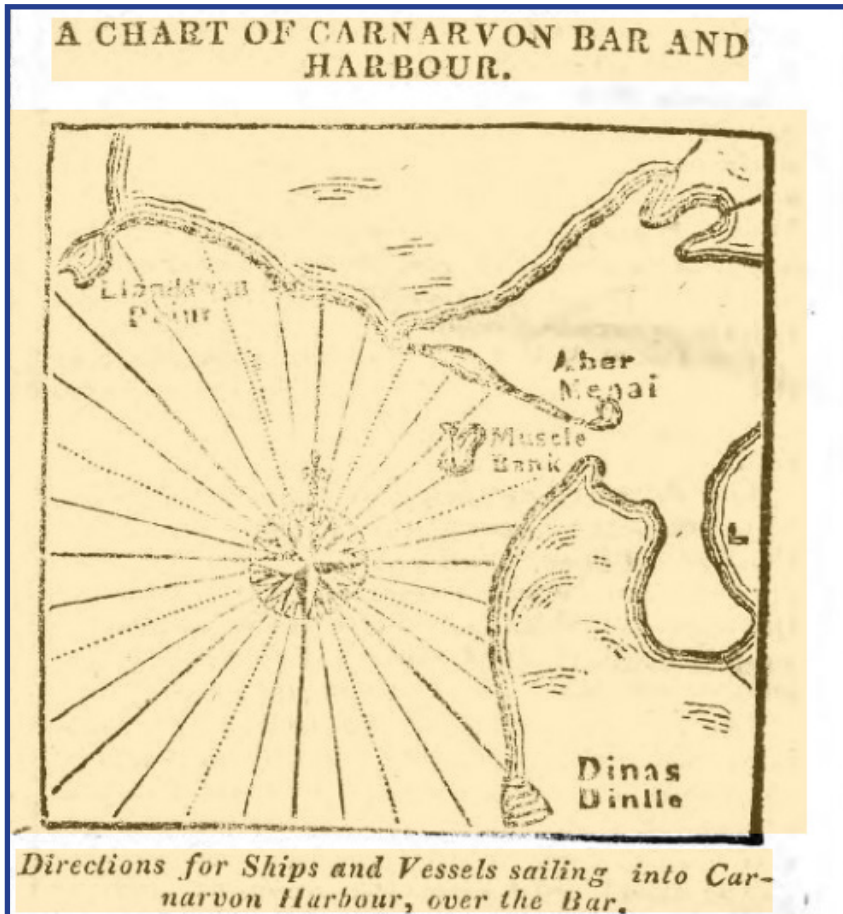
The newspaper reports also say 'That they left Portdinllaen at half past two o'clock, p.m.' and 'She was bound to Liverpool, and passed the black and red buoys on Carnarvon Bar about 5 p.m.' Elsewhere, it says that the buoys were passed at 6.00 p.m. The distance between Porth Dinllaen and Caernarfon Bar is around twelve miles, so to have covered that distance in the time reported is quite slow, probably reflecting the issues with the water slowly filling the hull to increase her draught of water and reduce her speed.



The Tidal Curve for Caernarfon with high-water at a similar time to that of Saturday, January 7th, 1843.

Sunset on the 7th of January, 1843.

Sunset at Caernarfon on the 7th of January occurs around 4.20 p.m., with what is known as 'Nautical Twilight' ending at around 5.45 p.m., so whichever time was correct in the newspaper reports, daylight was rapidly diminishing as she entered the narrow and shallow channel that led to Abermenai as low-water approached.

**North Wales Gazette.****1st December 1814.**

A CHART OF CARNARVON BAR AND HARBOUR. Directions for Ships and Vessels sailing into Carnarvon Harbour, over the Bar. In order to facilitate the navigation of this Harbour, two Buoys are placed on the Bar, the outer one is painted black, and the inner red; a Perch is also erected on the Bank, called the Muscle Bank. Llanddwyn Point lies about 2 miles distance from the black Buoy, which is moored in the entrance of the Bar, in about 15 feet water, at low water, average spring tides in a N. by E direction. Dinas Dinlle lies from three or from that to three and a half miles distance from the black Buoy, in a S. E. direction.

