



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

No picture or drawing of the vessel was found

**Report compiled by:
Gerallt Owen**

Report Title:

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

Compiled by:

Gerallt Owen
07920025338
gerallt.owen@aol.co.uk

On behalf of:

Nautical Archaeology Society

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

Managed by:

Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit

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

Date:

May 2020

Report Ref:

1.0 Abstract

The aim of the "www Research Project" is to carry out further research into the 500 plus ship wrecks off the north Cardigan Bay coast. The research is carried out exclusively on-line using extensive internet based resources.

The research should cover not just the shipwreck and the circumstances surrounding the wrecking, but also look at the history of the vessel, from it's construction, registration, crew, cargo, voyages etc

2.0 Index

2.1 Table of Contents	Page No.
1.0 Abstract -----	2
2.0 Index -----	3
2.1 Table of Contents	3
2.4 Contributors	4
2.5 Abbreviations	4
3.0 Introduction -----	5
4.0 Background -----	6
5.0 Research Methodology -----	7
6.0 Results -----	8
7.0 Analysis -----	13
8.0 Conclusions & Recommendations -----	14
9.0 References -----	15

2.4 Contributors

National Library of Wales Newspaper Archives

Lloyds Register and Lloyds List

CLIP

Coflein

2.5 Abbreviations

A list of any abbreviations used in this report, i.e.

GAT	Gwynedd Archaeology Trust
IJNA	International Journal of Nautical Archaeology
MADU	Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit
NAS	Nautical Archaeology Society
NPRN	National Primary Resource Number
OS	Ordnance Survey
RCAHMW	Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Wales
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
etc.	

3.0 **Introduction**

I selected the Six Brothers for two reasons, firstly it had a close connection with my hometown Porthmadog in that it was built in the town, and it sank on the approaches to the town harbour. Secondly I also chose what I believed to be a distinctive name which would make it easier to research. That did not quite work out as there was another ship called Six Brothers out of Caernarfon which also shipwrecked in the same year near Nefyn, but that is another story.

I was hoping to find out as much as possible about the history of the vessel and the circumstances of its shipwreck such as

- What were the vessel's specifications?
- What historical information is available relating to the vessel?
- What was the story leading up to wrecking?
- What caused the wrecking?
- What has happened since the wrecking?

4.0 **Background**

Prior to starting my research all that I knew was what was included on the MADU database, namely the ships name, date of wreck and location of wreck

Unfortunately the maps could not be incorporated into the report due to the technical inadequacies of my computer software.

5.0 **Research Methodology**

During my research, which I did exclusively from home, during the Covid 19 pandemic of 2020 I used my Hewlett Packard Pavillion 15 Notebook Laptop and my Ipad. On the laptop I had Windows 10 Ver 1903 and ran the Opera web browser and Open Office 4.1.7.

The ipad was a 6th Generation running sotware version 13.3.1. I used the Safari browser.

The approach I used followed the guidance notes provided but I also used the National Library of Wales Newspaper archive which I have used for other research I have done in the past.

My initial search on April 29th was to find newspaper reports of the shipwreck. This I found on the National Library of Welsh Newspaper Collection (copies included below)

The following day I searched the Lloyds Register to find the 1852 registration of the ship. This was done using the O/N found in the 'Porthmadog Ships' entry for the ship.

In the days that followed I searched the CLIP and Coflein sites for more information. No crew lists were available on CLIP but three years (1863, 1864 and 1866) are held at the Gwynedd Archives at Caernarfon which are not digitized. So I was unable to obtain them. Further searches on Captains and masters in the name John Williams proved inconclusive.

The Coflein site was useful in pinpointing the site of the wreckage and also listing the vessels owners. It mentions 15 but the shares listed only add up to 56 of the 64 shares usually sold to investors.

A lot of time was spent trying to document the movements of the vessel by scrutinising Shipping Intelligence notices in papers both in Wales at National Library and further afield at the British Newspaper Archive. This proved frustrating and time consuming with only a few entries for the first few years obtained. Very few found on the Lloyds List for this vessel.

Many other sites did not prove fruitful. Some because they did not cover the period 1841 to 1867 the vessel was operational. This was the case with Board of Trade wreck reports which only covers the period 1876 to 1980. Also some websites themselves were not working as in the case of theshiplist.com or the nationalhistoricships.org.uk

As the vessel seems to have only operated in British waters no crew agreements were available.

