

**Welsh Wreck Web Research Project  
(North Cardigan Bay)  
On-line research into the:  
*SV Sierra Miranda*  
*And a case of mistaken identity***



The SV Sierra Miranda moored by the Bush Warehouse, Princes Wharf, Bristol in March 1884  
(image <https://collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/resource/PRG+1373/8/103> )

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Report Title:

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## 1.0 Abstract

This report is the result of an online investigation into the grounding, ongoing mercantile shipping career, renaming, and demise of the SV Sierra Miranda, sold on and renamed Maria Borges, before foundering in mysterious circumstances off the East coast of N America in 1922.

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**2.4 Contributors**

The following people are thanked for contributing to the research

Mr Ian Cundy

Mr Chris Holden

Mr Stephen Rhodes

**2.5 Abbreviations**

Abbreviations used in this report -

MADU Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit

COFLEIN National Monuments Record of Wales

SV Sailing Vessel

### 3.0 Introduction

Whilst there is no known evidence of the back story of the *SV Sierra Miranda* having been compiled, there is a great deal of information to be found to build her story.

#### The research starting point –

To address why this ship was selected to research and report – The *SV Sierra Miranda* was an elegant fully rigged sailing ship, still plying her trade on international shipping routes long after steam ships had been introduced. How did she succeed in doing this, especially after apparently going aground off the coast of North Wales early in her life?

This is the only information known about the *SV Sierra Miranda* before the research -

MADU Ref. No.	Date Wrecked	Name	Location 1	Location 2	Details	Vessel Type
299	03/01/1894	<i>SV Sierra Miranda</i>	Cardiganshire	Causeway	Ran aground	Fully Rigged Ship

### 4.0 Research Methodology

The primary research method has been internet searches, using established maritime databases and newspaper archives, using a laptop (MacBook), MS Office suite (Word, Excel).

Resources used include –

- Book - Wreck and Rescue on the Coast of Wales (the lifeboats of Cardigan Bay and Anglesey) by Henry Parry
- British Newspaper Archive
- Lloyds List <https://lloydslist.maritimeintelligence.informa.com/>
- Lloyds Register <https://hec.lrfoundation.org.uk/archive-library/lloyds-register-of-ships-online>
- [www.wrecksite.eu](http://www.wrecksite.eu)
- [www.Discovery.NationalArchives.gov.uk](http://www.Discovery.NationalArchives.gov.uk)
- [www.clydeships.co.uk/view.php?ref=19190](http://www.clydeships.co.uk/view.php?ref=19190)
- <http://sunderlandships.com>
- The State Library of South Australia <https://collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/find/sierra+miranda>
- [www.gracesguide.co.uk](http://www.gracesguide.co.uk)
- [www.bristolcitydocks.co.uk](http://www.bristolcitydocks.co.uk)
- Book - Robert Carse *The Twilight of Sailing Ships*, pub Grosset and Dunlap 1965
- Google image and text searches

#### Research questions to answer –

- What really happened at the apparent grounding?
- What type of ship was the *SV Sierra Miranda*?
- What was her ownership history?
- Can we find information about her crew?
- What ports did she trade with, and what types of cargoes did she carry?
- What notable events happened during her travels?
- Where did she meet her end?



Fig 1. *SV Sierra Miranda* fully square rigged. Photo <http://www.clydeships.co.uk/view.php?ref=19190>

## 5.0 Background

### 5.1 The Sierra Shipping Fleet

#### What were the vessel's specifications?

The *SV Sierra Miranda* was built, according to the rules of the Society for Iron Ships, in 1884 by John Reid and Co, in Glen Yard (no 7), Port Glasgow. In the early 1880's, steel was introduced to replace iron as material for ships' hulls, and *SS Sierra Miranda* was constructed with a steel hull. She was built for the Sierra Shipping Company, to be managed by Thompson Anderson and Co, out of Liverpool, as a cargo vessel. The *SS Sierra Miranda* was registered on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1884, her official number being 87957, and international signal code J.H.V.T.

Her gross tonnage was 1888 tons. The vessel dimensions were 264ft 7" long x 39ft x 1' beam x 23ft 9" draught.

She had three masts, and was a fully rigged sailing ship. This 3 masted configuration was a very common for deep-water cargo-carriers of the 19th century. The rigging was the most complex of all contemporary sailing vessel types.

#### What historical information is available relating to the vessel?

There is very little information to be found about the history of the Sierra Shipping Company, of Liverpool. It is known from Lloyds Register that there were at least 13 other sailing vessels in the Sierra fleet at the time of *SV Sierra Miranda*. Those vessels were –

Name of Vessel	Year of launch	Gross Tonnage
Sierra Blanca	1875	1591
Sierra Cadena	1884	1913
Sierra Colonna	1878	1499
Sierra Cordova	1877	1491
Sierra Estrella	1880	1500
Sierra Lucena	1883	1747
Sierra Madrona	1875	1484
Sierra Morena	1875	1423
Sierra Nevada	1877	1523
Sierra Parima	1882	1584
Sierra Pedrosa	1888	1686
Sierra Segura	1888?	1700?
Sierra Ventana	1889	1853

Table 1 - The Sierra Shipping Company Fleet

The shipbuilder John Reid and Co (Port Glasgow) is listed as having built the 'largest fully rigged ship of the 1880's in the British Isles' – could this have been the *SV Sierra Cadena* at 1913 tons?

[https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/John\\_Reid\\_and\\_Co](https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/John_Reid_and_Co)

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF BRITISH REGISTERED SAILING VESSELS.							663
Official No.	Name of Ship and Port of Registry.	Rig.	Where built.	When built.	International Code Signal (if any).	Registered Tonnage.	Owner, or Part Owner, and Manager (if recorded). × Signifies <i>Managing Owner</i> . Italics signify <i>Manager</i> .
82064	Shooting Star, St. John's, N.F.L.	Sr.	Placentia Bay, N.F.L.	1876	..	19	Patrick Emberly, North Harbor, Placentia Bay, N.F.L.
27423	Shoreham, Shoreham . . . .	K.	Shoreham . . . .	1859	P.R.G.D	59	×John Moore, Island of Cravedish, Clew Bay, co. Mayo.
18073	Shorne, Rochester . . . .	Spl.	Northfleet . . . .	1886	M.K.G.T	35	Josiah Jackson, Shoeburyness, Essex.
58839	Shortest Day, Plymouth . . . .	K.	Cowes . . . .	1870	..	33	×William T. F. Hart, West Hooe, Plymouth.
45332	Shot, Nassau, N.P. . . . .	Sr.	Absco . . . .	1882	V.J.B.R	4	(c) John Henry Sweeting.
102425	Shulah, Plymouth . . . .	Cr.	Southampton . . . .	1890	..	7	John L. Coad, Leigham St., Plymouth.
93659	Siberia, Liverpool . . . .	F.	Northwich . . . .	1877	..	96	The Salt Union, Lim., 2, Salters' Hall Ct., City, London. <i>John M. Fells, Winsford, Cheshire.</i>
45579	Sibyl, Cowes . . . .	Cr.	Cowes . . . .	1859	V.D.T.M	28	George Patten, 12, Devonshire St., Plymouth.
67031	Sibyl, Faversham . . . .	Spl.	Sittingbourne . . . .	1872	..	35	The Whitstable Shipping Co., Lim., Whitstable, Kent. <i>James Robert Daniels, same address.</i>
95117	Sibyl, Portsmouth . . . .	K.	Emsworth . . . .	1890	..	35	×Jas. Duncan Foster, Emsworth, Hants.
42138	*Sibyl, Turk's Islands . . . .	Bg.	(a) . . . .	(a) . . . .	T.H.N.D	153	William T. Frink, St. Stephen's, N.B.
77894	Siddartha, Sackville, N.B. . . .	Bk.	Sackville, N.B. . . .	1880	T.W.R.S	463	Josiah Wood, Sackville, N.B.
76423	Sidney, Liverpool . . . .	Sp.	(a) . . . .	(a) . . . .	..	40	Morsey Dooks & Harbour Board, Revenue Buildings, Liverpool.
75944	Sidon, St. John's, N.F.L. . . .	Sr.	Burgeo, N.F.L. . . .	1876	..	23	George W. R. Bowbridge, Burgeo, N.F.L.
91313	Sidonia, Grimsby . . . .	K.	Grimsby . . . .	1885	..	81	The Grimsby Fishsalesmen's Association, Lim., Grimsby. <i>Jas. Edwards, 74, Park St., NewClee, Grimsby.</i>
96928	Sidonian, Charlottetown, P.E.I.	Bkn.	Grand River, P.E.I.	1890	M.B.L.O	389	John Yeo, Port Hill, Pr. Ed. Is.
78511	Sidwell, Rochester . . . .	Spl.	Sittingbourne . . . .	1877	..	48	John D. Drake, Sittingbourne, Kent.
100101	Sierra, Parrsboro', N.S. . . .	Sr.	Eatonville, N.S. . . .	1891	..	124	Frederick Rupert Eaton, Eatonville, N.S.
94804	Sierra, Victoria B.C. . . .	Sr.	(a) . . . .	(a) . . . .	..	25	Wing Mo Ah Look, Saanich, B.C.
74482	Sierra Blanca, Liverpool . . . .	S.	Cartsdyke . . . .	1875	P.H.V.W	1518	The Sierra Shipping Co., Lim., Fenwick Chambers, Liverpool. <i>Andrew M. Anderson, same address.</i>
87955	Sierra Cadena, Liverpool . . . .	S.	Liverpool . . . .	1884	J.H.R.F	1768	The Sierra Shipping Co., Lim., Fenwick Chambers, Liverpool. <i>Andrew M. Anderson, same address.</i>
78785	Sierra Colonna, Liverpool . . . .	S.	Stockton-on-Tees . . . .	1878	R.M.L.W	1397	The Sierra Shipping Co., Lim., Fenwick Chambers, Liverpool. <i>Andrew M. Anderson, same address.</i>
76498	Sierra Cordova, Liverpool . . . .	S.	Liverpool . . . .	1877	Q.P.F.S	1371	The Sierra Shipping Co., Lim., Fenwick Chambers, Liverpool. <i>Andrew M. Anderson, same address.</i>
81346	Sierra Estrella, Liverpool . . . .	S.	Stockton-on-Tees . . . .	1880	T.F.P.S	1392	The Sierra Shipping Co., Lim., Fenwick Chambers, Liverpool. <i>Andrew M. Anderson, same address.</i>
87394	**Sierra Lucena, Liverpool . . . .	S.	Greenock . . . .	1883	H.W.T.K	1621	The Sierra Shipping Co., Lim., Fenwick Chambers, Liverpool. <i>Andrew M. Anderson, same address.</i>
87957	Sierra Miranda, Liverpool . . . .	S.	Port Glasgow . . . .	1884	J.H.V.T	1740	The Sierra Shipping Co., Lim., Fenwick Chambers, Liverpool. <i>Andrew M. Anderson, same address.</i>
74469	Sierra Morena, Liverpool . . . .	S.	Sunderland . . . .	1875	W.T.D.M	1385	The Sierra Shipping Co., Lim., Fenwick Chambers, Liverpool. <i>Andrew M. Anderson, same address.</i>
78711	Sierra Nevada, Liverpool . . . .	S.	Southampton . . . .	1877	R.C.D.V	1474	The Sierra Shipping Co., Lim., Fenwick Chambers, Liverpool. <i>Andrew M. Anderson, same address.</i>
86212	Sierra Parima, Liverpool . . . .	S.	Port Glasgow . . . .	1882	W.M.G.Q	1480	The Sierra Shipping Co., Lim., Fenwick Chambers, Liverpool. <i>Andrew M. Anderson, same address.</i>
87911	Sierra Pedrosa, Liverpool . . . .	S.	Port Glasgow . . . .	1883	J.C.B.D	1542	The Sierra Shipping Co., Lim., Fenwick Chambers, Liverpool. <i>Andrew M. Anderson, same address.</i>
96298	Sierra Ventana, Liverpool . . . .	S.	Liverpool . . . .	1889	L.C.R.N	1787	The Sierra Shipping Co., Lim., Fenwick Chambers, Liverpool. <i>Andrew M. Anderson, same address.</i>
63158	Siesta, London . . . .	Sr.	Fairlie, Ayr . . . .	1869	J.V.W.K	70	×Edward Wrixon Bayly, Royal London Yacht Club, Savile Row, London.
90406	Siesta, Southampton . . . .	Yl.	Southampton . . . .	1884	J.M.B.H	20	Harry Sopper, Stock Exchange, London.
85535	Sigefroi, Yarmouth, N.S. . . .	Sr.	Tusket Wedge, N.S. . . .	1883	..	41	David E. Beveridge, Melbourne, Yarmouth co., N.S.
88076	Signal, Nassau, N.P. . . .	Sr.	Bahamas . . . .	1883	..	15	Richard N. Saunders, Hopetown, Bahamas.
10272	Signal, Grimsby . . . .	Sk.	Brightlingsea . . . .	1854	..	18	Mason Croft, Mill Rd., Cleethorpes, Linc.
75655	Signal, Quebec . . . .	Bk.	Quebec . . . .	1877	W.D.K.F	574	James G. Ross, Quebec.
77541	Silas H. Morse, St. John's, N.F.L.	Sr.	Pugwash, N.S. . . .	1877	..	114	William Duff, Carbonear, N.F.L.
87353	Silberhorn, Liverpool . . . .	Bk.	Port Glasgow . . . .	1884	J.H.L.N	1853	×Chas. E. & Jno. S. DeWolf, 28, Brunswick St., Lpl.
49631	Silene, Bathurst, R.G. . . .	Cr.	Bordeaux . . . .	1871	..	10	Edmund Allegre, Bathurst, R.G.
28699	Silent, Cowes . . . .	Bg.	Cowes . . . .	1860	..	19	Samuel Leigh, 34, Holy Rood St., Newport, Isle of Wight.
65179	Silent, Ramsgate . . . .	Sk.	Ramsgate . . . .	1872	..	33	H. Summers, Ramsgate. [Lincolnshire.]
90367	Silent Wave, Grimsby . . . .	Dy.	Grimsby . . . .	1884	..	82	×Edwin Bacon, 15, Arlington St., New Clee, Silvanus Bethel, Nassau, N.P.
48276	††Silvanus, Nassau, N.P. . . .	Sr.	New Suffolk, U.S.A. . . .	1847	V.S.D.J	59	
92817	Silver Belle, Grimsby . . . .	K.	Grimsby . . . .	1886	..	83	Wm. Ellis, 62, Hainton St., Weelsby, Lincolnshire.
59357	Silver Belle, St. Andrew's, N.B.	Sr.	Campobello, N.B. . . .	1874	..	13	Peter Malloch, Campobello, N.B.
68550	Silver Cloud, Auckland, N.Z. . . .	Sr.	Sunderland . . . .	1874	N.C.T.V	292	Thomas Munro Carlaw, Auckland, N.Z.
80784	Silver Cloud, Digby, N.S. . . .	Sr.	Brighton, N.S. . . .	1880	..	41	Handford Outhouse, Tiverton, co. Digby, N.S.
76702	Silver Cloud, Grimsby . . . .	Cr.	Grimsby . . . .	1877	..	27	×Ed. Royce, Humber St., Cleethorpes, Grimsby.
78096	Silver Cloud, Plymouth . . . .	Sk.	Plymouth . . . .	1878	..	40	John S. Paddon, Plymouth.
80326	Silver Dart, Yarmouth . . . .	Lr.	Yarmouth . . . .	1880	..	35	Mrs. Sarah Thrower, Exmouth Rd., Yarmouth.
91680	Silver Dip, Nassau, N.P. . . .	Sr.	Andros Island . . . .	1888	..	16	William Riley, Andros Island, Bahamas.

