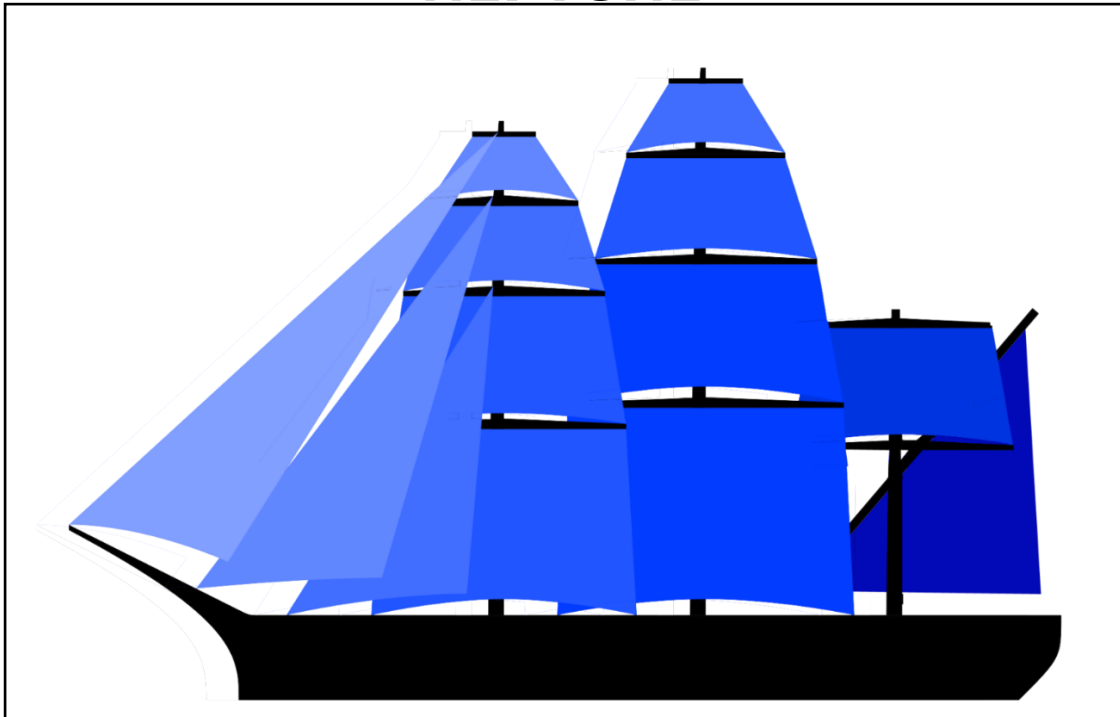


**Welsh Wreck Web Research Project
(North Cardigan Bay)
On-line research into the wreck of the:
*NEPTUNE***



Fully rigged ship 18th century

Wreck of the Neptune

Report compiled by:

Graeme Perks

Report Title:

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

Compiled by:

**Graeme Perks
graperks@aol.com**

On behalf of:

Nautical Archaeology Society
Fort Cumberland
Fort Cumberland Road
Portsmouth
PO4 9LD
Tel: +44 (0)23 9281 8419
E-mail: nas@nauticalarchaeologysociety.org
Web Site: www.nauticalarchaeologysociety.org

Managed by:

Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit
17 Hornyold Road
Malvern
Worcestershire
WR14 1QQ
Tel: +44 (0)1684 574774
E-mail: MADUdiving@gmail.com
Web Site: www.madu.org.uk

Date:

MAY 2020

Report Ref:

Leave blank

1.0 Abstract

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

2.0 Index

2.1 Table of Contents	Page No.
1.0 Abstract -----	3
2.0 Index -----	4
2.1 Table of Contents	
2.3 List of Pictures	1
2.5 Abbreviations	5
3.0 Introduction -----	6
4.0 Background -----	7
5.0 Research Methodology -----	8
6.0 Results -----	13
7.0 Analysis -----	18
8.0 Conclusions & Recommendations -----	20
9.0 References -----	21

2.3 List of Pictures

Page No.