The black Buoy lies about one mile distance from the red Buoy, in a S. W. by S. direction. The red Buoy lies about two, or from that to two and a quarter miles distance from the Perch, in a W. by N. direction. The Perch lies near one mile distance from Abermenai, in a west direction, where ships and vessels may anchor in safety. Masters of vessels, drawing 12 feet water and upwards, should not (in a gale of wind) approach this Bar until four hours flood. All vessels coming in should leave the Perch on the larboard hand. High water at full and change, at a quarter after nine o'clock - average spring tides rise and fall on the Bar from 16 to 18 feet - neap ditto from 6 to 8 feet. Expert Pilots may always be had on making the proper signal. This Harbour has been lately considerably enlarged and improved, a great number of large vessels are built here annually - it is a most convenient place for repairing of old vessels - there is an extensive trade carried on in the exportation of slates (of the best quality) and other articles, to most parts of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and consists of convenient quays and wharfs, for the reception and safety of ships and vessels loading and unloading, or lying within the limits of this port. The Trustees of this Harbour have expended from four to five hundred pounds in blasting some of the rocks at the Swillies, to low water mark, which has rendered a most free passage for ships and vessels of large burthen, coming from the eastward to this Harbour, or sailing through the Straits of Menai. The north and south banks of this Bar are subject to shift. When they do shift or the Buoys part from their moorings, proper care will be taken to moor Buoys in the deep, as at present,



Two years after the loss of the ‘Monk’.

Morning Post. December 22, 1845.

NOTICE TO MARINERS. Port of Carnarvon.—Notice is hereby given, that on and after the 1st of January, 1846, a fixed red light will be exhibited from dark to daylight on Llanddwyn Point in Carnarvon Bay. It will be seen in clear weather about five miles to seaward, between the bearings (from Llanddwyn by compass) of N.W. by N. and S.W. by W. This light is intended solely as a leading light for the entrance to the Menai Straits by way of Carnarvon Bar, and not for channel purposes: vessels bound to the Straits are recommended not to attempt the Bar until daylight. Carnarvon. Dec 15, 1845.



The author and his diving-buddies with the signal-cannon at Pilot’s Cove, Llanddwyn Island.

OTHER VESSELS WRECKED IN JANUARY, 1843.**The Standard. January 17, 1843.**

PWLLHELI. Jan 14. — The Dove, of Cork, from Liverpool, and the smack Emerald, bound to Amlwch, are ashore in Abersoch Bay. The Margareta, for Amlwch, and the Elizabeth, of Cork, for Liverpool, and the Water Lilly, of Aberystwyth, are ashore two miles to the eastward. The Dolphin, of Liverpool, is ashore at Portynllaen, and expected to go to pieces. The Friends, of Portmadoc, is ashore at the same place, with considerable damage.

Liverpool Standard and General Commercial Advertiser. Tuesday, 17th. January, 1843.

PWLLHELI, Jan 14. The steamer, Dolphin, Jones, of Liverpool, is on shore on the beach at Portynllaen, considerably injured.

The Welshman. 20th January 1843

DREADFUL HURRICANE. The desolating storm which raged with such violent fury in the metropolis, appears to have visited almost every part, of the island and some places with fearful and calamitous severity. The most singular fact in connection with it, was the extraordinary depression of the barometer — a depression, which has not been equalled during the last 30 years. On Tuesday, further information was received of 21 vessels wrecked or stranded, in addition to those before-mentioned.

ABERYSTWYTH, JAN. 14. — About three o'clock in the morning of the 13th instant we were visited with a heavy gale of wind from nearly every point of the compass, accompanied with thunder, lightning, and heavy rain. At eight o'clock, the wind was almost calm and the rain had ceased, but the sea was in an unsettled state. About two o'clock in the afternoon, a tremendous storm commenced blowing from the West; at six, the wind veered to North West, and continued blowing in that state until three of the following morning, when it moderated considerably. The sea ran very high during the storm, and what between the roar of the sea and the howling of the tempest, it was truly awful. At eight, the storm having in some degree abated, a sloop was perceived making for the harbour from the N.N.W., carrying but a small quantity of canvass. She was boarded by a pilot and brought safe into harbour about ten o'clock, four hours after high water. She proved to be the Orion, of Aberayron, Jenkin Davis, master, from Liverpool, with a general cargo for Gloucester. The master reports that about three in the afternoon of the 13th., he was driven out of St. Tudwall's Roads with loss of three anchors, two chain cables, a stream hawser, and sundry moveables from off the deck. There were many vessels in the Roads when he was drove out. He further states that between five and six on the following morning he saw a schooner sink close to Sarn-y-bwlch, and supposes that all hands perished. At noon a vessel was perceived from Aberystwyth, lying about two miles from Pen-bwch — could not discern the build, and only one mast. A sail was discovered in the tops in which it was supposed the crew had taken refuge. About one o'clock the following morning (last Sunday), the weather having cleared up a little, a boat with five hands left for the last vessel. The boat and crew not returning in due time, their friends feeling uneasy, and a report having spread that the boat was ashore at north, men left here to search for the crew. Whilst searching, they perceived a dead body washed on shore, which proved to be that of one of the crew, John Griffiths, boatman, who has left a wife and two children to lament his untimely loss, the bodies of the remaining four are not yet found; their names are

