

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

Report compiled by:
Melanie Taylor

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1.0 Abstract

Since 2001 Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit have compiled a database of vessels reported to be wrecked off the coast of North Wales, between Aberystwyth and Bardsey Island. One of these vessels was named *Rob The Ranter*, wrecked at Hell's Mouth a bay at the western end of the Llyn Peninsula not far from Bardsey Island and synonymous with shipwrecks in the area. She was driven there is a south-westerly gale with her crew forced to abandon ship, two being lost in the heavy sea.

Today there is little physical remaining of *Rob The Ranter* on the beach at Hell's Mouth, but how much of her story survives, buried in archives. Using only on line resources, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, can her story be re-told?

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2.3 Contributors

This exercise was undertaken solely by the author.

However, acknowledgment needs to be made for the access available on line of the Lloyd's of London Resources through the Lloyd's Register Foundation Historic and Education Centre.

2.4 Abbreviations

MADU	Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit
NAS	Nautical Archaeology Society
NPRN	National Primary Resource Number
RCAHMW	Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Wales
CLIP	Crew List Index Project
RNLI	Royal National Lifeboat Institute

3. Introduction

Since 2001 the Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit (MADU) has built a database of vessels known to have wrecked in the north of Cardigan Bay. This was undertaken as part of their investigation in to the vessel designated under the Protection of Wreck Act (1973) as the 'Diamond'. The 'Diamond' had been wrecked on Sarn Badrig Reef in January 1825, but the vessel designated was later determined not to be the 'Diamond'.

During the process the database developed in to a large collection on names for vessels lost in the vicinity, however there is little investigative work that has been undertaken this project aims to look into the history of some of these vessels adding to the national historic record. This project was launched during the Corona Virus Pandemic, as a web-archive project giving interested individuals a focus during "lock-down".

With the closure of many of the national archival repositories the question was posed as to how much information regarding individual vessels can be obtained solely through the use of internet resources and databases.

The Brigantine, *Rob The Ranter* is cited on the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments Wales website, Coflein. Under NPRN reference 271419 the website gives an approximate position for the wreck site and some brief detail regarding its overall size, cargo and ownership. However there is little information other than this. A review of the content of this NPRN reference reveals that there is currently no published archaeological or historical data regarding this vessel, therefore any information which can be provided will add significantly to the historic record.

It is important to note that there is a second vessel named *Rob The Ranter* listed in the Coflein website, under NPRN reference 506921. This vessel though is both a steam vessel and lies a significant distance away from the area which is this projects remit.

Aim

To reconstruct the history of *Rob The Ranter*, a vessels lost at Hell's Mouth on 30 October 1899 using only on-line resources.

4. Background

According to Coflein *Rob The Ranter* lies just off-shore at Aberdaron. This is an area that is known locally as Hell's Mouth and with good reason. Geographically the Hell's Mouth bay is situated towards the western end of the Llyn Peninsula (map 1), which forms the Northern region of Cardigan Bay. Several miles south, lying east - west is the Sarn Barig Reef. Given the, often strong, prevailing south-westerly winds sailing vessels were often driven ashore here. Accounts of many of these vessels have been recounted in local history, which has now been shared via websites, such as rhiw.com¹ and PenLlyn.com². Whilst a brief search of the both these websites identifies the incident in one¹ the other does not². The wrecking is also cited in the Shipwreck Index of the British Isles³ as being wrecked on 29 October 1899 at Hell's Mouth, although this account does list her as a schooner and not a brigantine. Again none of these accounts give any significant detail regarding the incident or the vessel.

Today there are several wrecks located at Hell's Mouth that can be seen in the shore line⁴, one of which may belong to be *Rob The Ranter*. However, due to the ferocity of the conditions at the site though very little structure remains.

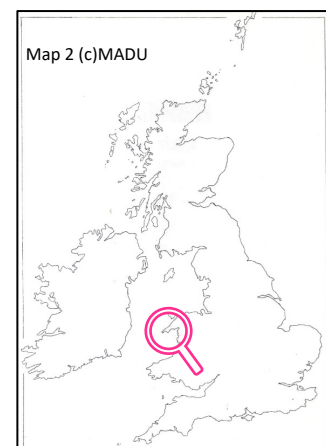
Geographic Location

There is currently no GPS co-ordinates as the specific position of the wreckage is unknown. She is known to have been blown ashore in a bay known as Hell's Mouth. This is shown on map 1, marked with the pink arrow.

This map clearly shows the geographical context in which the wrecking took place. With Bardsey Island to the west and Sarn Badrig Reef to the south-east, the bay itself faces out to the south-west, almost like a hand waiting to catch stricken vessels.



Map 2 places the Llyn Peninsula in context within Wales and rest of the United Kingdom, under the pink magnifying glass.



5. Research Methodology

Research was undertaken using the author's experience of on line resources and in two phases. The first of these using websites that record official data regarding British merchant vessels and the second a search of newspaper archives available on line.