Front Cover: A representative fully rigged ship ----- 1

2.4 Contributors

Chris Holden – The essential underwater guide to North Wales: volume one –
- Barmouth to South Stack

2.5 Abbreviations

GAT	Gwynedd Archaeology Trust
MADU	Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit
NAS	Nautical Archaeology Society
NPRN	National Primary Resource Number
OS	Ordnance Survey
RCAHMW	Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of - Wales
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
RNLI	Royal National Lifeboat Institution
WNW	Wrecks of North Wales by
NMM	National Maritime Museum
NML;MAL	National Museums Liverpool; Maritime Archives and Library

Introduction

- The vessel appears to have been a fully rigged ship, a square rigger with at least three masts on passage from New Orleans to Liverpool.
- In a violent West to North Westerly gale the ship was driven into Cardigan Bay and ran around on Saint Patricks Causeway losing its rudder, this a partially drying spit of land near the middle of the bay. There are records of many ships being lost on this hazard to shipping and some recorded as carried into it by storms on route to Liverpool from New Orleans. The crew laid an anchor and abandoned the ship. It was then boarded by seven local men to assist who were then unable to leave again when the anchor cable parted and the ship was driven by the gale onto the rocks below the cliffs ashore.
- I can find no record of any previous record of previous investigation of this wreck except for the entry in Wrecks of North Wales
- Since the wooden vessel was wrecked on the rocks in a gale there will be no wreck to survey or dive with its remains carried away by the sea or salvaged as was most of its cargo.

3.0 Background

Neptune was known for the wreck, Edmund Lewis, a local man, was awarded one of the first silver medals by what was later to become the RNLi. He saved seven men on his own from the vessel near Barmouth. The wreck is shown as sunk on Saint Patricks causeway off Barmouth in WNW which is widely reproduced. A lifeboat station was opened two years later at Barmouth as a result of the number of ships being lost on Saint Patricks Causeway and the tragic loss of life.

The cotton triangle was the trade between Liverpool & New York in textiles and manufactured goods, between New York and New Orleans in cereals which were exchanged for cotton which was shipped to Liverpool.

4.0 Research Methodology

I used a Microsoft Pixel laptop with access to my home internet running windows 10 operating system

I first searched for an RNLI site, looking for the citation for Edmund Lewis's silver medal and found it in the history section of the Barmouth lifeboat station website. Searches using "silver medal" & "Edmund Lewis" were unsuccessful so I searched "Barmouth RNLI" which brought up the website for the station.

I searched Lloyds List for 1825 using "Neptune" which produced the entry for 8th February 1825

I searched Lloyds List for 1824 & 1825 using "Neptune" which produced the record for a Brig sailing out of Liverpool which was the only possibility. The record showed this vessel sailing from Li. to C B rtn , Liverpool to C B and return in 1825. The 1824 record showed the same vessel with the same captain sailing from Liverpool to Canada. I had no idea what the abbreviation C B stood for so I searched for "Ports" which produced a Wickapedia list, which listed 2 ports with the two letters C B , Ciudad Bolivar, Orinoco River, Venezuela and Corner Brook ,Newfoundland Island ,Canada. Angostura was renamed Ciudad Bolivar in 1846 so this could not be a destination in 1825, leaving Corner Brook as the only possible destination and the most likely since it is in Canada (the 1824 destination). This was obviously not the same ship.

I searched for "Neptune American ship" which brought up Heritage & Education Centre which listed various ships named Neptune but no possibility's.

I searched "American ship Neptune" in the British newspaper archives which produced a number of reports of American ships named Neptune, most were after the 1825 when the vessel in question was lost.

The Coflein site also appeared but contained no new information except a chart showing a location adjacent to the shore for the wreck site.

I searched "American ships" which brought up the United States national archive. The information there was that before 1872 ships were not required to keep log books & deposit them with the government. The records for vessels based in New Orleans are not available on line. Some records of passengers arriving from other countries were available but these were incomplete and only recorded the name of the ship, no other details. The only Neptune landing passengers(6) was a brig in 1822.

The records available on line concentrate on immigrants arriving from overseas.

I searched the British & Irish newspaper archives for "Neptune 1825" with no matches for this vessel.

I search Welsh newspapers via the Library of Wales website with no matches

I searched "cotton trade" as I suspected the cargo was cotton since its departure port was New Orleans – negative

I searched "New York registered ships 1824" which produced ;

Ship Registers and Enrollments of New Orleans, Louisiana: 1821-1830 this is an alphabetical list of ships with details of size, ownership history and building. It lists 2 vessels named Neptune which are both steamboats.

New York, NY 1820- 1957 /National Archives which lists vessels & passengers arriving at the port of New York but it is only on micro film.

I searched the "Liverpool Mercury" for 1825 with no matches but with a report that a vessel had arrived on 30th January 1825 with the first of the new seasons crop of cotton from New Orleans

I checked copies of the “North Wales Gazette”, with no matches. It did have two notices regarding goods salvaged from vessels giving persons the opportunity to deliver them to the authorities before they became liable in law to transportation for 14 years.