\* Foreign Name "Truxillo." † Formerly the "Auriga." ‡ Formerly the "Calistoga." § Formerly the "Lucile."  
\*\* Formerly the "Inverglas." †† Foreign Name "Elizabeth Hull."

Fig 2 - Mercantile Navy List 1895 (P663), listing the Sierra Shipping fleet, whose registered offices at Fenwick Chambers, Liverpool.

<https://www.crewlist.org.uk/data/viewimages?&name=Sierra%20Miranda&steamsail=Sail&submit=Enter&year=1895>

### What was the story leading up to the grounding?

In January 1894 a Sierra shipping sailing vessel was en route from Barrow to Capetown, South Africa. During a storm it was either blown into, or sought shelter in, Cardigan Bay, dropping anchor near St Patrick's Causeway, a notorious long narrow shoal that protrudes several miles into the bay.

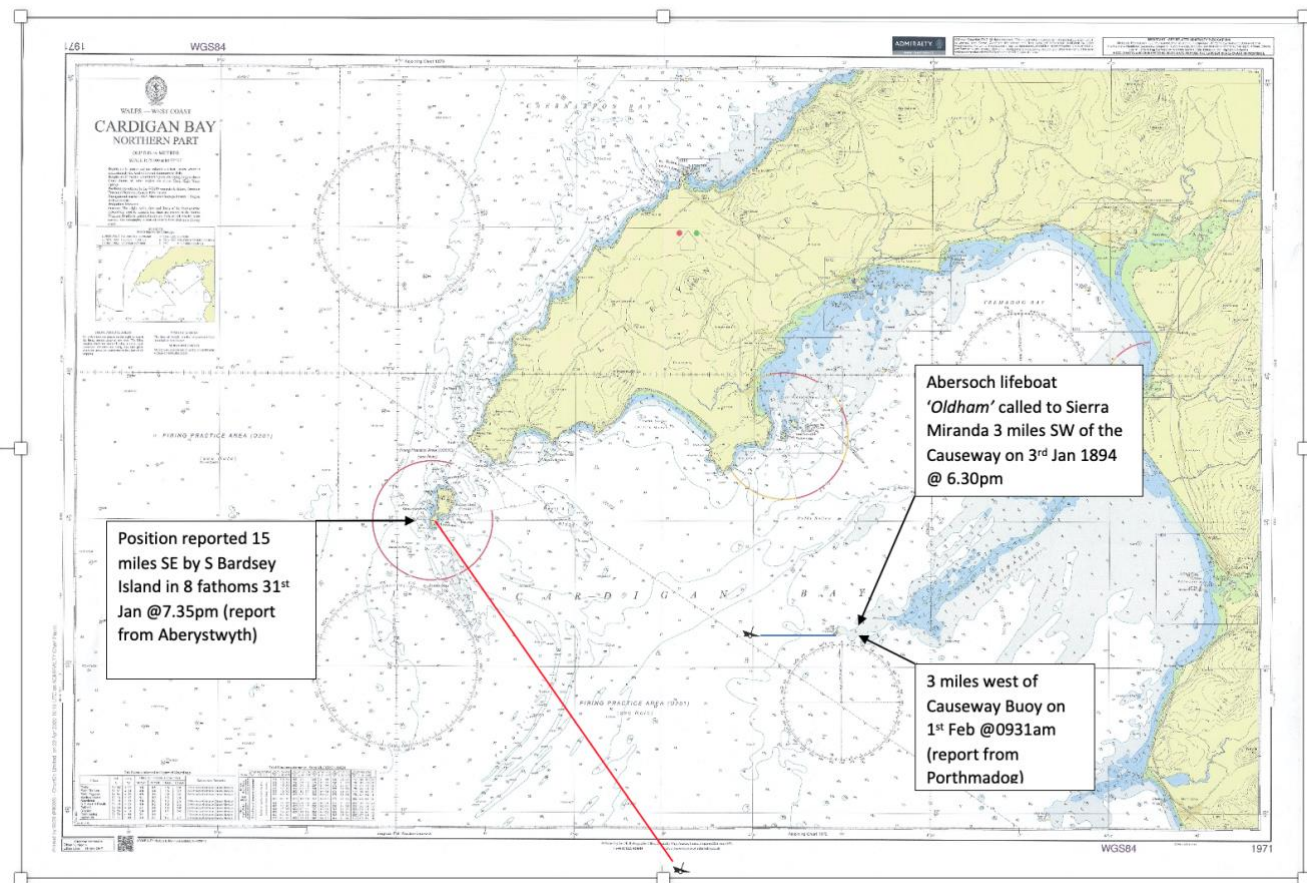


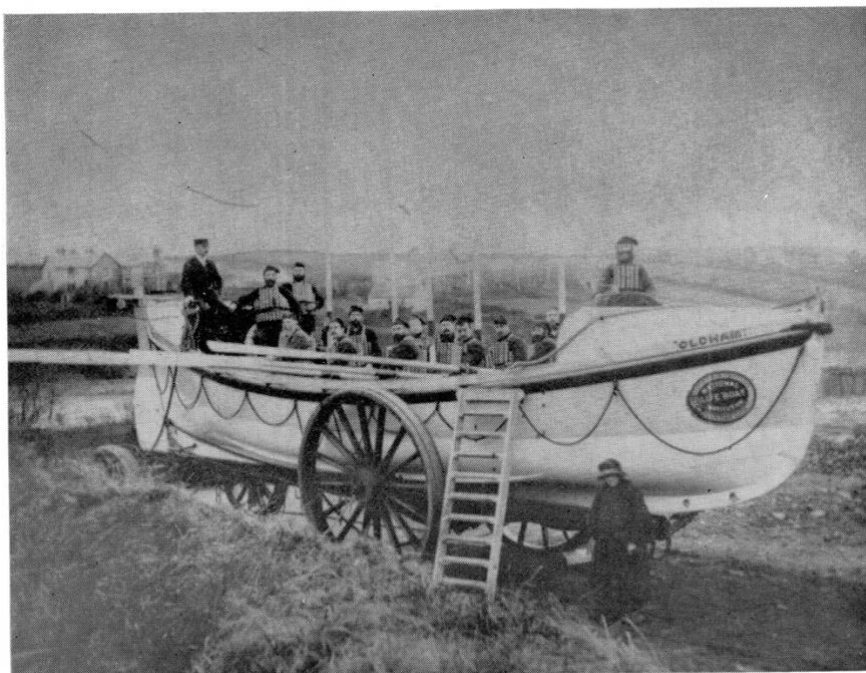
Fig. 3 The location of sightings of the vessel that ran aground near St Patrick's Causeway in Cardigan Bay  
(Map kindly provided by Ian Cundy)

### What evidence indicates that a grounding took place?

The main evidence is found in the book 'Wreck and Rescue on the Coast of Wales' by Henry Parry (published 1969 by D Bradford Barton Ltd, Truro).