Stage 1 - Official Sources

Using information known about the vessel, as provided from the MADU database:

Name: *Rob The Ranter*

Date of Wrecking: 30 October 1899

Lloyd's Wreck Returns for October to December 1899 available at:

<https://hec.lrfoundation.org.uk/archive-library/casualty-returns>

This then provides information regarding entries in Lloyd's Register entry of the vessel for that year:

<https://archive.org/stream/lloydsregisters97unkngoog#page/n441/mode/1up>

Information in the register provides information regarding ownership, dimensions and much more, including the vessel's official ships number. This is an important piece of information when accessing the Crewlist Project Index Project (CLIP):

<http://crewlist.org.uk>

The CLIP website is a searchable database of British registered vessels from mid-nineteenth century onwards, including listings in the Mercantile Navy List

Stage 2 - Newspaper Archives

There are two newspaper archives appropriate to shipwrecked vessels in Wales

i. <https://newspapers.library.wales/search/advanced>, hosted by the Nation Library of Wales

ii. <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>, hosted by the British Library

The following search terms were then inputted in to their Advanced Search option:

I. *Rob The Ranter*

II. Dates From: July 1874

III. Date To: January 1900

These search terms allowed the construction of a time line for this particular vessel which was supported by the evidence found in the official sources from the Stage 1 search.

6. Results

Table 1 - Summary of Vessel

Vessel	Name/s	Rob The Ranter		
	Type	Brigantine		
		Cargo		
Built	Date	1874		
		July 1874		
	Builder	Geddie		
		Kingston		
Construction	Materials	Wood, salted		
	Decks	1		
	Bulkheads	Not known		
Propulsion	Type	Sail		
	Details	Square rigged, with Gaff		
Dimensions	Length	96 ft	7 ins	m
	Beam	22 ft	5 ins	m
	Draught	11ft	8 ins	m
Tonnage	Gross	155		
	Net	112		
Owner	First	George Lawter		
		Burghead, Elgin		
	Last	Joseph G. Goode		
		Port Isaac, Cornwall		
	Others	Andrew Geils, Portsoy, Banff		
Registry	Port	Inverness (October 1874)		
		Fowey (1884)		
	Flag	British		
	Number	62123		
History	Routes	Multiple		
		Multiple		
	Cargo	Multiple including; fertiliser, corn, ore, coal.		
Final Voyage	From	Belfast (around 25 October)		
	To	Cardiff (due around 1 week later)		
	Captain	Bate		

	Crew	6
	Passengers	0
	Cargo	Burnt Ore
Wrecking	Date	30 October 1899
	Location	Hell's Mouth
	Cause	Storm
	Loss of life	2
	Outcome	Total Loss

Timeline

Using the terms described in the Methodology it was possible to construct a timeline for *Rob The Ranter*, based solely upon appearances in newspapers reporting shipping movements. Although this is not a complete record it does offer a reasonably comprehensive history of the movements of this vessel and some of the incidents it was involved in. It also provides some insight in to the types of cargo that was conveyed. This evidence can be reviewed at:

<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/search/results/1850-01-01/1899-12-31?basicsearch=%2brob%20%2bthe%20%2branter&freesearch=rob%20the%20ranter&retrievecountrycounts=false&sortorder=score>

Year	Date	Event
1874	June	Built - Geddie, Kingston
	1 October	First Registry
	6	Master - Winchester
	6	Sailed from Aberdeen for Baltic (cargo - herrings)
	24	Sailed from Libau, Baltic for Aberdeen
	21 November	Arrived Aberdeen
	3 December	Arrived at Home Port
	21	Arrives Millwall Docks
	26	In Dry Dock
	28	At Millwall Dock
1875		Appears in Mercantile List
		Owner George Lawter, Burghead, Elgin
	5 January	Sails from the River passing Deal
	14	Arrives Cardiff (cargo - manure)
	25	Sails Cardiff for Cadiz (cargo - coal)
	2 March	Arrives Cadiz, via Rio Grande
	24 April	Arrives Rio Grande from Cadiz
	29 July	Sails Rio Grande for Falmouth
	1 September	Arrives Falmouth
	5 October	Sails for Fraserburgh from Peterhead
	30	Collision with Steam Tug - Fraserburgh
1876	3 January	Arrives Ystad, Sweden
	19 February	Sails from Shields for Plymouth
	6 June	Sails from Leghorn for Bristol
	29 July	Arrives Bristol
	24 August	Sails from Cardiff for Madeira
	9 September	Arrives Maderia
	24 September	Arrives Saffi
	3 November	Arrives Queenstown from Saffi

1877	23 January	Arrives Saffi from Hoyle
	3 March	Court case between two crew members, Falmouth
	8 May	Arrives Gibraltar from Torre del Mar Sails for Cadiz
	26 June	Sails from Cadiz for Newfoundland
	23 July	Sails from Grace Harbor for Labrador
	16 November	Sails from Genoa for Girgenti
	23 November	Arrives Gerenti
1878	2 January	Arrives Swansea from Girgenti
	30 January	New Master - Masson Sails for Cadiz
	10 February	Arrives Cadiz
	24 March	Seen at Lizard
	26	Passes Deal
	6 April	Arrives Aberdeen
	17	Sails for Sunderland
	6 May	Sails from Shields for Huelva, via Falmouth
	10	Passes Beachy Head
	13 June	Sails from Huelva for Lynn
	9 July	Arrives Lynn from Huelva
	6 August	Sails from Newcastle for Napels
	15	Sails from Deal for Naples
	29 Sept	Arrives Naples
	21 October	Sails from Palermo for Bristol
	2 December	Passes Lizard (West)
	6	Arrives Bristol from Palermo
16 December	Sails from Cardiff for Santos (cargo - 258 tons coal)	
1879	24 March	Arrives Santos
	10 April	Sails from Santos to Pernambuco
	7 August	Arrives Falmouth
	22	Sails from Falmouth for Liverpool
	27	Arrives Liverpool
	5 September	Sails from Runcorn for Koenigsberg
	29	Arrives Longhope for Koenigsberg
	7 October	Arrives Pillau
	31	Sails Pillau for Cardiff
	5 November	Calls at Elsinore
c24	Arrives Penarth (cargo 147 tons wheat)	
20 December	Sails for Bahia from Cardiff (cargo - 265 tons coal)	
1880	29 February	Arrives Bahia, from Cardiff
	23 March	Sails from Bahia for Montreal
	28 May	Calls at Quebec
	1 June	Arrives Montreal
	26 July	Arrives Queesntown (cargo - peas)
	16 August	Arrives Leith (from Montreal)
	30	Clears St David's for Koenigsberg
	8 September	Arrives Pillau from St David's
	19 October	Seen off Deal from North heading West
	22	Arrives Fecamp
	9 November	Sails from Fecamp for Shields
	11	Arrives at Shields
20	Crew each sign articles at South Shields Shipping Office value £2 15s / month	
27	Sails from Shields for Rotterdam	
1881	5 January	Arrives Malaga from Newcastle
	20 February	Sails from Malaga for Dunkirk
	11 March	Arrives Dunkirk
	27	Sails from Dunkirk for Newcastle
	1 April	Arrives Tyne / Shields