I searched the incomplete records for the transportation of slaves landed at New Orleans in 1822 and 1824 from vessels for any previous mention of the Neptune without a match. These were slaves transported within the United States as it was illegal to import slaves after 1808.

I searched the British Newspaper Archive for” Neptune” which produced a number of reports but without further information about its master or owners I could not proceed further

I followed The National Archives guide to;

Cust – Records of Customs ,Excise, and Customs & Excise, and H M Revenue & Customs Division within Cust – Records of imports and exports to and from Britain and its colonies

Ledgers of Imports and Exports , America

Where I searched the date range 1800 to 1825 for any record of the Neptune having visited the Britain before in an effort to discover details of the ship for

“Neptune”, ”cotton”, “New Orleans”, with no results

I then browsed the records ;

“Neptune”,

Description	Held by	reference	further information
--------------------	----------------	------------------	----------------------------

1809-20 accounts 14002 Earle	Hull History Centre		NRA
---------------------------------	---------------------	--	-----

“Neptune 1”,

1799 bill of sale 30121 NMM	NMM; Caird library	HNL/93/1-7	NRA
--------------------------------	--------------------	------------	-----

1799-1800 copy charter, correspd NRA 30121 NMM ,memo book ,bills paid, voyage accounts And clearance papers	NMM; Caird library	HNL/93/1-7	
---	--------------------	------------	--

Neptune 2”,

1801 bill of sale	NMM: Caird Library	HNL/25/81	NRA 30121 NMM
1801-7 copy former register Correspd, memo book, voyage accounts , bills paid & shipping papers	NMM; Caird Library	HNL/94/1-21	NRA 30121 NMM

“Liverpool” which led to “Liverpool Customs & Excise”

1743-1970 management records, register of merchant ships	NML;MAL	C /EX /L,C/EM,C/EX/R	NRA 39851 Liverpool
---	---------	----------------------	---------------------

1739-1988 merchant shipping registers	NML;MAL	C-X	
---------------------------------------	---------	-----	--

“Liverpool Customs Port”

c1820-1939 bills of entry	Liverpool record office	1992-23	see annual return 1992
---------------------------	-------------------------	---------	------------------------

“Liverpool Shipping registers”

1939-1988 records	NML;MAL	C /EX	see POD Databa
-------------------	---------	-------	----------------

Following an update from "Research project " I searched "Neptune Dixon" which produced a number of matches, Dixon being the master when the vessel was lost.

I searched Merchant Sail ;Hathi Trust Digital library

Ship registers & Enrollments for;

New Bedford, Massachusetts

New Orleans, Louisiana

Boston & Charlestown

New Port, Rhode Island 1790 - 1939

Providence, Rhode Island 1773 – 1939

Machias, Maine 1780 -1930

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Newburyport, Massachusetts

I searched Merchant Sail by William Armstrong Fairburn without result

I searched Mystic Seaport Museum for "Neptune" which produced records for the Washington Insurance company in Providence Marine Insurance policies.

It also produced ships registered at New York but no record of a ship Neptune.

I searched "Neptune Warner" in British newspaper archives with resul

5.0 Results

Vessel	Name/s	Neptune	
	Type	Fully Rigged Ship	
Built	Date	Unknown	
	Builder		
Construction	Materials	Wood	
	Decks		
	Bulkheads		
Propulsion	Type	Sail	
	Details	Square Rigged,	
Engine	Details	None	
	Boilers		
Drive	Type		
	Number		
Dimensions	Length	ft	ins
	Beam	ft	ins
	Draught	ft	ins
Tonnage	Gross		
	Net		m
Owner	First	Unknown	m
			m
	Last	Unknown	
	Others		
Registry	Port	Unknown	
	Flag	American	
	Number		
History	Routes	Unknown	
	Cargo		
Final Voyage	From	New Orleans	
	To	Liverpool	
	Captain	Dixon	
	Crew	Unknown	
	Passengers	Unknown	
	Cargo	Likely to be cotton	
Wrecking	Date	2 nd February 1825	
	Location	Near Barmouth, Wales	
	Cause	Wrecking by being driven onto rocks by a storm	
	Loss of life	None known	
	Outcome	Total Loss but most cargo saved	