In chapter 4 (Abersoch and Penrhyndu), page 56, it states –

*'The secretary received a telegram on January 3rd 1894, stating that a vessel was ashore on the Causeway. On reaching the position at 6.30 that evening, the lifeboatmen found the ship SV Sierra Miranda on a passage from Barrow to Capetown, at anchor 3 miles south west of the Causeway. They remained alongside for half an hour, enduring a squally wind from the NE, and occasional heavy snowfalls, after which the master informed the coxswain that no help was required. The Oldham (lifeboat) then began a long and weary tack back, battling throughout the night against strong winds and extreme cold. Finally she arrived at her station at four the next morning, having accomplished nothing – although not for the lack of trying.'*



*The lifeboat Oldham on her carriage ready for launching; a photograph taken soon after her arrival at Abersoch in 1892.*

Fig 4 The lifeboat *Oldham*. From H Parry book

### What other evidence corroborates the evidence from the H Parry book regarding the vessel's identity?

A search of the British Newspaper Archive (including Lloyds list) produced **no evidence** that *SV Sierra Miranda* was sailing off the coast of Wales at this time.

However, following extensive research into the trading life and ultimate demise of the *SV Sierra Miranda*, and before this report was written, an interesting discovery was made....I decided to read some of the other reports included in the Welsh Wreck Web Research Project. I selected a comprehensive report by Chris Holden (Vessels that escaped from danger in the northern part of Cardigan Bay), which reported on several ships, including the *SV Sierra Morena*, a sailing ship (built 1875, in Sunderland) also of the Liverpool based Sierra Shipping Co. However, the circumstances of *SV Sierra Morena* running aground in a storm, 1<sup>st</sup> February 1894, off St Patrick's Causeway – the same apparent reported location as *SV Sierra Miranda* (albeit apparently one month earlier) - in similar weather conditions, receiving attention from the same lifeboat(s), similarly sending away the lifeboat saying they didn't need assistance, raise the possibility that some key evidence (ie H Parry's book) may be incorrect.

### Which ship ran aground on St Patrick's Causeway?

The grounding of the *SV Sierra Morena* on 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 1894 is well documented in newspapers of the day, notably the South Wales Echo (1<sup>st</sup> Feb) and the Liverpool Mercury (2<sup>nd</sup> Feb), with further evidence in Lloyds List (1<sup>st</sup> Feb) of her name and location.

From this it appears that perhaps the report in H Parry's book has given the vessel the wrong name of *SV Sierra Miranda*, instead of the correct name of *SV Sierra Morena*. The date of the grounding in the book (3rd Jan 1894) also does not align with news reports (1<sup>st</sup> Feb 1894). I conclude that there is a mistake in the H Parry book.

For reference, *SV Sierra Morena* was built in 1875 in Sunderland for Sierra Shipping. Her length was 231.2ft, with a gross tonnage of 1423. She was one of the last sailing vessels built there. Production of sailing vessels by Sunderland shipwrights ceased in 1880.

Total 1 : Vessels matching your search						
Year Built ▲▼	O.N	Vessel Name ▲▼	Builder ▲▼	Yard No ▲▼	Vessel Type ▲▼	Propulsion ▲▼
1875	74469	SIERRA MORENA	Thomas R. Oswald & Co.	149	Cargo	Sailing Vessel

[http://sunderlandships.com/list.php?vessel=sierra+morena&year\\_built=1875&builder=](http://sunderlandships.com/list.php?vessel=sierra+morena&year_built=1875&builder=)

Records show that the official registration of *SV Sierra Morena* was closed in 1897 (ref National Archive). We can assume that she was either lost, scrapped or sold and renamed/re-registered. No further information has been found about her eventual demise.

<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/results/r?&dss=range&ro=any&st=adv&cr=BT110/74/27>



Fig. 5 This photograph of the *SV Sierra Morena* was taken by local amateur photographer Alexander Wilson, during the ship's first recorded visit to Dundee. She arrived after a voyage of 120 days with a cargo of jute from Calcutta. (Date unknown)

<http://www.leisureandculturedundee.com/photopolis/sierra-morena-dundee-harbour-0>

#### **Has anyone dived, recorded, surveyed or worked on the site?**

No reports of finds at the site have been located. It seems unlikely that there was any debris from the apparent grounding of *SV Sierra Morena*. The only possibility is jetsam, but again no evidence of this has been found.

#### **Has anyone previously investigated or researched the vessel back story?**

No known earlier reports about the *SV Sierra Miranda* backstory. My research has brought together many facts about the life of *SV Sierra Miranda*, and her crew, which are collated in this report.

#### **Can we prove that *Sierra Miranda* was not in Cardigan Bay on 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 1894?**

A further search in the British Newspaper Archive for activity relating to *SV Sierra Miranda* at the time produced the evidence of her true whereabouts in Jan/Feb 1894. The Englishman's Overland Mail (14<sup>th</sup> Feb 1894) reports that *SV Sierra Miranda* is due to depart from Rangoon (Burma) on or after the 14<sup>th</sup> Feb 1894. Lloyds List (20<sup>th</sup> Feb 1894) confirms her arrival back in Rangoon from Chittagong, part of India at the time, on 20<sup>th</sup> Feb 1894. We can conclude therefore that the *SV Sierra Miranda* was in the region of the Bay of Bengal at the beginning of February 1894, and nowhere near North Wales!

## 6.0 The ownership and voyages of the *SV Sierra Miranda*

### Ownership history of *SV Sierra Miranda*

Date	Owner	Captain(s)	Flag
1884-1906	Sierra Shipping Co, Liverpool	Capt. T Mesnard Capt. A McMaster	British
1906-1922	A Meling, Stavanger	1. Capt. S Feyling (from 1907) 2. Capt. G Olsen Ihme (from 1915) 3. Capt. O Omland (from 1919)	Norwegian
1922	Browne Willis	Capt. Browne Willis. Vessel renamed <i>SV Maria Borges</i>	Panamanian

Table 2 – Ownership of the *SV Sierra Miranda*

### The crew of the *SV Sierra Miranda*

The following crew list for 1891 was located in the National Archive (ref BT 99/1708/45) –

Ship: *SV Sierra Miranda*; Official number: 87957.

1. A McMaster; rank/rating, Master; year of birth, 1853; place of birth, Wigtown, Scotland; previous ship, same. (Aged 38yr)
2. George Peterson; rank/rating, 1st Mate; year of birth, 1858; place of birth, Stockholm; previous ship, *SV Sierra Estrella*.
3. J H Williams; rank/rating, 2nd Mate; year of birth, 1869; place of birth, Liverpool; previous ship, same.
4. D Lethlevter; rank/rating, Steward; year of birth, 1854; place of birth, Bishop Stortford; previous ship, *SV Lady Isabella*.
5. W Heurson; rank/rating, Cook; age, 42; place of birth, London; previous ship, *Bolderaa*.
6. James Downey; rank/rating, Able Seaman; year of birth, 1821; place of birth, Wexford, Ireland; previous ship, same. Aged 70yr
7. Alexander Ross; rank/rating, Able Seaman; age, 38; place of birth, Liverpool; previous ship, *SV Sierra Cordova*.
8. Richard Carney; rank/rating, Able Seaman; year of birth, 1873; place of birth, Liverpool; previous ship, same.
9. John Ball; rank/rating, Able Seaman; year of birth, 1842; place of birth, Woolwich; previous ship, Bay of Naples.
10. John Lawrie; rank/rating, Able Seaman; year of birth, 1839; place of birth, Dumfries; previous ship, Kate Fawcett.
11. Joseph Driscoll; rank/rating, Able Seaman; year of birth, 1840; place of birth, London; previous ship, *Majestic*.
12. William Pearce; rank/rating, Able Seaman; year of birth, 1870; place of birth, London; previous ship, *Majestic*.

13. C Driscoll; rank/rating, Able Seaman; year of birth, 1862; place of birth, London; previous ship, *Majestic*.
14. W Bridgman; rank/rating, Able Seaman; year of birth, 1841; place of birth, London; previous ship, *Majestic*.
15. J Driscoll; rank/rating, Able Seaman; year of birth, 1861; place of birth, London; previous ship, *Majestic*.
16. J Goggin; rank/rating, Able Seaman; year of birth, 1840; place of birth, London; previous ship, *Majestic*.
17. T Smith; rank/rating, Able Seaman; year of birth, 1845; place of birth, London; previous ship, *Majestic*.
18. Thomas Merry; rank/rating, Able Seaman; year of birth, 1849; place of birth, London; previous ship, *Ganges*.
19. Charles John Caldecot; rank/rating, Apprentice; year of birth, 1875; indentured 18 June 1889 in Cardiff.
20. William George Williams; rank/rating, Apprentice; year of birth, 1875; indentured 19 May 1890 in Liverpool.
21. Henry Seaborn Williamson; rank/rating, Apprentice; year of birth, 1876; indentured 3 April 1890 in Liverpool.
22. Ebenezer Cotton Allen; rank/rating, Apprentice; year of birth, 1876; indentured 24 April 1891 in Dover. Aged 15.
23. William Isaac Williams; rank/rating, Apprentice; year of birth, 1872; indentured 15 August 1887 in Penarth.

From the crew list it can be noted that –

- The First Mate was from Sweden
- The crew included five apprentices
- The oldest crew member was one of the Able Seamen, aged 70yr
- The youngest crew member, one of the apprentices, was just 15yr



<https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/hester/id/646/rec/1>

Fig. 6 The crew of the *SV Sierra Miranda* on her deck. Capt. McMaster is assumed shown in the middle row, 4<sup>th</sup> from right. Photo by Wilhelm Hester, in the University of Washington archive. Circa 1900. The photo, and the crew list of 1891, show us that a crew of 21 to 23 people was typical for a fully rigged sailing ship.

### **The voyages and cargoes of the *SV Sierra Miranda***

*SV Sierra Miranda* worked mainly as a bulk carrier. She undertook many very long voyages with relatively low value (but essential to the UK and Ireland) cargoes such as

- Rice from Rangoon
- Jute from Chittagong
- Wheat from Portland, Oregon, and from Tacoma, nr Seattle to Queenstown, Ireland
- Wheat from Australia to UK
- Coal from Penarth, South Wales, to Mauritius
- Coal from Cardiff to Bombay
- Salt to Calcutta, but no record of where from.

Her capacity for coal was in the region of 2,680 tons, as documented in Lloyd's List on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1887 when she arrived in Bombay (now Mumbai of course) docking on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, having left Cardiff on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1887. Her voyage had taken 105 days.

(See Appendix 1 table for details)

# Times of India - Tuesday 06 December 1887

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... n, Pile and Company  
Rs. 15 ... at which they  
... have declined

... DISCOUNT  
REST.

... security of  
... cent. per  
... subject to

...	Half-Yearly Divid.	Cash Rate.
100	7 pr. ct.	792½
all	5 pr. ct.	890
all	7 pr. ct.	710
al	6 pr. ct.	130
all	17½ pr. ct.	120
£12½	5 pr. ct.	111

## SHIPPING INTELLIGENCE.

Dec, **ARRIVALS.**

S Peshawar (s) ..... Wheeler ..... London, Nov. 10.  
 Victoria (s) ..... Russell ..... Liverpool, Nov. 6.  
 Bhowanigger (s) ..... Nacola ..... Bhowanigger, Dec. 4.