	12	Sails for Inverness
	25	Arrives Vienna (from Newcastle?)
	14 May	Cleared at Vienna for Halve
	25	Sails from Huelva for Cadiz
	1 June	Arrives Cadiz
	3	Sails St John's NF
	17 July	Arrives St John's NF
	18 October	Encounters hurricane mid-Atlantic, significant damage
	19 November	Arrives Limerick from Newfoundland (cargo - fish)
1882	29 January	Arrives Exmouth from Labrador
	14 March	For Sail, Shields
	April	Owner; Andrew Geils, Portsoy, Banff
	26 April	Sails from Newcastle for Odessa
	13 May	Seen at 3pm off Prawle Point
	16 June	Arrives Bari, master Osborne
	22	Sails for Messina, from Bari
	12 July	Sails for Susa, from Messina
	25	Arrives Susa
	12 August	Sails for Glasgow (cargo - 398 barrels olive oil, 4 pumping casks)
	27	Passes Gibraltar
	29 September	Arrives Glasgow
	21 October	Sails for Algiers
	14 November	Waterford, from Glasgow for Algiers (cargo - coals)
	29	Passes Sagres, south
	30	Arrives Algiers
1883		Mercantile Navy List - Owner Andrew Geils, Banff
	7 January	Arrives Licata from Catania
	17	Sails from Licata for Vigo
	13 February	Arrives Vigo
	24	Sails for St Ubes
	5 March	Arrives St Ubes
	14	Sails for Shetland Isles
	30	Collides with lightship off Ramsgate, one crewman injured
	7 April	Arrives Lerwick
	15 May	Sails for Shields (cargo - light)
	20	Arrives Shields
	22 June	Sails for Vienna
	25 July	Sails for Cadiz from Vienna
	28	Arrives Cadiz
	5 August	Sails for St. John's Newfoundland
	7 September	Arrives St John's Newfoundland
	11 November	Arrives Alicante
	15	Sails for Leghorn
	28	Arrives Leghorn
1884	3 January	Sails for Cadiz
	16 February	Clears at Cadiz for St Jose du Norte
	28	Arrives St Jose du Norte
	14 April	Arrives Rio Grande from Cadiz
	28 May	Sails for Aracaju from Rio Grande
	26 June	Arrives Maroim
	28 October	Arrives Falmouth from Aracaju (Cargo - sugar)
	1 November	Sails for Liverpool
	6	Arrives Liverpool
1885	20 January	Sails from Tyne for Teignmouth
	2 February	Anchors at Deal
	4 March	Arrives Glasgow
	23 May	Arrives Antwerp from Par
	21 June	Arrives Liverpool from Antwerp
	11 July	Seen off Lizard

	31	Arrives Cardiff
	19 September	Arrives Helvoet from Par Master - Goad
	15 October	Sails for Newcastle from Halvoet
	22	Arrives Tyne
1886	1 November	Sails for London Owner; Joseph G. Goad, Port Issac, Cornwall (not confirmed)
	14 May	Arrives Nieuwe Waterweg, from Fowey
	3 June	Arrives Shields from Brunswick
	10	Sails for Fowey
	29 October	Arrives Shields from Antwerp
	5 November	Sails for Exeter
	6	Put into Tyne - Weather
	10	Sails for Exeter
1887	23	Arrives at Exeter Canal (cargo - gas coal)
	3 January	Sails from Rotterdam for Tyne
	13	Arrives Shields
	20	Arrives Tyne Dock (cargo - light)
	27	Sails for Teignmouth
	4 April	Arrives Harberg from Antwerp (master - Goad)
	24 June	Arrives Sharpness from Groningen (cargo - Oats)
	14 July	Sails from Sharpness for Charlestown (cargo - 264 tons coal)
	17	Seen off Plymouth (noted as registered Fowey)
	18 August	Sails from Charlestown
	29	Arrives Nieuwe Waterweg from Charlestown
	12 September	Sails from Helvoet for Newcastle
	27	Arrives Tyne (cargo Hoops)
	7 October	Sails for Southampton
	14	Seen at Prawle Point
	15	Arrives Porthleven
	10 November	Sails from Porthleven
	20	At Flushing from Charlestown
	1 December	Arrives Brussels from Charlestown
1888	14	Sails for Sunderland
	2 January	Arrives on the Wear
	18	Sails for Devonport
	9 February	Arrives Plymouth from Par
	18	Passes Prawle Point, heading up, 3pm
	4 March	Arrives Flushing, from Par
	9	Arrives Antwerp
	3 April	Sails for France
	7	Seen Beachy Head (10am)
	22 May	Passes Dungeness (west, 10am) Passes Beachy Head (west 3pm)
	23	Passes Prawle Point (7:20pm)
	30	Arrives at Marennes, from Antwerp
	12 June	Sails for Ghent
	26 July	Anchored at Deal
	28	Put back and Anchored, Dungeness
	19 August	Arrives Marennes from Ghent
	28	Sails for Antwerp
	14 September	Arrives Falmouth from Marennes
	17	Sails from Falmouth for Ghent (cargo - Burnt ore)
	30	Seen at Prawle Point
	5 October	Arrives at Ghent
	1 November	Arrives at Cowes, from Ghent heading for Bordeaux
	4	Arrives at Fowey (for Marennes / Bordeaux)
	10 December	Sails for Marennes / Bordeaux (cargo - Phosphate)
1889		Owners name changed, J. G. Goode, Port Issac, Cornwall