Lloyds list 23rd December 1814

Gravesend 21st Neptune, Dixon arrived from St Andero

Lloyds List Friday 31st January 1823

St Thomas arrived from Liverpool – Neptune, Dixon

Liverpool Mercury Friday 14th March 1823

Neptune, Dixon hence and St Thomas's at Havannah

Lloyds List Tuesday 6th May 1823

Arrived(Plymouth)3rd May the Neptune, Dixon from Havannah in 42 days
This was reported in 9 other newspapers including Lloyds list so it must have been a fast passage

Exeter Flying post Thursday 8th May 1823

Plymouth 2nd May arrived the Neptune, Dixon from Havannah with sugar and coffee

Morning Post Thursday 3rd July 1823

Deal 1st July 1823 Came down from the river Neptune, Dixon for St Johns, New Brunswick

This is where sailing ships coming out of the Thames anchored in the downs until a favourable wind arose to carry them out along the channel or into the North sea.

Liverpool Mercury Friday 23rd April 1824

Vessels Sailed 18th
Neptune, Dixon , S. Martha & e.

Liverpool Mercury Friday 9th July 1824

Neptune, Dixon hence for Carthagena arrived off Barbadoes 30th May and would proceed on her voyage immediately

Lloyds List Tuesday 24th August 1824

Cartagena De Columbia June 4th arrived Neptune, Dixon from London and Barbadoes

Liverpool Mercury Friday 3rd September 1824

Neptune, Dixon hence at Carthagena

North Wales Gazette. 10th March 1825

CAUTION TO WRECK ROBBERS.

On the 11th. and 12th. of February last, Petty Sessions were held at the County Hall, in Dolgelley for the purpose of investigating the case of some persons who were suspected of having concealed silks taken from a trunk cast on shore below Harlech, from the wreck of the Diamond, in Cardigan Bay. Three of them were convicted in the penalty of £45, being treble the value of the articles so concealed. The Magistrate trusted that this summary punishment would operate as a sufficient warning to all persons finding wrecked property cast on shore on these coasts, not to appropriate it to their own use, but promptly to give honest information of it as the law requires. Mr. Aikin, of Liverpool, who is agent for the wreck of the Diamond, and of the Neptune, also lost in the same bay, conducted this business with great correctness, and with the most gentlemanly feelings; and when the fine was imposed, he very liberally presented it to the Magistrates with a request that it should be applied to the relief of the poor of the parish of Llandanwg, where the offence was committed, after defraying the necessary expenses attending the conviction.

In a violent gale the ship was driven into Cardigan Bay and runs around on Saint Patricks Causeway losing its rudder. The crew laid an anchor and abandoned the ship. It was then boarded by seven local men to assist who were then unable to leave again when the anchor cable parted and the ship was driven by the gale onto the rocks below the cliffs ashore.

Silver Medal awarded to Edmond Lewis for rescuing seven men when the vessel Neptune ran aground in a violent gale on 2 February 1825. The crew of the vessel abandoned her in Cardigan Bay, seven Barmouth men went to her assistance but having boarded her were unable to leave. The ship parted, ran onto rocks, and the men were given up for lost. Mr Lewis attaching himself to a rope descended a precipice to board the wreck and using ropes that he had brought down for this purpose, helped to haul all the men up the cliffs to safety. From RNLi Barmouth web site

Sun(London) 5th February 1825

The Neptune, Dixon from New Orleans for this port (Liverpool) was driven on shore near Barmouth, having struck on the causeway in Cardigan Bay and lost their rudder on Tuesday night.

British Press Monday 7th February 1825 same report

Lloyds List 8th February 1825 reports the Neptune on route from New Orleans to Liverpool a Total Loss most cargo saved.

Lancaster Gazette Saturday 12th February 1825

The weather during the last week was very tempestuous, particularly on Wednesday and Thursday nights ,when we experienced violent gales from the W. and W.N.W. On the latter night there was a heavy fall of snow, which continued till Monday morning. We regret to state that two American vessels have been lost ; the Neptune, Dixon from New Orleans in Cardigan Bay where the Diamond foundered and the Magnet, Garwood in Galway Bay.

Ship registers of the district of Newburyport, Massachusetts 1789 - 1870

Neptune,ship,354 tons; built Newbury 1810, length 104ft 6 in, breath 27ft 8 in, depth 13ft 10in,billet head, reg June 16 1810, Abner Wood owner, George Warner, Master

That this is the only record for this ship in the record means it was sold but there is no record of to whom or where.