William Mungs, shipwright, John Fisher, cabinet-maker, John Morgan, and Edward Watkins, sailors, all single men, and between 21 and 23 years of age; they also found a boat washed ashore, name inside, David Havart, Phoebe, Newport, as nearly as could be ascertained, as the name was partly erased.

A messenger arrived on the morning of the 14th from Llanrhystyd, stating that a vessel was on shore near Llanon. The vessel proves to be the brig Paquete da Bilboa, Juan Antonio de Yenchiz, master, bound from Liverpool, with a general cargo, for Cadiz and Seville. This vessel was driven ashore near Llanon, a village about eleven miles south of Aberystwyth, at one o'clock in the morning of the 14th instant. It is expected she will become a total wreck; the crew are saved and the cargo landed in a damaged state. Great praise is due to Lloyd's agent, and the gentlemen and inhabitants of the adjoining neighbourhood for their exertions in assisting the crew and saving the cargo.

January 16th; the sloop 'Sisters', Jenkins, master, arrived this morning from Liverpool with general cargo, having been obliged to put into Tudwall's Roads. The master states that there were in the Roads upwards of forty vessels during the storm, nearly all having suffered damage, some being driven out, others getting entangled and foundered, and others driven on shore.

January 16th; this morning, Pierce Evans, Esq., Collector of the Customs of this port, has kindly favoured us with the following letter received from Aberdovey, about ten miles from Aberystwyth, which describes the progress of the tremendous storm further northward. Aberdovey, (last) Monday evening.

Dear Sir,—I am sorry to acquaint you of three wrecks on this coast yesterday; the masts of one are to be seen from here, about three miles from the North; she is called the Phoebe, schooner, 123 tons, of Cardigan, all hands lost. Another schooner, about 120 tons, called Victoria, Stone, master, laden with salted hides and general cargo, all hands perished; two of the bodies were this morning found. The men and self were there all day and intend going to-morrow not knowing whether she is foreign or not; two respectable farmers have been sworn in to protect the cargo and six others to walk the beach. Another schooner from Port Madoc with slates, get aground near Llangail, crew saved except one. The fine schooner, Edwin, Barrow, master, was lost on Barmouth bar, all hands lost except one lad; there was one of the Pilot men on board who likewise perished. The boy who was saved said he saw another large vessel in the bay sink at her anchors. The Diligence, of your port, Edwards, master, was lost somewhere. I shall again let you hear when I know more about them.

I am, dear sir, yours very truly,

Pierce Evans, Esq., Collector of the Customs, Aberystwyth."

At Milford-Haven the hurricane was attended with a fall of snow, and thunder and lightning. At about day break the men stationed at the St. Ann's Light-house, close to the mouth of Haven, saw a brig go down between five and six miles from the Head Cliffs, carrying with her the unfortunate crew, who all met with a watery grave. Among other casualties in the course of the morning, the Piper, a schooner of London, from Waterford to Gloucester, drove from her anchors, and came into violent collision with another vessel, the Sydney and Jane. Both sustained very serious injury. The brig Flora, of Neath, also got into collision under similar circumstances with the Royal Oak, a sloop belonging to the same port, in consequence of which the latter broke from her moorings, and was driven upon the rocks near Castle Pile Creek, where she remains exposed to a dangerous surf. At Aberdovey, three vessels were

totally lost, and all hands perished. One is known to be the Phoebe, of Cardigan, about 120 tons burden. Numerous other disasters, with loss of life, are known to have occurred off Neath, Runcorn, Cork, Grimsby, Bude, and several other seaports but the particulars have not been received.