	28 January	Arrives Newport, Old Dock
	6 February	Sails from Newport for Par (cargo - light)
	27	Sails from Falmouth for Par
	27 March	Arrives Harberg from Par
	17 April	Sails from Harberg for Lisbon
	3 May	Windbound at Falmouth, for Lisbon
	3 July	Arrives Yarmouth from Lisbon
	16 July	Sails from Yarmouth for Newcastle
	23	Arrives Shields (cargo - light)
	27	Sails for Plymouth
	24 August	Arrives Fowey, from Plymouth
	11 September	Sails for Antwerp
	16	Seen off Beachy Head, east
	7 October	Arrives Sunderland, from Antwerp
	21 October	Sails for Penzance, (cargo 120 tons coke; 60 tons coal)
	12 November	Arrives Penzance
	26	Sails for Rochester
	6 December	Seen off Beachy Head
	29 December	Arrives Falmouth (from London)
1890	5 January	Arrives Whitehaven from Rochester (some sails split)
	8	Sails from Whitehaven
	13	Sails from Falmouth for Isle of Man
	3 February	Sails for Rotterdam from Whitehaven
	25	At Plymouth (windbound)
	6 March	Sails for Rotterdam
	26	Sails for Newcastle
	28	Arrives Shields, from Rotterdam
	22 April	Sails for Fowey
	9 June	Sails for Charlestown, from Newport (cargo - 275 tons coal)
	5 July	Arrives Antwerp from Charlestown
	24	Sails for Cork
	9 August	Arrives Queenstown (cargo - general)
	29	Sails from Cardiff for Par
	19 September	Sails for Dordt, from Par
	25 October	Arrives Shields, from Dordt
	1 November	Sails for Pembroke
	5 December	Sails for Charlestown from West Bute Dock, Cardiff
1891	11 March	Arrives Gravesend
	12	Clears customs at London bound for Antwerp
	1 June	Arrives Exmouth from Antwerp (cargo - phosphate)
	15 August	Sails for Par, from West Bute Docks, Cardiff
1892	23 February	Arrives Ipswich from Terneuzen (cargo Lime phosphate)
	23 March	Arrives Dublin from Ipswich (cargo - manure)
	9 April	Sails for Plymouth
	13 June	Arrives Porthcawl from Wicklow (cargo - ballast)
	17	Sails for Par (cargo - 250 tons coal)
	8 August	Arrives Tyne from Dordt
	19	Sails for Torquay from Shields
	12 October	Sails for Londonderry from Antwerp
	20 November	Sails for Plymouth from Ayr
	22 December	Sails for Charlestown, from Plymouth (cargo - light)
1893	9 January	Arrives Fowey, from Charlestown
	19	Stranded on pier whilst trying to enter Charlestown Harbour
	6 February	Sails for Rotterdam from Charlestown
	25	Sails for Cardiff
	21 March	Sails for Cardiff from Nieuwe Waterweg
	20 April	Sails for Charlestown from Cardiff
	9 May	Arrives Dungeness on route from Charlestown to Ghent
	13	Arrives Ghent