Dec **DEPARTURES.**

S Satara (s) ..... Tice ..... P. Gulf via Kurrachee.  
 H. M. S. Ranger ..... Johnson ..... Persian Gulf.

The following vessels obtained their port clearances yesterday :-  
 Steamer Sumatra, Breeze, for Aden, Jeddah and Moudeida,  
 Barque Coolan, Hall, for Chittagong.

The following vessels began to load yesterday :-  
 Ship Lodestar, for Calcutta.  
 Schooner Bogarry, for Kelakurce.  
 Steamer Victoria, for Marselles, &c.  
 Steamer Bhowanigger, for Bhowanigger.

**THE ship Sierra Miranda** 1,808 tons, Commander Mesnard, which arrived in harbour on the 3rd inst, from Cardiff, 20th August, brought a cargo of 2,682 tons coal The vessel is consigned to the P and O S N Co  
 THE brig Ellias, 176 tons, Nacola, which arrived in harbour on the 4th inst. from Jaffna, 10th Nov, brought

Fig 7 Times of India - Shipping Intelligence (6<sup>th</sup> December 1887)

SV *Sierra Miranda* also carried many cargoes of jute, usually from Chittagong (Bay of Bengal) to the UK. Typically she carried just under 11,000 bales, but on one voyage she carried 13,371 bales. (see below)

## Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser - Tuesday 05 March 1889 - a cargo of jute from Calcutta

THE PUBLIC LEDGER, TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 1889.																					
CALCUTTA SHIPMENTS.																					
STATEMENT of the VESSELS, with their CARGOES, together with the TOTAL QUANTITY, at present on the water from CALCUTTA and CHITTAGONG, destined for the UNITED KINGDOM and CONTINENT.																					
Ships' Names and Destination.	Date of Clearance.	Rice.	Wheat.	Peas.	Dholl, &c.	Seed.			Tea.	Jute.	Jute Cuttings.	Gunnies.	Cotton.	Silk.		Hides, Cow and Buffalo.	Shellac.	Indigo.	Saltpetre.	Castor Oil.	
						Lin.	Rape.	Poppy.						Raw.	Piece Goods.						
		Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Lbs.	Bales.	Bales.	Number.	Bales.	Cwt.	Pieces.	Number.	Cwt.	Cwt.	Tons.	Cwt.	
<b>FOR LONDON.</b>	1888.									12500											
Olymp, Chittagong	Aug. 28																				
Erin's Isle	Oct. 29																				
Foyle, via Demerara	Dec. 1							1384		130385	9534										
Glenburn	8								118072	11766	799										
Majestic	8									14491											
Buckharst	19									16000											
The Hahnemann, Chit.	21																				
Vellore	1889. Jan. 2									12012											
British Empire	4								113227	13371											
Wiltshire, Chit.	12									10064											
Rothsay (str.)	15					2000				10950											
Erne	19				23				16094	800											2169
City of Cambridge (str.)	21	900			90	800			1230000	2500											100
Chusan (str.)	22	500				300			350000	3000			250		2500	36000	1300				900
Cian Drummond (str.)	22	250				500			400000	1000			130		2000	32000	300				300
	22	500				900			400000	3000		48000	150		60000	74000	500				50
																					90

Fig 8 Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser - Cargo details (5<sup>th</sup> March 1889)

In the spring of 1890, a fleet of 3 sailing ships set off from Chittagong with cargoes of jute, totally 38,000 bales, bound for Dundee, in 'fair weather' (until they reached the English coast).

These voyages are of interest because their durations are recorded in the Dundee Courier. The *SV Sierra Miranda* recorded the fastest journey of the 3 ships, at 115 days. Arriving 8 days later was a similarly sized vessel, the *SV Lady Isabella*, an iron hulled three masted cargo vessel. The third vessel, the *Ayrshire* was 24 days behind the *SV Sierra Miranda*. Research on the Clyde Ships website suggests that she may have been the *SV Ayrshire Lass*, a wooden Brigantine launched in 1835 (151 grt, and 77' 6" in length). No other references for the vessel *Ayrshire* were found.



Fig 9 The *SV Lady Isabella*, launched on Clyde 14/08/1882, 256ft long, 1520 grt

Image courtesy of the State Library of Victoria (Australia)

<https://viewer.slv.vic.gov.au/?entity=IE55677&mode=browse>

### Dundee Courier - Wednesday 16 April 1890

THE JUTE FLEET.—Yesterday the *Sierra Miranda* of Liverpool, the *Lady Isabella*, of Glasgow, and the *Ayrshire*, of Glasgow, arrived at Dundee from Chittagong with jute, the total cargoes of the vessels amounting to upwards of 38,000 bales. The *Sierra Miranda* has made the voyage in 115 days, the *Lady Isabella* in 123 days, and the *Ayrshire* in 139 days. They experienced fair weather on the passage until they reached the English coast.

Fig 10. Dundee Courier - Voyage durations from Chittagong (16<sup>th</sup> April 1890)

The Suez Canal had opened in November 1869. However, sailing vessels could not benefit from this new route. It was not a suitable short cut for sailing vessels. The Mediterranean winds were too variable, and the Red Sea was not suitable for large sailing ships.

It is expected that there were many more exports from UK carried by *SV Sierra Miranda*, but no further specific evidence was found. Many of these cargoes probably supported British colonial outposts.

As her career progressed she appears to have carried out more voyages to the west coast of the USA importing wheat to the UK/Ireland.

(See Appendix A: Voyages of the *SV Sierra Miranda*, for a spreadsheet collating further voyages)

**Sierra Shipping executor’s sale of company shares in 1900**

Lloyd’s List reported on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1900 of the upcoming sale of 20,271 shares in Sierra Shipping, each priced at 10s.

At this time the company was still under its original ownership of Thompson, Anderson and Co, Liverpool, and owned at least 10 vessels – listed below in the newspaper advert -



Fig 11 Lloyd’s List – Executors sale of Sierra Shipping shares (5<sup>th</sup> November 1900)

This contrasts with the list of 14 Sierra vessels known to have been run by the company over previous years.

The vessels no longer listed are –

Vessel	Tonnage	Year built	Loss	Source
<i>SV Sierra Madrona</i>	1484 grt	1875	10 <sup>th</sup> Feb 1894 posted missing en route from Liverpool to Rangoon with a cargo of coal	<a href="http://www.wrecksite.eu">www.wrecksite.eu</a>
<i>SV Sierra Morena</i>	1423	1875	Unknown, but name was reused by Sierra Shipping in 1903 for a steel hulled screw steamer	<a href="http://www.clydeships.co.uk">www.clydeships.co.uk</a>
<i>SV Sierra Nevada</i>	1523	1877	Foundered off Port Phillip Heads, Victoria, Australia, with the loss of 23 lives, on 9 <sup>th</sup> May 1900	<a href="http://www.wrecksite.eu">www.wrecksite.eu</a>
<i>SV Sierra Parima</i>	1584	1882	Wrecked on Suvadiva Atoll in the Maldive Islands, on 21 <sup>st</sup> June 1896	<a href="http://www.clydeships.co.uk">www.clydeships.co.uk</a>

Table 3 – Sierra Shipping vessels no longer listed at 5<sup>th</sup> Nov 1900

**Sierra Shipping sells the SV Sierra Miranda in 1906**

In January 1906 the *SV Sierra Miranda* (at that time lying at Leith) was put up for sale by auction. The Belfast News Letter of 18<sup>th</sup> January 1906 reports that a well attended auction of a number of vessels resulted in no sales of the 4 vessels on offer, with bids of £5,000 and £5,850 for 2 similarly sized vessels being clearly too low to secure them. *SV Sierra Miranda* suffered the indignity of receiving no bids at all!

## Belfast News-Letter - Thursday 18 January 1906

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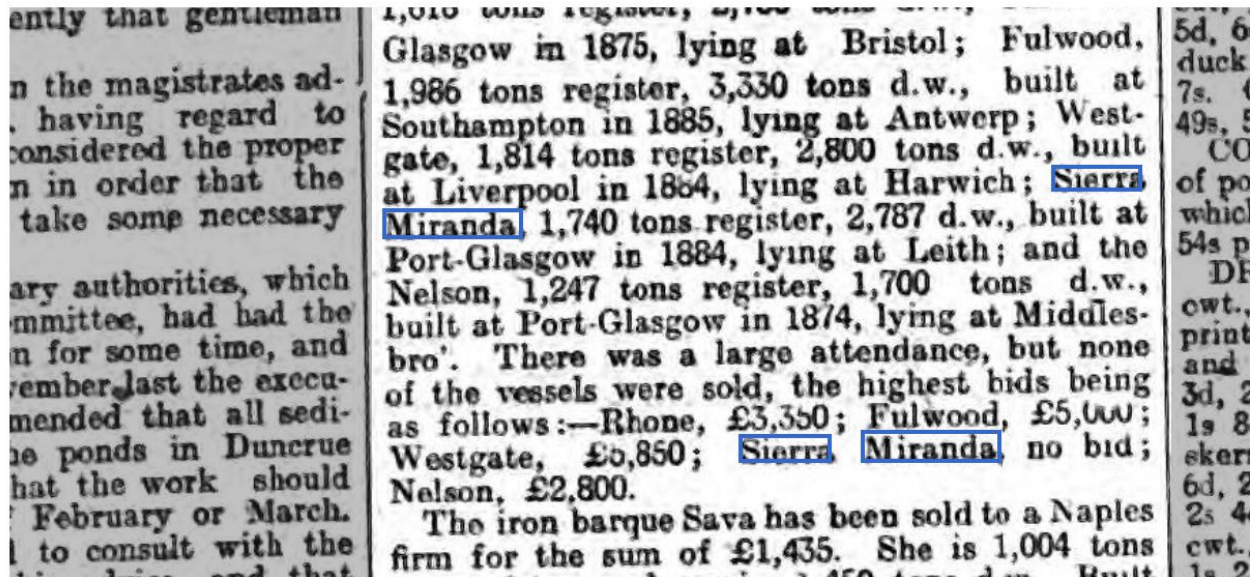


Fig 12 Belfast News-Letter – *Sierra Miranda* put up for sale (18<sup>th</sup> January 1906)

Later in 1906, the *SV Sierra Miranda* was sold to a Norwegian company, **A Meling, of Stavanger**. Retaining her name, she undertook voyages that focused on South America –

- Peru
- Uruguay
- Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Chile
- Australia
- North America

Cargoes included 2000 tons of linseed, with a value of £14,000, carried from Buenos Aires to Aberdeen. This voyage took place in June 1916, during WW1.

### Where was the *SV Sierra Miranda* during WW1?

Only one reference to the vessel during WW1 has been located – it says simply that the *Sierra Miranda* 'participated in WW1' <https://www.sjohistorie.no/en/skip/25749/default>. Her voyages under Norwegian ownership during this period took in UK, Ireland, Australia, Brazil, South Africa, Canada and both the east and west coasts of North America. Apart from conveying cargoes of linseed, and most likely wheat (from Portland, Oregon), the purposes of these voyages is not confirmed.

In June 1916 the *SV Sierra Miranda* was posted as missing, being considerably overdue on a voyage from Buenos Aires. Her voyage to Aberdeen had taken 140 days due to adverse winds, but she arrived safely with her cargo of 2000 tons of linseed, valued at £14,000.

## Aberdeen Press and Journal - Wednesday 28 June 1916

Image © D.C.Thomson & Co. Ltd. Image created courtesy of THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD.

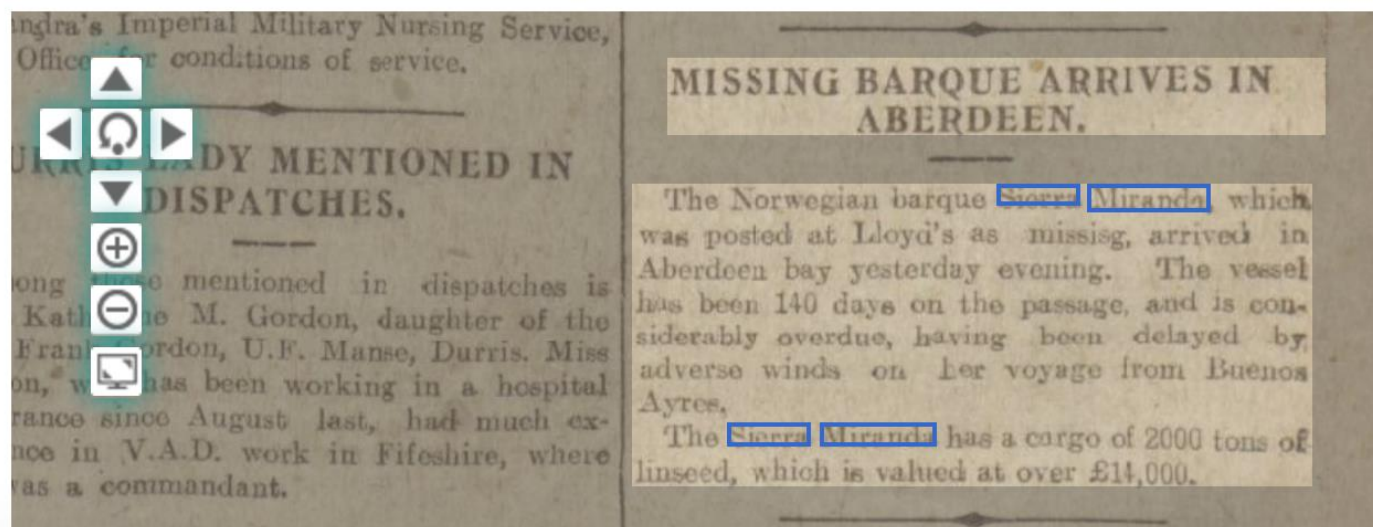


Fig 13 Aberdeen Press and Journal - *Sierra Miranda* posted missing (28<sup>th</sup> June 1916)

Whilst Norway had managed to stay neutral in WW1, its relations with 'belligerent countries' became troublesome soon after the outbreak of the war. Norway, having the fourth largest merchant fleet at the time, and very reliant on imports, was in a difficult position. In 1915 Norway was obliged to negotiate trade agreements with UK, favourable to the UK, and this process continued until 1917, when the 'Tonnage Agreement' was signed. Norway received coal, sent by British armed ships, and in return the UK took control of the Norwegian Merchant Fleet. Was the *SV Sierra Miranda* part of the Tonnage agreement? Whilst no specific evidence has been found, we can speculate that this was likely, since it was then a Norwegian merchant vessel. It is known that several Norwegian merchant sailing ships were sunk as a result of 'enemy action' in 1917, but the *SV Sierra Miranda* survived WW1 and continued plying her trade for A Meling.

The source of the information above is an on line excerpt from this text –

NAUK/MT 25/87/IV, Chapter III, pp. 47-53, 62; Petersen, Saga 1955, pp. 59, 67-69.

Petersen, Kaare: The saga of Norwegian shipping. An outline of the history, growth and development of a modern merchant marine, Oslo 1955: Dreyer

( <https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/norway> )

## 7.0 Notable events in the career of the *SV Sierra Miranda*

- 1. Collision in port channel** – In August 1908, the *SV Sierra Miranda* was entering the port of Chanaral, Chile, when she collided with another British sailing ship, the *Oimara* (based in Greenock). The blame was placed squarely on the shoulders of the Master of the *SV Sierra Miranda* (assumed to be Capt. S Feyling), as the *Oimara* was at anchor in the channel when the collision occurred. *Oimara* was holed just above the water line and was lucky to stay afloat. Further reports stated that she was to be repaired in Chanaral. There was no report of significant damage to the *SV Sierra Miranda*.

### Greenock Telegraph and Clyde Shipping Gazette - Tue 09 August 1898

Image © THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

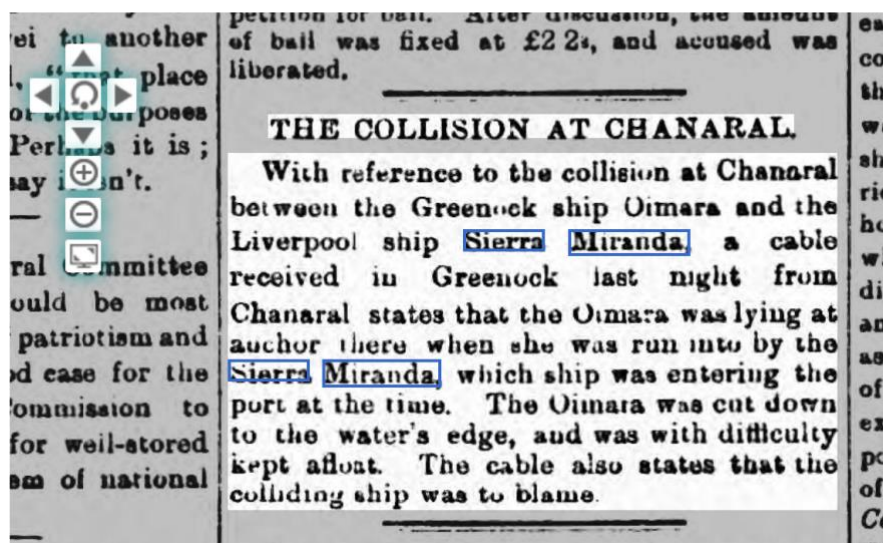


Fig 14 – Greenock and Clyde Shipping Gazette – The *SV Sierra Miranda* collision with the *Oimara* (9<sup>th</sup> August 1898)

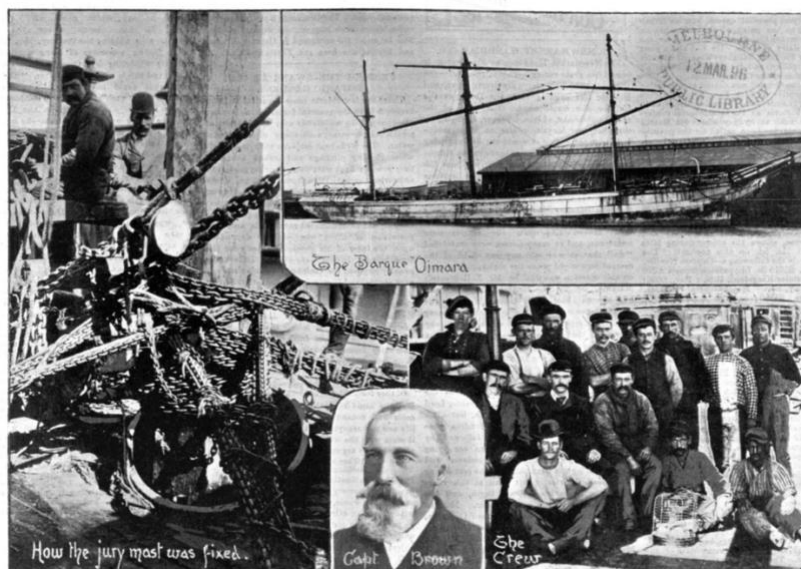


Fig 15 - Composite photo of the *SV Oimara* 1896, having been dis-masted, two years before the collision with the *Sierra Miranda*.

[http://search.slv.vic.gov.au/primo-explore/search?query=sub,exact,Oimara%20\(Ship\)&tab=default\\_tab&search\\_scope=Everything&vid=MAIN&offset=0](http://search.slv.vic.gov.au/primo-explore/search?query=sub,exact,Oimara%20(Ship)&tab=default_tab&search_scope=Everything&vid=MAIN&offset=0)

- 2. Fire in the hold** – Whilst docked in Leith in December 1905, in the process of discharging a cargo of bags of rice meal, a fire occurred in the cargo hold. The fire brigade was summoned to put out the fire, which damaged 5 bags of rice meal.

## Edinburgh Evening News - Thursday 07 December 1905

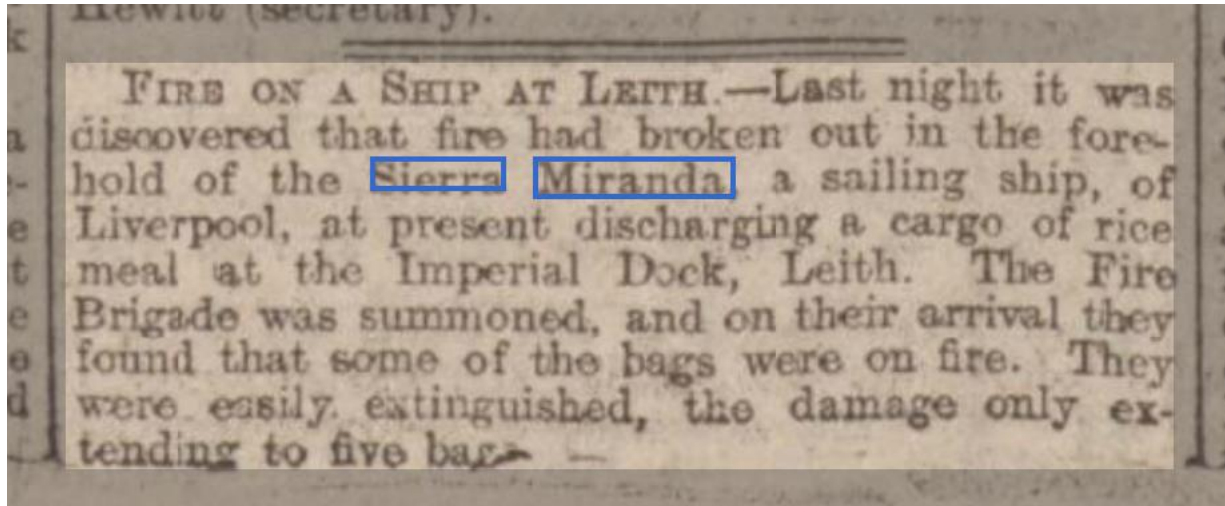


Fig 16 Edinburgh Evening News – Fire in hold of the SV *Sierra Miranda* (7<sup>th</sup> December 1905)

- 3. Crew member ashore illegally** – During WW1, the Ship's Steward, Rognval Rasmussen, found himself on the wrong side of the law in Aberdeen, having been caught walking around the town, ashore illegally, in contravention of the war time Aliens Restriction Order. Currently SV *Sierra Miranda* was under Norwegian ownership. The Steward's excuses of being lost were not accepted, resulting in a fine from the Sheriff of 20s.

## Aberdeen Evening Express - Saturday 01 July 1916

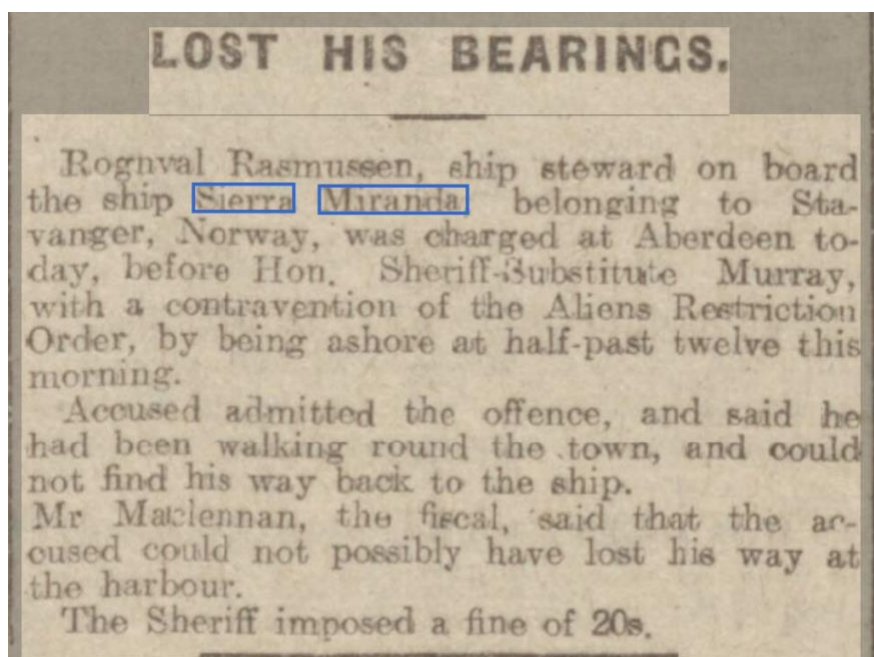


Fig 17 Aberdeen Evening Express – Crew member ashore illegally (1<sup>st</sup> July 1916)

**Where and how did the *SV Sierra Miranda* meet its end?**

In 1922 *Sierra Miranda* was sold to the company of a Mr Browne Willis, re-flagged as a Panamanian vessel, and renamed the *SV Maria Borges*. Her life under this ownership was short lived and ended in controversy.

On 27<sup>th</sup> March 1922, having been loaded with coal at Newport News, Virginia, and destined for Costa Rica, the *SV Maria Borges* mysteriously sunk overnight whilst at anchor. The crew were rescued by launch. She was reported as having 'sunk suddenly whilst on an even keel' in only 40ft of water. Foul play was immediately suspected!

<http://progress-is-fine.blogspot.com/2014/12/sinking-of-maria-borges.html>

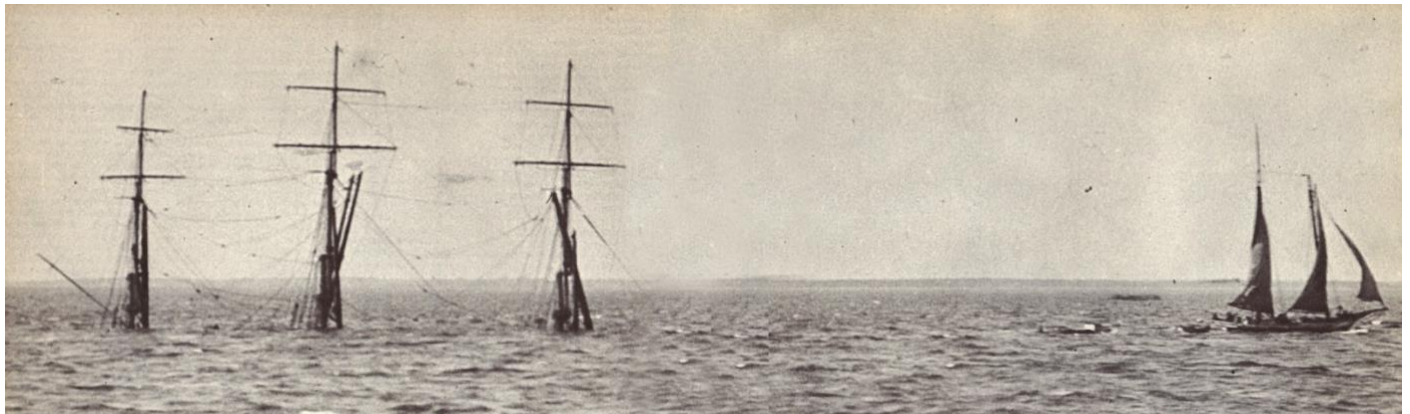


Fig 18 The *Maria Borges* sits on the seabed in the James River off Newport News, Virginia, USA, leaving only her masts showing.

Photo courtesy of Robert Carse *The Twilight of Sailing Ships*, pub Grosset and Dunlap 1965

In a further twist to the story, the Santa Ana Register newspaper reported on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1922 that the ship's large black cat refused to 'give up the ship'. Having been put in the rescue launch, the cat refused to go ashore, leaving rescuers with 'nothing but bandaged arms and hands for their valour'! Apparently the cat had not gone ashore for the previous 4 years.

In August 1923, 17mth after the sinking, a US newspaper reported that Captain Browne Willis had been arrested and charged (on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1923) with the theft of \$200,000 worth of liquor from a steamship (the *Virginia Pretelt*) that was in his command. The alcohol was apparently sold to bootleggers during May 1923. At this time prohibition was in force in the USA. Around 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1923, Captain Browne Willis was also charged with scuttling the *SV Maria Borges* for the purposes of an insurance claim. The evidence came from former crew members of his vessels!

The *Virginia Pretelt* had been acquired by Cornelius H Callaghan (New York) in early 1923.

<http://www.navsource.org/archives/12/179960.htm>

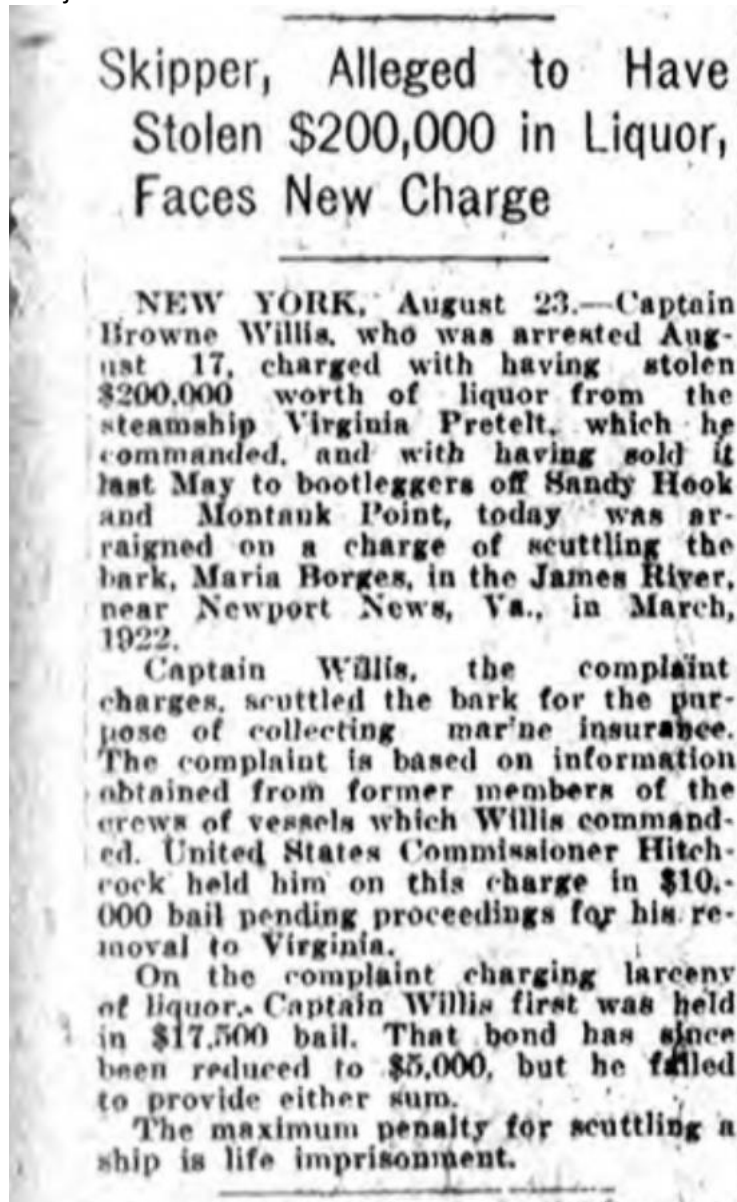


Fig 19 News article dated 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1923, New York, about Captain Browne Willis. Newspaper name unknown (maybe the Santa Ana Register)

Captain Browne Willis seems to have been a habitual criminal. The New York Times of 17<sup>th</sup> July 1928 reported that he forfeited \$40,000 bail for a failed court appearance, and that in 1926 he had been sentenced to serve 2 years in Atlanta penitentiary.

No information could be found regarding the outcome of the charge of scuttling the *SV Maria Borges*, but he was clearly back in the bootlegging business afterwards!

**Has any salvage, etc. been carried out?**

Following the sinking in relatively shallow water of the *SV Maria Borges*, the vessel was indeed salvaged. The ship's barometer is now held by the Mariners Museum and Park in Newport News, Virginia. About 30cm in diameter, it was made circa 1870, which makes it very likely that this was indeed the barometer that would have been tapped regularly by British Captains Mesnard and McMaster, and Norwegian Captains S. Feyling, G. Olsen, and O. Omland whilst she sailed as the *SV Sierra Miranda* from 1884 through to early 1922.

The barometer (accession number 1932.0003.000001) is in storage at the museum.

It is reported that the ship broke up during salvage.