BARMOUTH - At Barmouth, a dreadful shipwreck happened. Early after daylight the Edwin, a brig belonging to Chester, bound to this harbour, was observed at the entrance of the river with a signal for a pilot. One went out and remained on board until the turn of the tide, when she got under weigh, but being unable to effect an entrance into the harbour, they stood out to sea. Shortly after, the wind shifted and blew a tremendous gale, which forced them to run for the beach. At five o'clock in the afternoon she struck on shore half a mile north of the bar, where she immediately hove on her beam-ends. A number of boats put out to her assistance, but owing to the boiling surf which surrounded the vessel it was impossible to reach her until midnight, when, melancholy to relate, only one of the crew was found alive out of eighteen individuals. The pilot and a seaman were found lashed to the rigging dead, the others were washed overboard. None of their bodies have yet been discovered. Another ship was lost soon afterwards within five miles of the same spot. It was the schooner Mary and Eliza, of Lymington. The life-boat from Barmouth was conveyed thither by horses and well manned by six able seamen, who, after great personal exertion, succeeded in saving the master, Mr. Morris, who had lashed himself to the rigging, but all the crew had previously met with a watery grave. The vessel had sunk and her masts were just above the water.

TENBY. — On Thursday and Friday last it blew a tremendous gale, and the memory of “the oldest seaman” could not furnish an instance of such a terrific scene having ever been witnessed in our sheltered bay, as the sea, during Friday, presented. The waves were literally “mountains high,” and the offing exhibited a grand and fearful spectacle; the huge billows gathering into vast heaps of foam, and appearing to mingle with the clouds that hung in dense masses over them; then suddenly bursting and flinging their torrents of spray around with the force and velocity of waterspouts. The Phoenix steamer, after a perilous passage from Bristol, arrived in the bay about 5 o'clock on Friday morning, where she remained some hours, there not being sufficient water in the pier to receive her. She parted her cables twice during the day, and was compelled to cruise about until the tide flowed. A schooner, laden with bricks, went ashore on Caldy Island, where she became a complete wreck; the crew were providentially saved. A large sloop, name unknown, broke from her moorings in Caldy Roads, and was seen drifting helplessly before the gale towards the Glamorganshire coast; it being impossible from the violence of the storm to render her any assistance. As nothing has been since heard of her, it is feared that she foundered amidst the dreadful tumult of waters. A brig, the Greenock, of Glasgow, from the Bay of Honduras, to Kinsale, laden with log-wood and cocoa nuts, was brought into our pier in distress, and now lies here discharging her cargo, for the purpose of undergoing the necessary repairs. The storm did some damage to the houses in various parts of the town, and the church was so much stripped of its roof as to prevent the usual divine service being performed in it on Sunday.

SWANSEA, Jan. 15.-The Countess of Fortescue, from Cardiff to St. Ives, has been raised, and got into harbour, with little damage. The Isabella, of Belfast, bound to Runcorn, is wrecked on West Hoyle. Two flats are ashore at Hoylake.



The 'Grampian Castle' ran aground on Caernarfon Bar in 1987.

OTHER VESSELS WRECKED ON THE NORTH BANK OF CAERNARFON BAR.

North Wales Chronicle and Advertiser for the Principality. 9th November 1841

WRECK OF THE MOUNTAINEER.

At daylight on the morning of the 18th of October, 1841, the pilots at Llanddwyn Point observed a ship aground on the North Bar, distant about one mile, with the ensign flying in the lee fore-rigging, Union down. It was then blowing gale of wind from N.N.W. The pilots immediately hoisted The Ball as a signal for the assembling of the crew, and sent messengers also to Newborough and Rhyddgaer. They then made a signal to the ship that "a life-boat was coming out", on which she hoisted her own No. In the course of an hour, the crew was assembled, and the boat launched and manned, and in half an hour more, they got to the ship. It being half flood, the sea was running very high, and increasing every moment. They, with great difficulty, got the crew and passengers, mounting to 17, into the lifeboat, with the exception of one youth, who had become deranged, and refused to quit the ship. This occupied nearly an hour, when they were obliged to cut their cable and run into Carnarvon, where they were landed about half past 10 in a very destitute state, having lost all their clothes.

Morning Post. August 10, 1844.

Carnarvon, August 7.— The King William IV, bound for Port Madoc, in running for Carnarvon Bar, struck on the north bank, beat over, and now lies high and dry on the main; crew saved. The Margaret, for Port Madoc, is beached at Llanddwyn station.

Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald. 29th March 1845

SHIPWRECKS.— The Gale Of Good Friday. On the evening of this day, when it was nearly dusk, with the wind at S.S.W., blowing a hard gale, with heavy rain, and thick weather, a schooner and two sloops were observed in the Bay making for the Bar. Soon afterwards a gun was fired at Lord Newborough's Fort, and lights were exhibited at Abermenai, announcing that a vessel was in distress. With the utmost promptitude, the life-boat was prepared and manned by the Harbour Master, Mr. William Owen, accompanied by Lloyd's Agent for this Port, William Turner, Esq. An ineffectual attempt was made to get the lifeboat through the gap, after which Mr. Turner and Mr. William Owen, with the crew, landed at Abermenai. Finding, however, that the surf would prevent them from rendering assistance until the tide receded from the wreck, they returned to this port. The vessel in distress proved to be the Anne and Catherine, Hughes, master, bound for this port from London, with a general cargo of valuable goods; it appears that in crossing the bar the vessel missed stays, and struck on the North bank, about 6 o'clock p.m. Capt. Hughes succeeded in keeping her head on, and she beat on the bank to the main, where she now lies, making much water. Through the indefatigable exertions of Captain Hughes, who is one of the most experienced and active men in the Port of Carnarvon, nearly the whole of the dry and perishable goods were landed on Saturday, without much damage; and, since, the remainder has been discharged, excepting a quantity of porter and other articles in casks. The vessel is not expected to be got off before the next spring, but everything has been done that nautical skill can recommend to secure her from further damage

Daily News. September 14, 1847.

WALES. Shipwreck and Loss of Life — In the evening of Saturday last, the 11th inst., during a heavy gale from the W.S.W., in Carnarvon Bay, five persons met a premature death. Two vessels, one a yacht, the other a schooner, were seen on the afternoon of that day out in the bay. The yacht signalled for a pilot to cross the bar, and proved to be the Gem, the property of J. Fleming, Esquire, a member of the Royal Yacht Squadron. In consequence of the distance from the station, she did not wait for the pilot's arrival, but exchanged one of her own hands for the mate of the other vessel, who was to act as her pilot. The schooner proved to be the Vine, of Pwllheli, bound with a cargo of coal from Llanelli, in South Wales, to Bangor. From some cause or other, perhaps the darkness of the evening, the schooner, in attempting to pass the bar, sometime between five and seven o'clock, into the Menai Straits, struck on the north bank, must have immediately capsized, filled and sunk with all on board. The pilots belonging to the station at Llanddwyn went out in the lifeboat, but, owing to the extreme darkness and the schooner showing no light, they were unable to find out her position until day-break on Sunday morning, when having discovered her, they pulled out for the purpose of boarding. She was on her beam-ends with her masts imbedded in the sand. In the cabin, the dead body of a woman passenger was found, and on the bank the body of a man was discovered; and both were immediately taken to Carnarvon, there being signs of life in the man. Four other men, the remainder of the crew, perished. The Gem arrived safe over the bar with the Vine's mate on board.

North Wales Chronicle - Tuesday 28 September 1847.

The hull of the ill-fated schooner Vine, wrecked on Carnarvon bar, has been sold to Messrs. Humphrey Owen and Sons for £12. It has been a most disastrous business, the owners not being insured.

North Wales Chronicle and Advertiser for the Principality. 12th February 1850.

WRECK ON CARNARVON BAR. About one o'clock P.M., on Tuesday, a schooner, which proved to be the Alice Killam, of Carnarvon, belonging to Messrs. Davies, Menai Bridge, bound from Charleston to Runcorn, was seen making for Llanddwyn, but was driven on the spit of the North Bank, where she struck about three o'clock, close to the place where the Monk, the Vine, and the Ann & Catherine were wrecked. The sea was running high, and despite all efforts made to force her inshore, she rapidly broke up, and the captain and crew - five in number - about four o'clock, took to the ship's boat, and after great difficulty they succeeded in safely getting ashore before the lifeboat of the Trust could reach the spot. The coast is strewn with pieces of the wreck. It is reported that another vessel, the Mary, of Neath, loaded with iron, for Liverpool, after being driven on shore at Dinas Dinlle, has since sunk. A large barque appeared close down in the bay on Tuesday, and seemed in imminent danger of being driven upon the banks, but she succeeded however in clearing them, and was again enabled to put to sea without damage.

Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald and North and South Wales Independent. 16th February 1850

WRECK.—At day-break this morning (Friday), a large vessel was seen on the north bank of Carnarvon Bar. She is a brig of about 300 tons, bound from St. Domingo to Liverpool, with a cargo of mahogany. The crew landed about 7 o'clock in their own boat, at Llanddwyn. She is now under water, but will dry at ebb tide. No further particulars have reached us.