	5 June	Arrives Dublin (cargo - 270 tons manure)
	23	Passes Lizard (east)
	26	Arrives Ghent from Dublin
	3 July	Sails for Wicklow, from Ghent
	20 (approx)	Arrives Wicklow(cargo - 275 tons ground phosphate)
	27	Arrives Cardiff from Wicklow
	12 August	Arrives Charlestown from Cardiff
	27	Sails for Antwerp
	1 September	At Flushing
	12	Sails for Sunderland from Antwerp
	16	Arrives Sunderland
	25	At South Dock, Sunderland awaiting departure for Landerneau
	3 October	Sails for Landerneau
	21	Arrives Brest from Sunderland
	15 November	Arrives Cardiff from Landerneau (cargo - potatoes)
	2 December	Sails for Par, from Cardiff
	6	Arrives Par
1894	20 Jan	Arrives Flushing / Antwerp from Par
	22 February	Arrives Dublin from Antwerp
	4 April	Arrives Ostend from Cork (cargo - 270 tons Sulpha Soda)
	22	Arrives Dublin from Ostend
	21 May	Arrives Cardiff from Dublin (cargo - burnt ore)
	1 June	Crewman knocked overboard in storm
	4	Arrives Par
	21	Arrives Flushing / Antwerp from Par
	27 July	Sails for Portsmouth from Antwerp
	23 August	Sails for Fowey, from Weymouth
	3 September	Sails from Par for Antwerp
	7	Arrives Flushing / Antwerp from Par
	21	Sails from Antwerp for Topsham
	23	Arrives Exmouth
	4 October	Sails for Antwerp
	13	Went ashore at Heyst
	14	Refloats on tide and was undamaged
	21 November	Passes through Flushing - from Antwerp to Exeter
	23	Arrives Exeter (cargo - glass and zinc)
	6 December	Sails for Pentewan
	19	Arrives Antwerp from Pentewan
1895	26 January	Arrives Falmouth from Antwerp
	17 February	Arrives Dublin from Antwerp (cargo - 250 tons ground phosphate)
	28	Arrives Cardiff from Dublin (cargo - burnt ore)
	18 March	Arrives Fowey from Cardiff
	11 April	Sails from Par for Antwerp
	31 May	Arrives Cardiff
	7 June	Sails for Par
	27 August	Sails from Cardiff for St. Valery Sur Somme (cargo - 270 tons coal)
	23 September	Seen off Lizard
	27	Arrived Liverpool from St. Valery Sur Somme
	19 October	Sailed for Antwerp, from Liverpool
1896	2 January	Sailed for Antwerp from Par
	13 February	Seen at Flushing heading for Cardiff
	29	Arrives Cardiff
	12 March	Sails for Par
	31	Arrives St Valery (sur Somme) from Par
	21 April	Passes West at Lizard
	30	Arrives Weston Point from St Valery
	21 May	Arrives Delfzyl from Liverpool

	13 June	Sails for Hull
	24	Sails for Kingsbridge
	6 August	Arrives Antwerp from Pentewan
	24	In Flushings having lost topsail yards, on route to Newcastle
	31 August	Passes Flushing heading for Newcastle
	14 September	Sails from Tyne for London
	1 October	Arrives Dartmouth from Newcastle
	19 November	Sails from Antwerp for Topsham
	27	Arrives Exmouth from Antwerp
1897	9 January	Sails for Runcorn from Teignmouth Master - Soper
	6 February	Sails for Par, from Runcorn
	15	Arrives Par
	10 March	Arrives Dunkirk from Par, grounded on bottom of lock
	30	Sails for Par Master - Thomas
	21 April	Sails for Dunkirk from Par
	29 May	Arrives Shields from Dunkirk Master - Bate
	8 June	Sails for Fowey from Tyne
	20	Arrives Fowey
	30	Sails for Par
	19 July	Sails for Newport from Antwerp
	27	Passes Anvil Point
	3 August	Passes Barry Island - in tow
	12	Clears Newport for Charlestown (cargo - coal)
	14	Sails for Charlestown
	2 September	Arrives Antwerp from Charlestown
	15	Sails for Newcastle
	25	Arrives Tyne
	29	Sails for Blyth
	27 October	Arrives Fowey from Plymouth
	7 December	Passes Yarmouth, west
1898	12 January	Sails for Dunkirk from Par
	13 February	Passes Ventnor - west
	28	Arrives Par
	17 March	Arrives Antwerp from Par
	1 April	Sails for London
	25	Arrives Fowey
	10 May	Arrives Flushing from Fowey
	3 June	Sails for Shoreham
	13	Sails for Plymouth from Shoreham
	11 July	Sails for Teignmouth from Antwerp
	12 August	Arrives Ayr from Stranraer
	23	Sails for Plymouth from Ayr
	31	Arrives Par
	20 September	Arrives Antwerp
	10 October	Arrives Dublin
	31	Sails for Cardiff
	2 November	Arrives Cardiff (cargo - burnt ore)
	18	Arrives Charlestown
	1 December	Arrives Flushing
	24	Sails for Truro from Flushing
	31	Anchors at Brixham
1899	6 Jan	Arrives Truro
	25	Sails for Falmouth from Padstow
	18 February	Sails from Ghent for Cork
	26	Seen off Roche's Point
	28	Arrives Cork

15 March	Sails from Cork
20	Arrives Cardiff, Bute West Dock
1 April	Sails for Plymouth from Cardiff
25	Passes Prawle Point, east
11 May	Sails for Ipswich from Dunkirk
24	Arrives Exmouth, from Dunkirk
15 June	Sails for Antwerp from Fowey
21	Arrives Antwerp
7 July	Sails for Dublin
25	Arrives Dublin (cargo - phosphate)
3 August	Sails for Cardiff
19	Sails for Charlestown from Cardiff
24	Arrives Charlestown
7 September	Passes Prawle Point, east
11	Arrives Antwerp
14 October	Arrives Belfast from Antwerp (cargo - phosphate)
31	Wrecked at Hell's Mouth, on route from Belfast to Cardiff (cargo - burnt ore)
6 December	Body of one of the lost crewmen washed up at Borthiago

7. Analysis

Rob The Ranter is reported as wrecked on 30 October 1899¹, at Hell's Mouth near Abersoch. The initial report by the local Lloyd's Agent was not optimistic stating that the vessel had already taken on water and that the cargo was impossible to save². By 6 November^{3, 4} she had completely broken up demonstrating that the initial fear of the agent was well founded as the cargo had been washed out. This information was widely reported, throughout multiple newspapers, but there was very little difference between these reports, possibly due to them all being taken from the same source, however, there was one exception⁵ which mentions that *Rob The Ranter* was a schooner.