6.0 **Results**

The basic facts of the vessel are as follows

Vessel	Name/s	Six Brothers		
	Type	Schooner		
Built	Date	1841		
	Builder	Evan Evans		
		Porthmadog		
Construction	Materials	Wood		
	Decks	One		
	Bulkheads	Unknown		
Propulsion	Type	Sail		
	Details	Rigged with a standing bowsprit, square sterned, carvel built, and a billet head		
Engine	Details	None		
	Boilers			
Drive	Type			
	Number			
Dimensions	Length	47 ft	7 ins	m
	Beam	16 ft	3 ins	m
	Draught	8 ft	7 ins	m
Tonnage	Gross	44 tons		
	Net			
Owner	First	John Williams and 15 others		
		From Portmadoc, Criccieth, Pwllheli, Liverpool and London		
	Last	Name		
		Address / Location		
	Others			
Registry	Port	Pwllheli		
	Flag	British		
	Number	8452		
History	Routes	See below		
	Cargo	Coal, iron, balast		
Final Voyage	From	Unknown but possibly S. Wales		
	To	Porthmadog		
	Captain	Rees Williams (Nominated Master)		

	Crew	Unknown
	Passengers	None
	Cargo	Coal
Wrecking	Date	Saturday January 5 th 1867
	Location	North Bank Grid Reference SH5422934890 Latitude 52.891642 Longitude -4.1682088
	Cause	Hurricane storm winds
	Loss of life	None
	Outcome	Total Loss

The Six Brothers was built in Porthmadog by the shipbuilder Evan Evans who according to the book Porthmadog Ships had been building ships in Porthmadog between 1826 and the mid 1850's. No information can be found about the launch of the vessel which is believed to be on September 5th 1841 according to Coflein.gov.uk

Over and above what is included above Coflein also quotes "Technical and configuration specifications are given as 66 60/94 tons burthen" but no idea what that means

Also according to Coflein there were 15 owners of the Six Brothers at this time as follows:

John Williams of Porthmadoc, mariner (8);
Evan Evans of Porthmadoc, shipbuilder (4);
Ellis Evan of Brynscynhaian (?), farmer (4);
William George and John Jones of Porthmadoc (2);
Richard Williams of Porthmadoc, blacksmith (2);
Humphrey Owen of Brynscynhaian, farmer (2);
Rev John Jones of Criccieth, clerk (2);
Humphrey Jones of Penmorfa, drover (2);
Margaret Roberts of Pwllhelli, spinster (2);
Robert Robert Williams of London, draper (8);
Evan Williams of London, mercer (8);
Henry Williams of London, grocer (4);
Ellis Williams of London, grocer (4)
Henry Christian of Liverpool, sailmaker (2); and
Thomas Jones of Liverpool, carpenter (2).

This only makes up 56 shares. Ships at the time were usually made of 64 shares

Pure speculation but could all these men with the Williams surname be brothers – the six brothers?

An early voyage for the Six Brothers was from Porthmadog to Bute Docks, Cardiff with a cargo of flags and slate. It arrived there in the week ending November 3rd 1841. The following week took a cargo of ballast from Bute Dock to Penarth and then departed the Glamorganshire Canal for an unknown destination carrying a cargo of coal.

The Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald for September 25th 1841 has a vessel called Six Brothers, Williams arriving at Caernarfon during the previous week from Dublin. Could this have been its maiden voyage ?

On September 20th 1842 the North Wales Chronicle carried the following short report on an incident aboard the Six Brothers on page 3 of the edition

PORT MADOC.

On the night of Saturday last, or early on Sunday morning, the schooner Six Brothers, of this port, was broken into, and several articles of clothing stolen therefrom, by a person called Edward Williams, a native of Dolgelley or Machynlleth. The fellow has since been captured, brought before the magistrates, and committed to gaol to take his trial at the next Quarter Sessions.

Below are some of the reported arrivals and departures of the Six Brothers during the years 1841-49

Week ending November 3rd 1841 – Arrive Bute Dock, Cardiff with a cargo of flags and slates +

Week ending November 10th 1841 – Depart Bute Dock for Penarth with cargo of Ballast +

Week ending November 10th 1841 – Depart Glamorganshire Canal with cargo of coal ++

Week ending June 11th 1842 – Depart Port Penrhyn Bangor with unknown cargo +++

Week ending June 14th 1842 – Arrive Portmadoc with unknown cargo ++++

Week ending June 21st 1842 – Depart Portmadoc with unknown cargo ++++

Week ending February 11th 1843 – Arrive Bute Dock, Cardiff with cargo of ballast ++