I searched "Neptune Warner" in British newspaper archives

September 12 1810 Charlestown arrived Neptune, Warner from London

October 21 1810 Deal arrived Neptune, Warner from South America

March 3 1811 Savannah arrived Neptune, Warner from London

Then the War of 1812 – 1815 happened and after that I can find "Neptune" with different masters sailing between Europe and the USA ,I am unable to connect them to this ship or the wreck.

Ship registers & Enrollments Boston & Charlestown

756 Neptune ship of Boston, built Boston 1784, 52/95 tons, 86ft long, 25ft breath, 12ft 6in draft, 2 decks, 3 masts, square stern, ¼ galleries

Register number 41 9th November 1789

Owner Samuel Elliot, Merchant James Scott ,Mariner Daniel Hubbar

Washington Insurance company in Providence Marine Insurance policies.

Policies, Neptune (ship),Copenhagen & St Petersburg 1806 apr

History of Newburyport, Mass., 1764-1905 By John J. Currier, Dalcassian Publishing Company, 1906 has references Neptune ship on page 651

I purchased the e book for £0.80p but the Neptune mentioned was an British ship captured 9th January 1813 by Captain Nichols of the Decatur, a privateer, during the 1812-15 war.

6.0 Analysis

The Lloyds register did not produce a list of ship casualties until 1890 which included details of owners etc so this avenue of research was unavailable.

The vessel with the limited details available was not listed on Lloyds Register but I was unable to find description of it apart from the Wrecks of North Wales which described it as a fully rigged ship.

The vessel is likely to have been an American ship involved in the cotton triangular trade between Liverpool – New York – New Orleans. The date of loss coincides approximately with the reported arrival of the first of the new seasons crop of cotton at Liverpool. This date also saw a rise in the price of cotton by 105% due to the demand and the failure of the Indian cotton crop that year.

The availability of the records of ships on line in United States of America would have made available many additional areas of research which are closed unless its possible to view the available micro films in the USA.

The number of newspapers produced in 1825 was small with a limited circulation and readership due to the low numbers of the population who could read and the high price charged. That readerships interest in shipping losses did appear low and it was left to Lloyds register to report in an abbreviated form. I purchased a one month subscription to the British Newspaper archives but this failed to produce any reference to this vessel. It did produce vessels called Neptune for sale but since it was not on Lloyds list and I had no further details I could not follow that route any further. This was until I received the information that the captains name was Dixon a further search produced details of sailings in 1814, 1823, 1824 and a number of reports of the vessels loss.

It appears obvious that the local men boarded the vessel with a view to salvaging it after the crew had abandoned it. The master obviously made the correct decision as no square rigged ship would succeed in sailing out of the bay in a gale with any westerly direction in it with a rudder and having lost it the situation was hopeless. The anchor line later parted resulting in its wrecking on the cliffs. The unnamed local men were fortunate that Edmund Lewis was prepared to risk his life to save them by climbing down the dangerous cliffs.

The additional ships registers I found for some ports produced 2 possible ships called Neptune, the Boston Neptune appears too old and small for the long fast passages this Neptune achieved.

The Newberryport Neptune is a possibility but the master is different, which after 15 years is quite likely and I have now other details to confirm it is the same vessel.

7.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

There is no wreck site to dive for this vessel as it was smashed on the rocks at the base of the cliffs and since most of the cargo was salvaged I am sure anything else that was salvageable was also taken.

The Cofelin web site gives a location for the wrecking of the vessel but since this was just off a slipway on a beach it cannot be correct since the whole rescue would not match the reason for the award of the RNLi Silver medal.

The RNLi citation also removes the assumption that the rescued men were part of the crew of the ship.

The continuation of any research into this vessel will have to await the inclusion on line of the archives in the USA since there are so many different places it appears to be held around the USA and with no leads to follow it would be a fishing expedition relying on luck.

A search of the records held in NMM: Caird Library, Liverpool records office or NML;MAL may reveal further details of Neptune if it had visited Liverpool previously or is one of the vessels relating to the bill of sale but this is only a possibility.

I have learnt how the various searches operate, that including "ship" with name Neptune may reduce items about statues but produces every record with the word "ship". How to read Lloyds Register & to understand most of its abbreviations. How on line searches of the National Archives function. How searching "Neptune, Dixon" produced useful information which didn't appear with the ships name alone.

Ship in relation to a sailing vessel means a fully rigged ship type as apposed to other types like schooner, brig, brigantine etc.

8.0 References

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

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

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

<https://www.hathitrust.org/>

<https://hec.lrfoundation.org.uk/archive-library/lloyds-register-of-ships-online>

<https://www.mysticseaport.org/>

<https://rnli.org/>

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