Fig 20 The 20cm aneroid barometer, in a black wood case, salvaged from the *SV Maria Borges*  
Photo courtesy of the Mariners Museum and park, Newport News, Virginia

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

**8.0 Summary of key facts – *SV Sierra Miranda (SV Maria Borges)***

Vessel	Name/s			
	Type	Fully rigged 3 masted sailing ship		
		Cargo		
Built	Date	Laid down - Not known		
		Launched March 1884		
		Commissioned 26 <sup>th</sup> April 1884		
	Builder	John Reid and Co, Port Glasgow		
Construction	Materials	Steel hull		
	Decks	2		
	Bulkheads	1		
Propulsion	Type	Sail		
	Details	Square Rigged– Royals over single top-gallant, and double topsails, stern gaff sail		
Engine	Details	N/A		
Drive	Boilers			
	Type			
	Number			
Dimensions	Length	264ft	7 ins	m
	Beam	39ft	1 ins	m
	Draught	23ft	9 ins	m
Tonnage	Gross	1888		
	Net	1740 or 1808		
Owners	First	Thompson, Anderson and Co, Sierra Shipping Company, Liverpool		
	Second	From 1907 to 1922 Andrew Meling, Stavanger, Norway		
	Last	1922 – Brown Willis, renamed ship <i>SV Maria Borges</i> , Panama		
Registry	Port	Liverpool (first owner)		
	Flag	British (first owner)		
	Number	87957		
History	Routes	UK (Welsh ports, Liverpool, Dundee)		
		Rangoon, Calcutta, Chittagong, Hong Kong, San Francisco, Portland Oregon, Capetown, Mauritius, Hamburg, Buenos Aires		
	Cargo	Coal, salt, jute, grain, rice, linseed		
Did <u>not</u> run aground as originally documented (H Parry book)		Incorrect report states ran aground 3 <sup>rd</sup> January 1894, St Patrick's Causeway, Cardigan Bay, Wales. The <i>SV Sierra Miranda</i> was in region of the Bay of Bengal in early 1894.		
Final Voyage	From	James River (harbour), Newport News, Virginia, USA		
	To	Costa Rica, but didn't make the journey		
	Captain	Not known		
	Crew	Not known		
	Passengers	Not known		
	Cargo	Coal		
Wrecking	Date	27 <sup>th</sup> March 1922 (as <i>Maria Borges</i> )		
	Location	James River, Newport News, Virginia, USA		
	Cause	Suspected scuttling for insurance claim. Sunk at anchor		
	Loss of life	None		
	Outcome	Salvaged		

Table 4 – Summary of the *SV Sierra Miranda* key facts

## 9.0 Analysis

At the commencement of this research the statement in the book *Wreck and Rescue on the Coast of Wales* (the lifeboats of Cardigan Bay and Anglesey) by Henry Parry was taken as fact, and not corroborated then. In retrospect, further early searches into the grounding would have confirmed that it was not the *SV Sierra Miranda* on St Patrick's Causeway in January 1894. The research into the ongoing life of the *SV Sierra Miranda* yielded a large amount of fascinating information about global trading destinations and goods, with an intriguing plot twist at the end!

The Clyde Ships website was a good resource regarding the vessel's construction. Both the British Newspaper Archive and Lloyds List have been good sources of information about the voyages and events in the life of the *SV Sierra Miranda*.

Archaeological databases such as Coflein, the National Monuments Record of Wales database, returned no information about either the *SV Sierra Miranda*, or the *SV Sierra Morena*.

The image of *SV Sierra Miranda* on the title page of this report was found on the Clyde Ships website, and traced to the State Library of South Australia. However, the port shown was unidentified. My son, Mr Stephen Rhodes, a media expert, magnified the image to reveal the words 'Ferry Bristol' on the stern of the small tender moored alongside the *SV Sierra Miranda*. A reverse image search together with research on the architecture and history of the dock identified the precise location in Bristol, being Princes Wharf, confirmed by the image below taken in 1898 of another ship (HMS *Cleopatra*) in the same dock (<https://bristolcitydocks.co.uk/princes-wharf-4/>). Further research by Stephen revealed that the large building was in an area known as Floating Harbour, and the building is the Bush Warehouse, used as a grain store. The tower was the central grain lift, and the diagonal pipes dispersed the grain to various warehouse floors. We know that the *SV Sierra Miranda* carried many cargoes of grain, but specific voyages to Bristol did not come to light in this research.



PBAP3127 c1898 The Naval screw corvette HMS "Cleopatra" moored by the Bush Warehouse.

Fig 21 Bush Warehouse, Princes Wharf, Bristol (c 1898)

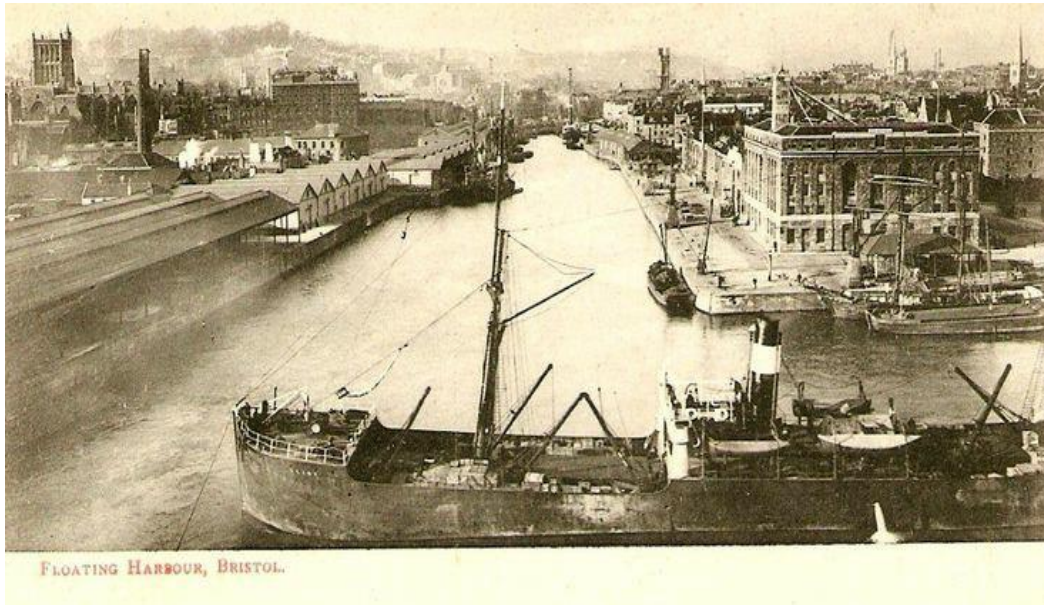
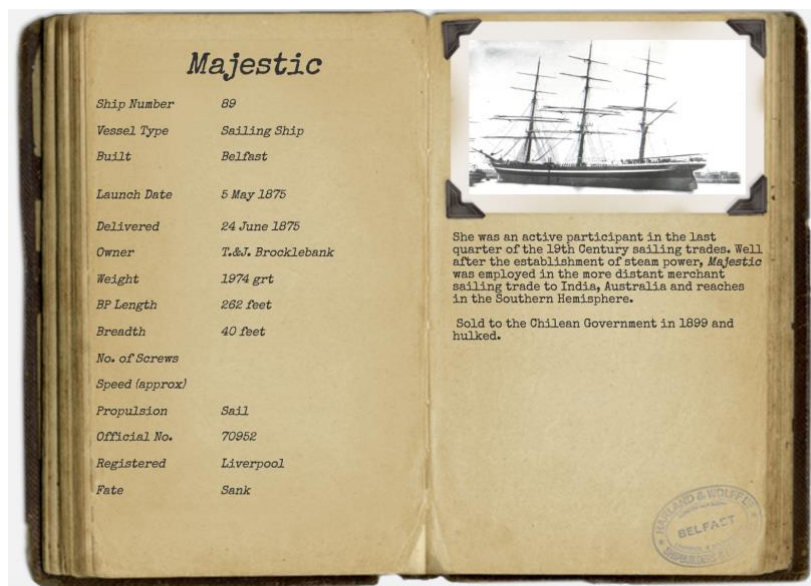


Fig 22 Floating Harbour, Bristol showing the Bush Warehouse (date unknown)

In the crew list of 1891 (page 11 of this report) it is noted that many of the *SV Sierra Miranda's* crew had previously served on the *SV Majestic*. A Google search revealed that *SV Majestic* was another 3 masted sailing vessel still plying her trade after the introduction of steam power. Launched in May 1875, she travelled to India, Australia, and further reaches of the southern hemisphere. In 1899 she was sold to the Chilean government.



<http://www.theyard.info/ships/ships.asp?entryid=89>

There are certain events about which it would have been helpful to find more information but searches reached a dead end –

- Information about passengers if carried.
- Details of her voyages under Norwegian ownership during WW1, and whether she was subject to the Tonnage Agreement
- The conclusion of the trial of Captain Browne Willis in America after the scuttling

These topics could be considered for further research.

## **10.0 Conclusions & Recommendations**

This research has taken in the region of 35 hours. It is estimated that approximately 10 hours of that were spent online.

The significant conclusion is that there was a mistaken identity of the ship that ran aground on St Patrick's Causeway in January 1894. The grounded vessel was her sister ship, the *SV Sierra Morena*, which re-floated herself without assistance, and there is no known debris field from this event.

The project incurred minimal costs, being only subscription to the British Newspaper Archive.

What has been learned about approaching online research? It is very easy to lose focus as myriads of fascinating facts come to light.

What has been learned about the subject of the research? I now have a much deeper understanding of the use of fully rigged sailing ships in the late 19th century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, together with global trading routes, cargoes and capacity. I have also learned about her crew.

Whilst the *SV Sierra Miranda* story is probably out of the scope of the North Wales Wrecks project, there is a fascinating story of a 19<sup>th</sup> century sailing vessel told here.

## 11.0 References

<https://collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/resource/PRG+1373/8/103>

<http://www.clydeships.co.uk/view.php?ref=19190>

[https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/John\\_Reid\\_and\\_Co](https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/John_Reid_and_Co)

<https://www.crewlist.org.uk/data/viewimages?&name=Sierra%20Miranda&steamsail=Sail&submit=Enter&year=1895>

[http://sunderlandships.com/list.php?vessel=sierra+morena&year\\_built=1875&builder=](http://sunderlandships.com/list.php?vessel=sierra+morena&year_built=1875&builder=)

(Multiple results from National Archives)

<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/results/r?&dss=range&ro=any&st=adv&cr=BT110/74/27>

<http://www.leisureandculturedundee.com/photopolis/sierra-morena-dundee-harbour-0>

<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/results/r?q=BT+99%2F1708%2F45&sd=&ed=&hb=>  
National Archive (ref BT 99/1708/45)

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<http://progress-is-fine.blogspot.com/2014/12/sinking-of-maria-borges.html>

Book - Robert Carse *The Twilight of Sailing Ships*, pub Grosset and Dunlap 1965

<http://www.navsource.org/archives/12/179960.htm>

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

<https://bristolcitydocks.co.uk/princes-wharf-4/>

<http://www.theyard.info/ships/ships.asp?entryid=89>

### Appendix A: Voyages of the SV *Sierra Miranda*/SV *Maria Borges*

The following table collates all voyages identified during this project. However, it should not be considered a complete log of all her voyages. The main source of the data is the National Newspaper Archive.