It was not until January 1900⁶ that the newspapers reported on the incident in more detail. This report though was primarily related to the rescue of four of the members of the crew by a local man and gives detail of the incident in order to make full account of his bravery. According to the account she had been caught in a strong SW storm near Bardsey Island and been dismasted, helplessly being driven into Hell's Mouth. The crew of six had been forced into the ship's lifeboat but her master, Bate and the rest of the crew, were thrown out. A local man Mr John Williams of Trefollwyn Fawr witnessed the capsizing and successfully brought four of them ashore. Unfortunately, two unnamed members of the crew were drowned⁶.

This is the extent of the evidence which is available on line regarding the loss of *Rob The Ranter*. Multiple databases have been explored, including the RNLi Archive as well as the British Newspaper Archive and Welsh Newspapers on Line. However, this does provide a significant amount of information on which to examine the history of the vessel itself. The Lloyd's Wreck Return clearly shows that *Rob The Ranter* was cited in the 1899 Register⁷ which a review of provides a significant amount of detail and that she is listed in the Lloyd's Register for that year.

According to the 1899 Register⁷ *Rob the Ranter* was built in July 1874 at Kingston and her master was called Bate, strongly suggesting that this is the same vessel. The Register also confirms the name of her owner, Mr J. G. Goode and dimensions.

Tracing back through the Lloyd's Registers that are currently available on line^{7 - 12} it is also possible to follow her changing fortunes, including changes to master and owner. Interestingly, between 1889¹² and 1894¹¹ her master is listed as J. G. Goode, who was her owner at the time of her loss¹. A possible explanation for this is that he may have initially bought her as master / owner but then retired but continued to operate her as a form of retirement income.

It is also noted that she is in different ownership between 1883¹³ and 1889, based on the entry in the Lloyd's Register for that year¹³. In 1883 *Rob the Ranter* is listed as having a master H. Osborne and is owned by Mr A Geils of Inverness. Therefore, somewhere in the intervening period she must have been sold by her initial owner, raising questions that need to be answered if a complete picture of *Rob The Ranter* is to be drawn.

In an attempt to identify the date of selling more accurately another key piece of information available in all the Lloyd's Registers of this period was used, her official number; 62123^{9 - 13}. This information enabled a search of records stored in the Crew List Index Project, an on line repository of mercantile shipping records¹⁴. Indeed an exploration of the records in this repository enables a timeline of ownership to be drawn up.

Rob The Ranter was initially registered at Inverness on 1 October 1874¹⁵, as a 147 tons sailing vessel. She then is entered in to the Mercantile Navy List in 1875¹⁶, owned by Mr George Lawter of Burghead Elgin. At this time she is noted to be rigged as a brigantine. This initial period of ownership continues until 1883¹⁷ where she then appears to have changed hands to a Mr Andrew Geils of Portsoy, Banff, suggesting that this occurred in 1882 due to the timing of publications of the Navy List, although there is no explanation provided in these sources as to why this occurred, this information does tie in with the information in the Lloyd's Registers. However, this period in her life is a relatively short one as by 1887¹⁸ she has changed hands again, now being owned by Joseph G. Goad of Port Issac, Cornwall, again reflecting the Lloyd's Registers. When this transfer of ownership actually takes place is less certain than the previous as the online records do not show the 1886 list, although the 1885¹⁹ record shows her still in the ownership of Mr Geils at time of publication, suggesting a date between these two records. A review of the timeline for this period would suggest that it occurs between July and September of that year as there is a gap in her being listed during this period and when she does appear it is under the command of a new master. This time line will be discussed more thoroughly later.

It is in 1887¹⁸ that her Port of Registry also changes, to Fowey. It is important to note that the changing of the owners name occurs in the 1889²⁰ Mercantile Navy List, but it is likely that this is a correction in spelling and not a change in ownership as his surname is changed to Goode, therefore this is the name of the final owner J. G. Goode¹. Her final listing in the Mercantile Navy List is, as would be expected, 1899²¹, owned by J. G. Goode, which corresponds with the information in the Lloyd's Register⁷ and Wreck Return¹. However, there is one conflicting piece of information throughout the entries in the Mercantile Navy List^{16 - 21} and in the Appropriations Book¹⁵ she is listed as brigantine rigged whereas in the Lloyd's sources she is listed as a schooner, the reason for this is not understood.

Based on the listing in the Mercantile Navy List^{16 - 21} it is possible to conclude that during this period there was only one vessel operating in British waters under the name *Rob The Ranter*. Therefore, is it possible to recount more of the history of this vessel from contemporary newspaper articles and provide reason as to why events seem to occur in her time line?

Rob The Ranter makes her first appearance in the Shipping Intelligence on 14 October 1874²², having sailed from Aberdeen on 6 October, bound for the Baltic with a cargo of herrings. This first journey seems to have been uneventful, as she arrived without incident on or around 24 October^{23,24}, under master Winchester. She then must have sailed quickly for Aberdeen, where she appears to have arrived by 21 November²⁵. She finally arrives back at her home port by 3 December 1874²⁶, successfully concluding her first commercial voyage.