North Wales Chronicle and Advertiser for the Principality. 19th February 1850

WRECK IN CARNARVON BAY. This morning, Feb. 15, heavy guns were heard at intervals in the bay, but owing to the closeness of the mist nothing could be discovered seaward. As the weather cleared up a vessel was seen on shore on the main near Llanddwyn point, which proved to be the Orion, Belfast, M'Kegan, master, from St. Domingo for Liverpool, with mahogany etc. etc. It appears that she struck on the North Bank at 5 o'clock, a.m., and when the tide rose, she beat over the bank, and drifted on the main. She is full of water and must discharge.

The disaster arose from the thick weather in the channel, which prevented the "look out" seeing Bardsey light. Providentially no lives were lost.

North Wales Chronicle. Feb 6, 1869

On Thursday, while the schooner William, of and for Liverpool laden with set-stones, was making for this harbour, she was driven ashore about a mile to the eastward of Llanddwyn Point, and in all probability will become a total wreck. The master and crew were saved by getting up the rigging, and remaining there till low water when they got ashore.

North Wales Chronicle and Advertiser for the Principality. 2nd October 1875.**WRECK AND LOSS OF LIFE AT CARNARVON.**

Carnarvon suffered very great damage by the gale on Sunday night. The only serious casualty amongst the shipping in the Menai Strait was the case of the Mary Reynolds, a small schooner belonging to Nevin, which tried to cross the North Carnarvon bar between eight and nine o'clock on Sunday morning, when it was blowing half a gale from the S.W. The vessel grounded on the bar, and, being struck by a heavy sea, almost immediately capsized, and sank in deep water. There is some doubt as to the number of her crew. She usually carried five or six hands, but it is believed there were only three on board at the time. Three men, one of whom was recognised as Captain Ellis, who was in charge, were seen by the Llanddwyn pilots clinging to the side of the vessel just before she heeled over, but they were almost immediately washed away.

The North Wales Express. 27th August 1886

The schooner Wisch, of Youghal, which went aground on Carnarvon Bar, has since become a total wreck. The wreck as she now lies has been sold to Mr Robert Evans, sailmaker, Carnarvon, for the sum of £10.

7.0 Analysis.

The Monk was a small, wooden paddle-steamer whose previous work was simply plying between Liverpool and Birkenhead across the fast-flowing but relatively-sheltered mouth of the River Mersey. It is debatable whether or not she was suitable to steam between Porth Dinllaen and Liverpool, a much longer and far more exposed voyage, especially if she was heavily-laden.

Adverts printed in 1840 show that, along with the other two ships on the Monk's Ferry crossing, she proved difficult to sell.

However, whatever the suitability of the vessel, the weather on that fateful day and during the following week caused many ships and lives to be lost, not only in North Wales, but in South Wales, Cheshire, Ireland and the east coast of England.

To enter the narrow entrance to the Menai Strait without a pilot, in a leaky, possibly unseaworthy boat, on a falling-tide with darkness approaching and with a crew who probably had little experience of her, would appear to be the combination of errors that led to the heavy loss of life and property.

Sir Llewellyn Turner contemplated joining the 'Monk' on her voyage, but declined, then later wrote: '

I have often wondered whether if I had gone and returned on board of her, I should have saved her, or been drowned with the rest of the crew.'

Perhaps his skill and local knowledge could have avoided this disaster and loss of life. We shall never know.

8.0 Conclusions & Recommendations.

That the 'Monk' was wrecked on the North Bank of Caernarfon Bar is indisputable, but the mound of stone investigated by the author at low-tide may or may not be the remains of this vessel, and could be a natural-feature, the cargo of a wrecked vessel or a pile of ballast. From comments made in the newspapers of 1843, it would appear that 'wreckers' were active soon afterwards, so it is unlikely that anything of value remains of the paddle-steamer.

However, given the opportunity, the author would like to complete a side-scan survey of this area, and perhaps dive the site to obtain samples of the stones to see if they are of local-origin, or whether they are quarried 'set-stones' from the schooner 'William'.

Alas, at the time of writing, winter is approaching, and Covid-19 prevents us from venturing far from home.

9.0. References.

Sources include:

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Shipwreck Index of the British Isles. Vol 5 (Richard Larne, Lloyd's Register).

The Essential Underwater Guide to North Wales. Vol. One, Part Two. (Chris Holden)

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