Date of source or departure	Departed from	Destination	Arrived	Captain	Cargo	Owner	Details	Source
3rd February 1884	Liverpool	Calcutta	Still in transit 27th June 1885		Salt	Sierra Shipping Co		Englishman's Overland Mail 27th June 1885
4th January 1885	Rangoon	Queenstown (Ireland)				Sierra Shipping Co		Glasgow Herald 6th January 1885
3rd March 1885	?	Calcutta			Salt	Sierra Shipping Co		Englishman's Overland Mail 3rd March 1885
17th March 1885	?	Calcutta			? Salt	Sierra Shipping Co		Englishman's Overland Mail 17th March 1885
3rd November 1885	Rangoon	Liverpool				Sierra Shipping Co		Homeward Mail from India China and the East 3rd November 1885
2nd August 1887	Liverpool	Newport				Sierra Shipping Co	Could this be Newport Wales, or Australia, or USA?	Lloyd's List 2nd August 1887

Date of source or departure	Departed from	Destination	Arrived	Captain	Cargo	Owner	Details	Source
3rd October 1887	Cardiff	Bombay	3rd December 1887	Commander Mesnard	Delivered 2,682 tons coal	Sierra Shipping Co		Lloyd's List 7th December 1887 and Times of India 6th December 1887
27th April 1888	Rangoon	UK				Sierra Shipping Co		Lloyd's List 27th April 1888
29th May 1888	Rangoon	Liverpool				Sierra Shipping Co	Stopped in St Helena en route 29th May 1888	Lloyd's List 29th May 1888
25th August 1888	Calcutta?	UK (maybe Dundee)?			Full cargo of jute for December loading'	Sierra Shipping Co		Englishman's Overland Mail 25th August 1888

Date of source or departure	Departed from	Destination	Arrived	Captain	Cargo	Owner	Details	Source
22nd September 1888	?	Calcutta				Sierra Shipping Co		Dundee Weekly News 22nd September 1888
6th November 1888	UK?	Saugar (Sagar? India)		Captain T Mesnard		Sierra Shipping Co		Englishman's Overland Mail 6th November 1888
13th November 1888	Hooghly River, Bay of Bengal (at anchor)			Captain T Mesnard		Sierra Shipping Co		Englishman's Overland Mail 13th November 1888
7th December 1888	Calcutta	Dundee		Captain T Mesnard	Jute	Sierra Shipping Co	Seen near Brittany on 1st May 1889. Reported in Greenock Telegraph and Clyde Shipping Gazette	Lloyd's List 7th December 1888
4th January 1889	Calcutta or Chittagong	London			13371 bales of jute	Sierra Shipping Co		The Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser 5th Mach 1889

Date of source or departure	Departed from	Destination	Arrived	Captain	Cargo	Owner	Details	Source
29th April 1889	Gravesend	Calcutta				Sierra Shipping Co		Lloyd's List 29th April 1889
21st June 1889	Cardiff	Capetown				Sierra Shipping Co		Dundee Advertiser 24th June 1889
2nd January 1890	Chittagong	Glasgow	15th April 1890		3 ships imported 38,000 bales of jute	Sierra Shipping Co	Voyage took 115 days. The 2 other ships took 123 days (the Lady Isabella) and 139 days (the Ayrshire)	Dundee Evening Telegraph 15th April 1890
8th April 1890	Chittagong	Probably Gravesend?			10,796 bales of jute	Sierra Shipping Co		Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser 8th April 1890

Date of source or departure	Departed from	Destination	Arrived	Captain	Cargo	Owner	Details	Source
2nd December 1890	Chittagong	Gravesend	10th April 1891		10,950 bales of jute	Sierra Shipping Co		The Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser 3rd April 1891, and Home News for India, China and the Colonies 10th April 1891
26th November 1891	San Francisco	Dunkirk, via Portland Oregon	Arrived Portland 21st November 1891		May have picked up wheat in Portland	Sierra Shipping Co		Arbroath Herald and Advertiser for the Montrose Burghs 26th November 1891
29th September 1892	Hong Kong	San Francisco				Sierra Shipping Co		Dundee Evening Telegraph 29th September 1892
2nd April 1893	San Francisco	Liverpool	Still in transit 18th May 1893			Sierra Shipping Co		Dundee Courier 18th May 1893

Date of source or departure	Departed from	Destination	Arrived	Captain	Cargo	Owner	Details	Source
3rd October 1893	UK?	Rangoon				Sierra Shipping Co		Lloyd's List 3rd October 1893
5th February 1894	Chittagong	Rangoon	20th February 1894	Capt. McMaster		Sierra Shipping Co		Shipping Gazette and Lloyds List
12th July 1894	Bremerhaven	Cardiff (East Bute Dock)			Ballast	Sierra Shipping Co		South Wales Daily News 12th July 1894
4th August 1894	Hong Kong	Cardiff		Capt. McMaster		Sierra Shipping Co		Lloyd's List 16th August 1894
25th March 1895	Hong Kong	San Francisco	Approx. 25th March 1895			Sierra Shipping Co	Arrived with loss of some sails and one boat, and deck movables washed overboard.	South Wales Daily News
7th June 1894	Rangoon	Queenstown (Ireland)	7th June 1894	Capt. McMaster		Sierra Shipping Co	Onward to Dover, arrived 11th June 1894	Home News for India, China and the Colonies 15th June 1894

Date of source or departure	Departed from	Destination	Arrived	Captain	Cargo	Owner	Details	Source
18th December 1895	Penarth	Mauritius			Probably coal	Sierra Shipping Co		Greenock Telegraph and Clyde Shipping Gazette 18th December 1895
23rd June 1896	Rangoon (in harbour)					Sierra Shipping Co		Lloyd's List 23rd June 1896
12th September 1896	Rangoon	Queenstown (Ireland)	12th September 1896		Rice	Sierra Shipping Co		Lloyd's List 12th September 1896
17th September 1896	Queenstown	Hamburg				Sierra Shipping Co	Returned to Queenstown after Hamburg	Greenock Telegraph and Clyde Shipping Gazette 17th September 1896

Date of source or departure	Departed from	Destination	Arrived	Captain	Cargo	Owner	Details	Source
15th October 1886	Liverpool	Rangoon				Sierra Shipping Co		Greenock Telegraph and Clyde Shipping Gazette 15th October 1886
20th May 1889	London	Capetown			Ballast London to Cardiff)	Sierra Shipping Co	Via Cardiff	South Wales Daily News 21th May 1889
13th March 1890	Chittagong	Liverpool			10,796 bales of jute	Sierra Shipping Co		Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser 13th March 1890
31st March 1891	Chittagong	London			10,950 bales of jute	Sierra Shipping Co		Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser 31st March 1891
9th October 1891	Not known	San Francisco	9th October 1891			Sierra Shipping Co		Greenock Telegraph and Clyde Shipping Gazette 12th October 1891
8th August 1893	Liverpool	Chittagong	En route			Sierra Shipping Co		Lloyd's List 8th August 1893

Date of source or departure	Departed from	Destination	Arrived	Captain	Cargo	Owner	Details	Source
22nd May 1894	Rangoon	UK?				Sierra Shipping Co	Stopped in, or seen near, St Helena en route (to UK?)	Lloyd's List 22nd May 1894
8th October 1895	San Francisco	Liverpool	8th October 1895			Sierra Shipping Co		Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser 8th October 1895
15th September 1896	Rangoon?	Hamburg			Rice	Sierra Shipping Co	Stopped in Queenstown?	Cork Constitution 15th September 1896
8th June 1897	Rangoon (in harbour)					Sierra Shipping Co		Lloyd's List 8th June 1897
14th October 1897	Rangoon	Zaandam (nr Amsterdam)				Sierra Shipping Co		Arbroath Herald and Advertiser for the Montrose Burghs 14th October 1897

Date of source or departure	Departed from	Destination	Arrived	Captain	Cargo	Owner	Details	Source
18th November 1897	Penarth	Mauritius (St Louis)			Coal	Sierra Shipping Co		South Wales Daily News 18th November 1897, Lloyd's List 19th November 1897
6th November 1897	Penarth	?				Sierra Shipping Co		Lloyd's List 6th November 1897
9th August 1898	Chanaral, Chile	?				Sierra Shipping Co	Collision with vessel Oimara. Sierra Miranda no damage reported	Greenock Telegraph and Clyde Shipping Gazette 9th August 1898. Lloyd's List 16th September 1898

Date of source or departure	Departed from	Destination	Arrived	Captain	Cargo	Owner	Details	Source
16th April 1900	Port of Astoria, nr Portland Oregon	Queenstown (Ireland)	16th April 1900		Wheat	Sierra Shipping Co	Trading price quoted as 28s 9d. Is this per bushel (56lbs)? Northern Whig 21st April 1900	Greenock Telegraph and Clyde Shipping Gazette 11th April 1900
1st August 1901	Tacoma (nr Seattle)	Queenstown (Ireland)	At Roche's Point nr Cork on 1st August 1901		Wheat	Sierra Shipping Co		Lloyd's List 1st August 1901. Cork Examiner 2nd August 1901
25th December 1902	?	Pisagua, Chile				Sierra Shipping Co	Christmas Day at sea!	London Daily News 25th December 1902
26th March 1903	Pisagua	Hamburg				Sierra Shipping Co		Shields Daily Gazette 26th March 1903
4th July 1904	UK?	Rangoon	Arrived 4th July 1904			Sierra Shipping Co	Had departed for Rangoon on 5th March 1904	Lloyd's List 4th July 1904

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Date of source or departure	Departed from	Destination	Arrived	Captain	Cargo	Owner	Details	Source
7th December 1905	Rangoon?	Leith	At Leith 7th December 1905		Rice	Sierra Shipping Co	Minor fire in hold whilst discharging cargo at Leith.	Edinburgh Evening News 7th December 1905. Lloyd's List 8th December 1905
18th January 1906	Leith					A Meling, Stavanger, Norway	Put up for sale. No bids. <b>Sold later in 1906 to Andrew Meling, Stavanger Norway</b>	Belfast News-Letter 18th January 1906
13th September 1907	Callao, Peru	Sydney Australia				A Meling, Stavanger, Norway		Sydney Morning Herald. <a href="https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/14876590">https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/14876590</a>

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## Nautical Archaeology Society

Date of source or departure	Departed from	Destination	Arrived	Captain	Cargo	Owner	Details	Source
26th October 1909	Fernandina, Florida	Montevideo, Uruguay				A Meling, Stavanger, Norway		Lloyds List, 26th October 1909
24th December 1910	Tocopilla Channel, Chile					A Meling, Stavanger, Norway		Lloyds List 24th December 1910
27th March 1913	Buenos Ayres	The Semaphore, Nr Adelaide, S Australia		Capt. S Feyling		A Meling, Stavanger, Norway		<a href="https://passengers.history.sa.gov.au/node/990147">https://passengers.history.sa.gov.au/node/990147</a>
22nd April 1913	Australia	UK			Carrying wheat from Australia. Priced at 38 shillings (per sack?)	A Meling, Stavanger, Norway		Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer 22nd April 1913
1914	Albany, New York, USA	Tumby Bay, S Australia		Capt. S Feyling		A Meling, Stavanger, Norway		<a href="https://passengers.history.sa.gov.au/node/990147">https://passengers.history.sa.gov.au/node/990147</a>

Date of source or departure	Departed from	Destination	Arrived	Captain	Cargo	Owner	Details	Source
21st March 1914	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	UK	Arrived 21st March 1914			A Meling, Stavanger, Norway		The Shields Daily News 21st March 1914
24th May 1914	Portland, Oregon	Dublin	24th May 1914		Probably carrying wheat	A Meling, Stavanger, Norway		The Scotsman 24th May 1914
27th November 1914	Capetown, SA	Astoria, Oregon	26th December 1914			A Meling, Stavanger, Norway	Crew of 21, mixed nationality	
10th July 1915	Dublin	Canada			In ballast	A Meling, Stavanger, Norway		Irish Independent 10th July 1915
27th June 1916	Buenos Aires, Argentina	Aberdeen	27th June 1916		2000 tons linseed, value £14000	A Meling, Stavanger, Norway	Posted as missing (overdue). Journey took 140 days due to adverse winds.	Aberdeen Press and Journal, and The Scotsman, 28th June 1916
27th March 1922	Newport News, Virginia, USA	Costa Rica	(Didn't make the journey)	Browne Willis	Coal	Browne Willis (Now SV <i>Maria Borges</i> )	<b>Sunk at anchor</b>	<a href="http://progress-is-fine.blogspot.com/2014/12/sinking-of-maria-borges.html">http://progress-is-fine.blogspot.com/2014/12/sinking-of-maria-borges.html</a>