There seems to have been little rest for *Rob The Ranter* though as by 21 December²⁷ she is at Millwall, under master Manchester, although this is likely a mis-spelling of Winchester, the cited masters name on the previous voyage and subsequent ones. At this point it appears that she needed to undergo some level of significant repairs as she is next reported as being in dry dock²⁸, but this does not appear to have taken too long as by 28 December she is back at Millwall Dock²⁹. However, she does not appear to have departed Millwall until 5 January, where she is seen to pass out the river past Deal, on this occasion seemingly head for Cardiff, via Winchester³⁰, arriving at Cardiff on 14 January³¹. On this occasion her cargo appears to have been manure³². She remained in Cardiff until 25 January, when she appears to have sailed for Cadiz³³, with a cargo of coal³⁴.

However, it seems to have taken *Rob The Ranter* some time to arrive in Cadiz, listed as under master Winchester. She arrived there on 2 March 1875³⁵, having detoured via the Rio Grande. There is no explanation as to why this detour occurred, but it is possible that this was a planned lay over, or they may have had to make repairs for one reason or another. Certainly on the return voyage she again calls at Rio Grande on 24 April³⁶, which would suggest that she had enjoyed an extended period in Cadiz before making the voyage back home. There is then no mention in shipping intelligence reports until 12 August³⁷ where it is noted that *Rob The Ranter* departed on 29 July for Falmouth, like all previous reports there is little information given, especially since there seems to have been a highly extended stop over at Rio Grande. She finally arrived at Falmouth in early September³⁸. She finally arrived back in Scotland in late September, although there was little rest, soon departing Peterhead for Fraserburgh in early October³⁹. However, this ends her first twelve months at sea following registration.

It was during her departure from Fraserburgh, that she was involved in her first newspaper documented incident⁴⁰. When departing Fraserburgh Harbour on 30 October she was under the guidance of a small pilot boat. During these proceedings a steam tug collided with *Rob The Ranter* with the small pilot boat caught between the two larger vessels. Both vessels were seriously damaged and, perhaps more significantly, the master of the pilot boat had his hand severed.

By accounts the repairs did not take too long as by 18 December *Rob The Ranter* had arrived in Ystad, Sweden⁴¹. This seems to be another busy year for her. In February she sails from Shields to Plymouth⁴². Then there is some routine reports available regarding departures around Shields. By June though it seems the crew are once again being treated to the warmers climbs of Italy as she is seen to depart Leghorn, on Italy's west coast on 6 June⁴³, arriving in Bristol on 29 July⁴⁴. Following this she moves around the coast to Cardiff, from where on 22 August she sails for Maderia⁴⁵, where she arrives on the 9 September⁴⁶. From here it seems that she may have taken the scenic route back to British waters and on 24 September she arrives at Saffi⁴⁷. Her journey continues then, arriving in Queenstown on 3 November carrying a cargo of Maize from Saffi⁴⁸.

Reviewing the course of 1876 for *Rob The Ranter* and her crew they must have been exhausted by the time she put in to her home port at the end of the year. Certainly the vessel had been almost constantly at sea since probably May. The effect this had on the physical condition of the crew can only be guessed at. But for the owner there must have been considerable value in these long

voyages, although it can only be speculated it is likely that it is profit which is the primary motivator in this type of work, especially for a small vessel with only 6 crew members.

There seems to have been no rest for the crew though, as by 23 January *Rob The Ranter* was back in Saffi⁴⁹. The constant working of the vessel must have played on the crew. Certainly there is evidence of discourse amongst them as on 3 March there is a court case reported in the Shipping and Mercantile Gazette⁵⁰, at Falmouth. Ordinary Seaman, Joseph Cook had brought charges against Mate George Wright for hitting him whilst he was at the wheel on 26 February. Wright seems to have admitted to the charge, testifying that the plaintiff had dangerously allowed the wheel to veer two points, putting the vessel at risk. From his statement it seems clear that Wright did not like Cook very much. The outcome of this case was that Wright was fined 1S and costs.

Again the voyages seem to continue and appear to becoming more adventurous as on 23 July *Rob The Ranter* finds herself in Harbor Grace, Newfoundland, from where she is heading to Labrador⁵¹. Following this she seems to disappear from the shipping intelligence until November, where she is once again found in the Mediterranean, this time in Genoa and heading for Girgenti⁵². Evidence suggests again that this schedule had taken its toll on the crew, as on return to British waters in January, the hitherto constant master of the vessel, Winchester⁵³, seems to be replaced for the next voyage by Masson, again heading for Cadiz⁵⁴. Given the constant stress that Winchester would have been under it would not be unreasonable for fatigue to be the reasons for this change, or there could of course be other explanations. It has not been possible to identify if there were any other changes to the officers and crew from the online sources. To further explore changes to crew access to official ship's logs would be required.

Under the new master a succession of long voyages seem to be made without incident, which can be viewed in the timeline in the Result Section. This has timeline has been compiled based on, unreferenced accounts in contemporary newspapers and is replicable using the vessels name and dates between initial registry and wrecking. Although it was considered referencing each entry there were too considerable a number for this to be practicable in this report⁵⁵.

In October 1881, following a voyage to Newfoundland, *Rob The Ranter* was returning to home waters across the Atlantic when on the 18 October she ran in to a hurricane and suffered considerable damage. This was significant enough to warrant reporting by wire in the Shipping Intelligence⁵⁶. This damage may be the crucial factor in explaining why she was sold, the cost of repairs not being economical for her current owner. She must have undergone some repairs on her return as by she appears in a sales advertisement 14 March at Shields⁵⁷, where she is lying at anchor, at Felling having been coppered and copper fastened. This would support the suggestion earlier that she was bought by Mr Geils around 1882.