Week ending February 18th 1843 – Depart Bute Dock for Liverpool with cargo of iron ++

Week ending May 16th 1843 – Arrive Portmadoc with unknown cargo ++++

Week ending October 3rd 1843 – Arrive Portmadoc Unknown cargo ++++

Week ending October 31st 1843 – Put back Portmadoc ++++

Week ending November 7th 1843 – Depart Portmadoc with unknown cargo ++++

Week ending May 21st 1844 – Arrive Portmadoc with unknown cargo ++++

Week ending May 28th 1844 – Depart Portmadoc with unknown cargo ++++

Week ending April 26th 1845 – Arrive Llanelli from London with unknown cargo *

Week ending May 16th 1845 – Arrive Milford from Llanelli with unknown cargo #**

Week ending May 16th 1845 – Depart Milford for Llanelli with unknown cargo #**

Week ending January 23rd 1846 – Arrived Milford with unknown cargo **

Week ending May 15th 1846 – Arrived Milford from Bridgewater **

Week ending June 27th 1846 – Arrived Portmadoc with unknown cargo ++

Week ending March 16th 1847 – Depart Portmadoc with unknown cargo ++++

Week ending August 29th 1848 – Arrived Pwllheli with unknown cargo ++++

Week ending September 5th 1848 - Depart Pwllheli with unknown cargo ++++

Week ending June 2nd 1849 – Depart Portmadoc with unknown cargo +++

Week ending June 30th 1849 – Arrive Portmadoc with unknown cargo +++

Week ending August 4th 1849 – Depart Portmadoc with unknown cargo +++

Week ending November 10th 1849 – Depart Portmadoc with unknown cargo +++

Both these entries have ship name, followed by Williams for master and then both Llanelly and Balbriggan (unsure what this means) Did it mean it had a stop at Llanelli on the way to Balbriggan in Ireland, or that it had started at Llanelli and stopped at Milford on the way to Balbriggan

Sources:

- + Monmouth Merlin
- ++ Glamorgan, Monmouth and Brecon Gazette
- +++ Caernarfon and Denbigh Herald
- ++++ North Wales Chronicle
- * The Cambrian
- ** Pembroeshire Herald



Despite being built in 1841 and the vessel operating regularly it was not registered with Lloyds until 1852. (Copy found as a PDF file and unable to import into report)

On June 29th 1855 the vessel was given an official number 8452 in the Appropriation Books of the Registrar General of Shipping. Below is a photo of the Appropriation Book. It is the second entry.

Official Number.	Name of Ship.	Tonnage.	Whether Steam or Sailing Ship.	Port of Registry.	Date of Registry.	Occasion of Appropriation.	Date of Appropriation.
8451	Humility	84	sailing	Portheli	22 March 1855	lost/ presented	June 1855
8452	Six Brothers	44			22 Sept 1855		
8453	Spall	92			1 June 1855		
8454	Green Lane	144		London	7 March 1855		
8455	Alice	16		Cork	2 July 1855		
8456	George Brown	88			20 April 1855		
8457	Mary	43		Bristol	17 Nov 1855		
8458	Whitney	114		S'pore	31 Dec 1855		
8459	Lyford	256		London	10 Sept 1855		
8460	Prince of Wales	58		Chester	30 March 1855		
8461	Delicia	78		Swan	19 June 1855		
8462	Griffith	108		Cork	7 Dec 1855		
8463	Harriet	144			12 Mar 1855		
8464	Magnet	88		London	25 Sept 1855		
8465	Spirat	160		London	2 July 1855		
8466	William Thomas	261		Widow	18 Sept 1855		

The wrecking occurred on Saturday January 6th 1867 below are two accounts of the wreckage taken from the North Wales Chronicle dated January 12th 1867 p5

HEAVY GALES.—During the last fortnight almost every kind of weather has been experienced in Portmadoc. Heavy snow, bitter frost, rapid thaw, and incessant rain, have followed each other very rapidly. Last Saturday evening blew a perfect hurricane from the south west, causing, we are sorry to say, the wreck of three vessels, one was driven on the beach between Morfa Bychan and Criceieth, another on the bar, and the other just outside on a sand bank. The ill-fated vessels were loaded with coal for Portmadoc. The names were The Six Brothers, of Portmadoc, and the Hopewell, and Charlotte Ann, of Pwllheli all three are a perfect wreck. We are happy to say that the crews of all the vessels escaped.