Seemingly, under the new ownership, she continues with much the same pattern of foreign voyages as before, mostly without incident, as seen on her timeline. That is until 30 March 1883⁵⁸, where she is involved in an incident off Ramsgate. In this event she collides with the lightship sustaining damage to her mainsail, main boom and some of the bulwarks, but is able to continue on her way. However one of her crew is injured in the incident, able-seaman W. Masson, who is taken ashore by the local lifeboat.

According to the records seen earlier she again changed hands somewhere around 1887. Reviewing her appearances in the shipping intelligence for this period there is a gap in activity between January and April of 1887. When she does reappear there is a change in name of master and on 17 July she is noted to be of Fowey, suggesting that she has been re-registered by this point. There is also a notable change in the types of voyages she undertakes, in that these are more local between Sunderland, Netherlands, Ireland, South coast and Iberia. During the first seven years of this phase in her life there seems to be little of note occurring, in the way of incidents, although she seems to be constantly busy. The one exception to this being that on 5 January 1890 she had to put in to Whitehaven having had some of her seals spilt⁵⁹. However, it appears that 1894 was not a good year for her.

On 1 June 1894 there is a incident reported⁶⁰ whilst in heavy seas passing Dodman Head. Thomas Bradshaw, one of the crew members had been knocked overboard when the main boom jibbed, whilst the mainsail was being taken in. It appears he was unable to swim and was wearing oils and despite searching for him throughout the night they had not been able to recover him. The master reported this incident on arrival at Par, in Cornwall on 4 June. Later the same year there are two newspaper reports of her having gone ashore on the 13 October at Heyst, although these same reports also state that she was safely reflected the following day and was able to continue on her way without damage^{61, 62}.

Evidence from the timeline would suggest that Goode continued as owner and master of *Rob The Ranter* until 1897 where he was replaced by Soper, as reported in January of that year. This however, does not seem to have been a position Soper held for long though as barely three months into his tenure on 10 March, she becomes grounded in the lock on entering Dunkirk⁶³. When she again sails at the end of March⁶⁴ it is under the command of a man named Thomas. Thomas may have been the first mate, if he held the appropriate qualification, but this appears to be his only voyage in command as the next time she sails from a British port it is with a new master, who would turn out to be her last; Bate.

Bate seems to have had a relatively trouble free period of command until 1899. On 15 June of that year she is seen to sail out of Fowey for the last time, her destination Antwerp⁶⁵. It would seem from the compiled time line that for most of the year she had been moving between Antwerp, Dublin and Cardiff, with some other ports on occasion.

Her final voyage was from Belfast and, as previously documented, she was wrecked at Hell's Mouth on 30 October 1899, with the loss of two crew members. The body of one of these was later reported as recovered⁶⁶ on the 6 December having been washed ashore at Borthiago, the body was not identified, which is unsurprising having spent five weeks drifting.

Following this there are no further newspaper articles identified relating to *Rob The Ranter*, of Fowey.

8. Conclusions & Recommendations

There are several conclusions that must be drawn from this report relating to both the history of *Rob The Ranter*, wrecked in 1899 and to the availability of documentary evidence which is now on line.

Firstly the vessel herself, *Rob The Ranter* had a twenty-five year career as a cargo vessel. Although of no great size she seems to have covered a great deal of distance in her life time. For much of her early career she seems to have travelled to far flung places, from North Africa to North America. These voyages were seemingly not without incident, although the court case of 1877 shows that they certainly did happen. The cargo she carried was also broad, and seemingly unexciting, for example; herrings, coal, corn and fertiliser, however these were all essentials for a country undergoing rapid development in the second half of the nineteenth century. It is felt that her story must be fairly typical of other such vessels around Britain at this time and that alone makes understanding her story important, as it helps to build a picture of what life must have been like as crew aboard these vessels and for the families they left behind for months on end. It seems to be a sad end to her story that due to the number of vessels which went ashore at Hell's Mouth during this period, we are unable to identify her wreckage today.

With regards to further research for this vessel, once physical archives become readily accessible again it may be possible to conduct further research on the crew. Several crew members were named in this report, but these are likely to be just a few amongst many. In a similar ways it would be a matter of completion to research the vessels various masters, in doing so this may answer the question as to Mr Thomas was, whether he was the mate acting as master or if he was an outsider brought in for the return from Dunkirk in 1897. Evidence may also be identified regarding the fates of her three owners, possibly this would be more readily available than the details of her crew.

The second set of conclusions which can be drawn relate to the availability of on line resources. Prior to undertaken this on line search the author had previously had some experience of researching wrecked vessels using the same platforms. However, prior to this exercise it was not clear to what extent the newspaper shipping intelligence were complete. It is suggested that in relation to this particular vessel the shipping intelligence is fairly comprehensive, although it is acknowledged that there are some gaps, some of which may be explained by changes in management. There is a question now as to whether a similar result can be achieved with other vessels, this will then be a more complete test of how effective a search methodology this is.

On line resources are being developed at a high rate. The number of repositories for specific aspects of history are immense, if the researcher is aware of them. Difficulty arises when there is a lack of awareness and maybe that is something for the controllers of these repositories to address moving forward. Certainly the initial search for data in relation to *Rob The Ranter* took only a couple of hours to compile. However drawing up the vessels timeline took significantly longer, probably in excess of 20 hours, as each newspaper entry had to be reviewed for relevance. It is also important to note that not all data is currently available on line and as such visits to the various national and county archives still need to be undertaken, however these can now be undertaken in a much more focused way.

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