THE STORM OF SATURDAY AND ITS EFFECTS.—

Portmadoc was visited by a severe storm on Saturday, which commenced at 8 a. m.— the wind blowing from the SE., strong, wet, and squally. There were 16 vessels near the bar, having arrived at too late a tide to be towed up. Several of these had got over the bar, and were at anchor in Pwllglan Mor, others sheltered under Mochras gap and all expected to get in safely by the evening's tide, but unfortunately, the morning did not witness the height of the storm, for towards 6 p.m., it increased to a complete hurricane, so that any attempt to raise anchors and make for the harbour was perfectly useless. The steam tug "Wave of Life" left here with the intention of rendering assistance, but it blew so tremendously hard that it utterly failed to get further than Garreg Goch, so she was obliged to get back at once for her own safety. The unfortunate vessels remained in their critical

positions all night riding very heavily and occasionally striking. The schooner "Charlotte Ann", and the smack "Hopewell," both from Barmouth, parted anchors in the course of the gale, and were driven at its mercy when towards morning the poor sailors found themselves ashore on the Beach, near Treflys, where the vessels now remain total wrecks. The schooner "Six Brothers" also was driven ashore on the North Bank, within the bar and it sunk in deep water. The Brigantine "Melbourne Trader," Capt Jones from Cardiff, with coals while riding at anchor under Mochras, was filling itself with an awful sea, so that it became necessary for the Captain to have the foremast cut off in order to save lives as well as the ship and cargo. The next morning she was towed in safety. Several wind bounders also put luck having received some trifling damage, but during the whole gale, we are glad in being able to say that no lives were lost, and in all the casualties, vessels and cargoes were insured.

The Lloyds Registry for the Six Brothers O/N 8452 was closed on February 13th 1867.

Robert Cadwalader in his Vessel Losses and Casualties in Tremadog Bay and on St Patrick's Causeway at <http://freespace.virgin.net/r.cadwalader/maritime/lifeboat/wreck.htm> claims that Wreckage of the Six Brothers could still be seen at low tide in the 1940's

7.0 **Analysis**

A lack of basic knowledge of the subject matter made the research harder. Understanding the terms and the abbreviations and the way things were set out in the 19th century proved difficult. The process of administrating maritime trade also changed and developed and the timeline for this was not clear to me.

The early years of the vessel is reasonably well documented, although confirmation of the building and launch have not been found, only obtained through second hand sources.

The basic information was fairly easily available but delving further proved difficult.

It is possible to speculate that much of the vessels cargo may have involved coal, with probably slate when sailing from Portmadoc, but I have been unable to confirm this. There may be sources which I have not found which may be able to confirm this.

It is regretable that sailings later on proved very elusive

The actual wrecking it's self was well covered in contemporary accounts but no follow up on whether attempts were made to salvage the ship or cargo has been found.

8.0 **Conclusions & Recommendations**

The research took considerably longer than anticipated. In part this was because it was hard to judge to what level of detail one should go. Also chasing down blind alleys was a regular occurrence. I would estimate that somewhere around 24 to 30 hours of research for this vessel alone.

The two different specification on tonnage was also confusing and may well not be conflicting to the trained eye.

It would appear that the wreck could be seen in the late 1940's but that no sightings since would suggest that very little remains of the wreck and that diving to attempt a survey may be futile.

It is a shame that the only remaining crew lists are not online but are in paper form at Gwynedd Archives in Caernarfon. A follow up to have a look at these post the Covid 19 lockdown may prove fruitful as one of the years that are kept there is 1856 which ended just a month before the shipwreck.

The lesson this piece of research has taught me is that you need to be more organised and note every scrap of information because it may throw light on later discoveries.

For the most part the original questions posed have been answered but more details of the later years would have been useful.

9.0 **References**

<https://archive.org/details/@lrfhec>

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

<https://www.crewlist.org.uk>

<http://www.maritimearchives.co.uk/lloyds-register.html>

<https://newspapers.library.wales>

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

<https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/524897/details/six-brothers>

http://www.mariners-list.com/site_pages.php?section=Ship+Registers&category=Appropriation+Books+

<http://freespace.virgin.net/r.cadwalader/maritime/lifeboat/wreck.htm>

Other sources

Portmadoc Ships – Emrys Hughes and Aled Eames, 2009 Ed

Appendices:

Any relevant additional information can be added as an appendix as you think appropriate, and a couple of suggestions that you may like to consider are included below: