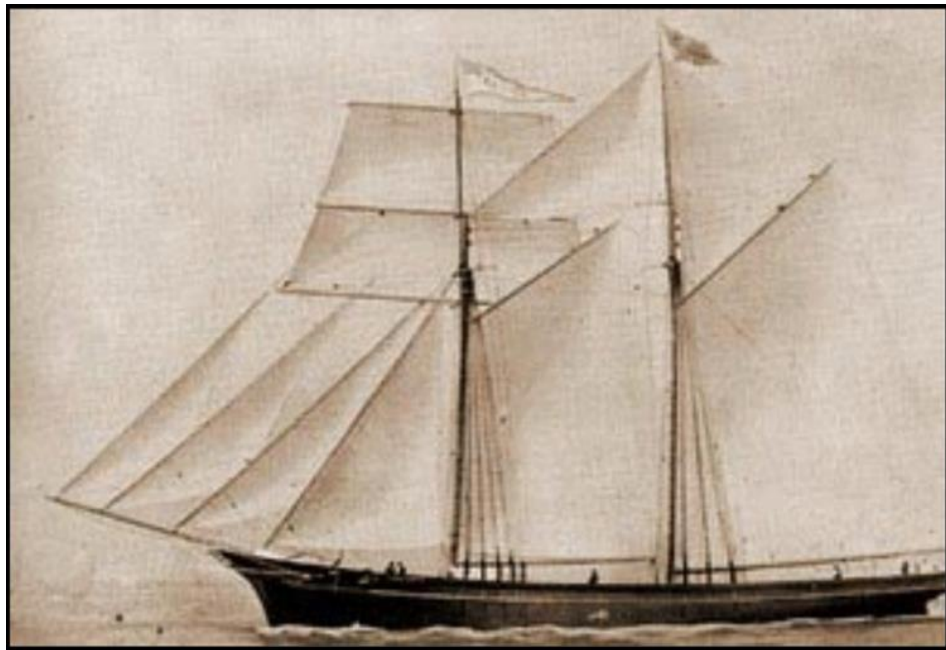




**Welsh Wreck Web Research Project
(North Cardigan Bay)**

**On-line research into the wreck of the:
*Twelve Apostles***



Report compiled by:

Deanna Cunningham

Report Title:

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

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1.0 Abstract

The idea for the Welsh Wreck Web Research Project began when between 2001 and 2009 the Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit were given various licences as per the Protection of Wrecks Act (1973) to dive on the shipwreck site of the *Diamond*. Whilst conducting research into the archaeology and history of *Diamond* MADU created an extensive list of vessels that had been wrecked in the vicinity of the site in the Sarn Badrig Reef. In total, 453 vessels have been identified in just the Cardigan Bay area and very few have been researched in any depth. Thus, the WWW Research Project began in partnership with the Nautical Archaeology Society in order to gain a better understanding and clearer record of Welsh maritime heritage.

Each of these vessels has a story to tell, whether about the technology used in her construction, the trade connections and goods, as well as the personal stories of the sailors and their families. Through this project volunteers have been given the opportunity to uncover Welsh history however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic researchers have been tasked with doing this research on the internet and in books rather than on the wrecks themselves.

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2.4 Contributors

Ian Cundy, Nautical Archaeology Society, Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit.

2.5 Abbreviations

BNA	British Newspaper Archive
GAS	Gwynedd Archives Service
NA	National Archives
MADU	Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit
NAS	Nautical Archaeology Society
OS	Ordnance Survey

3.0 Introduction

I selected the *Twelve Apostles* specifically due to my interest in maritime archaeology and religion, I am particularly fascinated in the way religion is changed and adapted in the context of seafaring and maritime culture. I also have a personal connection to the schooner ship type and therefore an investment in ships with this construction type as my great-grandfather himself was the skipper of a Cornish trading vessel. I want to find out as much about the *Twelve Apostles* as possible with my research questions falling along the lines of: what was its purpose? Who sailed it? How did it wreck? What happened to the people aboard?

3.1 What were the vessel's specifications?

The *Twelve Apostles* vessel was a wooden rigged schooner and had a gross tonnage of 118. It was built in Pwllheli in May 1858 at a length of 86 feet 2 inches long, 22ft 2in breadth x 11ft 4in with the figurehead of St. Peter adorning the bow of the ship (Coflein, 2013). She was also often seen with a silk burgee with the Twelve Apostles painted upon it (Coflein, 2013). The ship had been intended for coasting and foreign trade with its predominant trade being slate.

3.2 What historical information is available relating to the vessel?

The schooner was said to be named by a Lutheran merchant from the Baltic where the *Twelve Apostles* regularly visited with goods (Bennett, 1992: 96). The vessel had various owners: Pritchard between 1858 and 1867, to the Hughes & Company who took over from 1867 to 1894, then finally John James Jones owned her from 1894 to 1898 when it wrecked. The *Twelve Apostles* also had different home ports over the years from Pwllheli to Carnarvon however she was considered to be the unofficial flagship for Porthmadog (Jones, 2001; Bennett, 1992).

3.3 The story of the wrecking

The *Twelve Apostles* was on her return voyage in ballast from Southampton to Porthmadog on the 23rd November 1898 when a North Easterly gale force of 10 blew in (Parry, 1969: 58). However, when the wind changed to the South Captain Richard Jones who was the brother of John James Jones made the brave decision to continue his journey towards Porthmadog (Bennett, 1992: 96). The harsh winds and rain damaged three Porthmadog vessels and a Scottish brigantine was lost during this same gale (Bennett, 1992: 96). The *Twelve Apostles* was swept into Porth Neigwl, also known as 'Hell's Mouth', by locals due to the bay area being flanked by craggy rocks and cliffs (Holden, 2003: 45). The crew were said to battle with the ship but to no avail. Thus, the Captain made the difficult decision to run her ashore in an attempt to try and save the crew as well as the ship. However, she struck the rocks and sprung a leak which led her to taking in a lot of water (Parry, 1969:58). The crew managed to escape the boat with the help and support of a maid from a small farm near Trefollwyn (Rhiw, N.D). An ominous renowned telegram was also sent to the owners saying, '*Twelve Apostles* making water in Hell's Mouth' (Caernarfon & Denbigh Herald, 1858). The day after the wrecking event the beach was scavenged for any salvageable remains from the vessel.

3.4 Has anyone previously investigated or researched the vessel's back story?

There are several entries about the *Twelve Apostles* shipwreck in various books, online resources and the Lloyds Register which note the shipwreck. However, nobody has been able to dive, record of survey the site due to the exact location of where the ship sank in Porth Neigwl being unknown. No salvage has been conducted as far as it is known other than the day after the incident itself.

4.0 Background

Before starting my research into the *Twelve Apostles* shipwreck I had no prior knowledge about the ship or her history. All I had to go on were the books that Ian Cundy had directed me towards when I first set out my intentions to study the *Twelve Apostles*. I have only once visited Caernarvonshire and so it was important for me to make sure I had the basic geography of the area understood, I used the OS from the Coflein government website to locate the shipwreck as best I could (Maritime Officer, 2013). From the sources I have read it seems that the ship was very popular with the locals of Pwllheli, Carnarvon and the surrounding area because of her role as the unofficial flagship of Porthmadog (Rhiw, N.D.).

The Location of the *Twelve Apostles*:

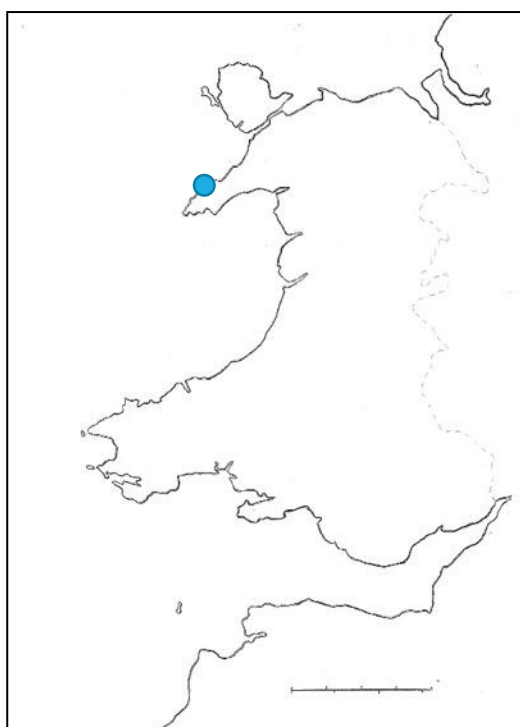
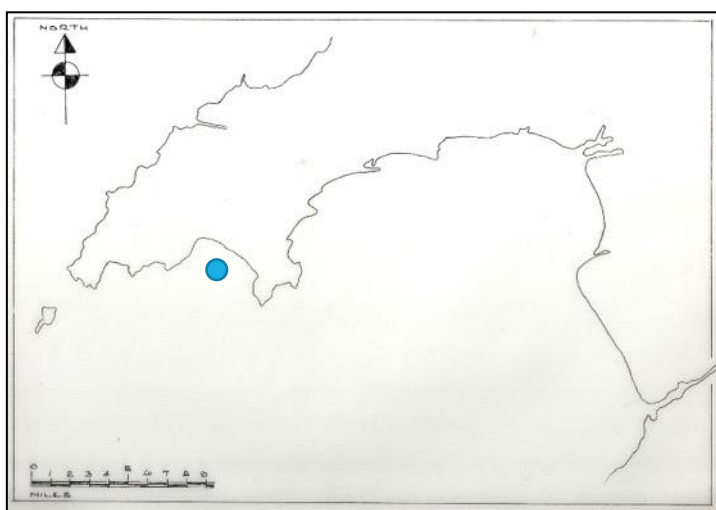


Fig. 1: Top left is zoomed in image of the Cardigan Bay area with the approximated location of the *Twelve Apostles* shipwreck marked with a blue circle (map provided by the MADU for the WWW Research Project, 2020).

Fig. 2: Top right is a map of the UK with the general area of the *Twelve Apostles* marked with a blue circle (map provided by the MADU for the WWW Research Project, 2020).

Fig. 3: Bottom left is a map of Wales and the Bristol Channel with the general area of the *Twelve Apostles* marked with a blue circle (map provided by the MADU for the WWW Research Project, 2020).

5.0 Research Methodology

I was able to use my Apple Mac Book Pro (2020 model) which has a 1.4GHz quad-core 8th-generation Intel Core i5 processor. I used Google as my search engine and Microsoft Word to write my report.

I started my research project following Ian Cundy’s advice and looked into some books that the *Twelve Apostles* shipwreck had already been mentioned in, such examples include *Shipwrecks Around Wales* by Tom Bennett and *Wreck and Rescue on the Coast of Wales* by Henry Parry (1969). From there I made my way through the list of suggested websites as supplied by the WWW Research Project and I started with the Lloyd’s Register archives where I found out the captains of the ship, the size as well as where she often travelled. I made a note of every single yearly register that I found the *Twelve Apostles* noted in and have added these to the Appendices [pages 18 and 19]. I then went to the Coflein website which gave some detail as to how little is known about the archaeology and its exact whereabouts as displayed by the OS (2013). With the subsequent COVID-19 situation it is unlikely that locating the site will happen easily anytime soon.

My route across the web through Google searches:

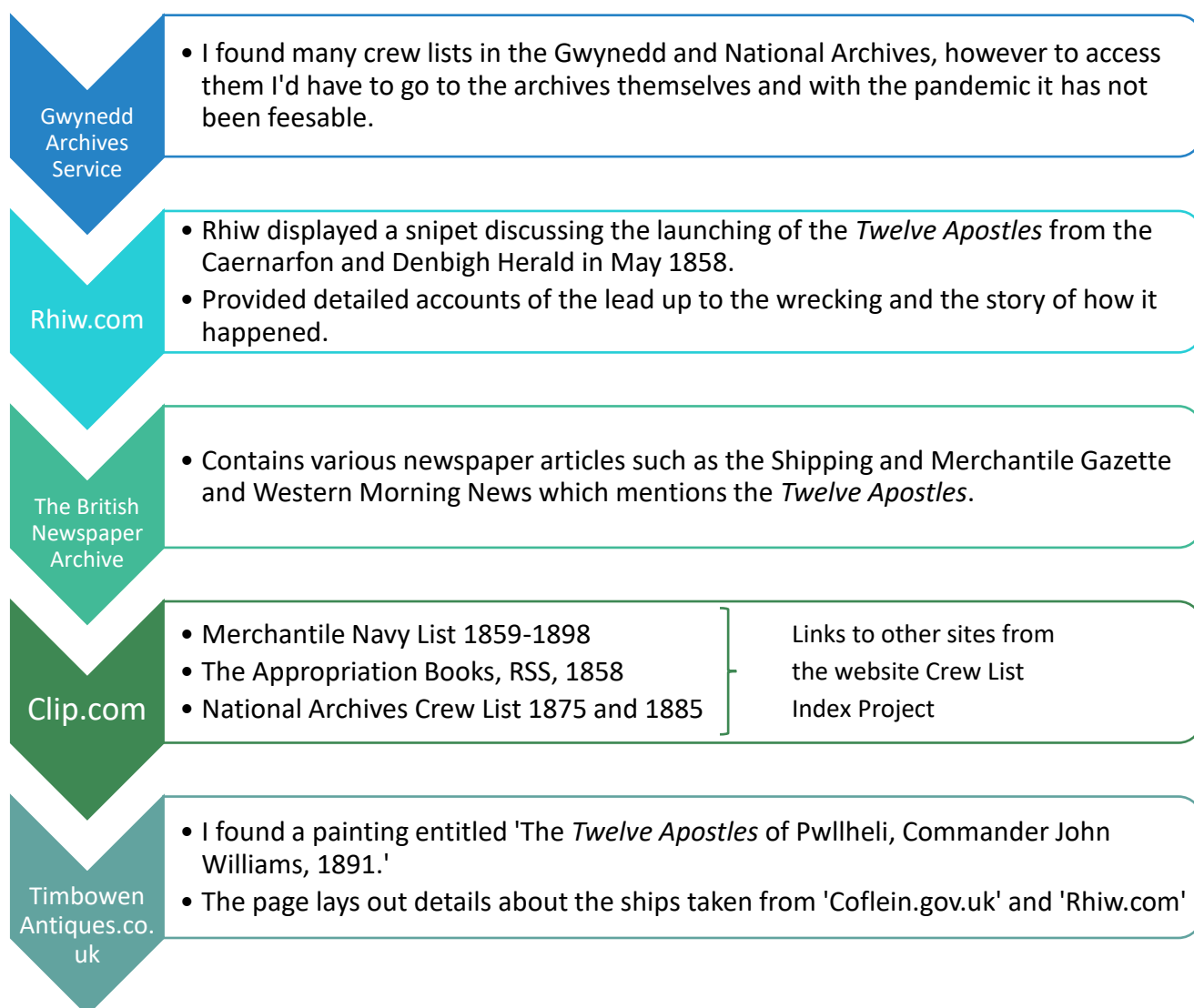


Table 1: My google searches for research into the Twelve Apostles










Ship	Official number	Port of registry and details	Source	Crew lists	Links
TWELVE APOSTLES	21329	Built: 1858, Register closed: 1898	<i>TNA catalogue, BT 110/81/79</i>	 MHA	 CLIP  More...
		Caernarfon, 32/1858, Sail, 127 tons	<i>Appropriation Books, RSS</i>		
		Caernarfon, 118 tons	Eames, Aled (1987): <i>Ventures in Sail</i> , Appendix B		
		Caernarfon, Crew lists 1863-1898	<i>Crew lists, Gwynedd AS (Caernarfon)</i>		
		Caernarfon, Sail, 127 tons	<i>MNL, 1860</i>		
		Caernarfon, Sail	<i>MNL, 1870</i>		
		Caernarfon, Sail, Schooner	<i>MNL, 1880</i>		
		Caernarfon, Sail, Schooner	<i>MNL, 1890</i>		

Fig. 4: Search Results for the *Twelve Apostles* from the Crew List Index Project (Clip).

5.1 List of Newspaper clipping mentions (BNA, 2020)

Newspaper: Caernarvon & Denbigh Herald

Published: Saturday 15th May 1858

Content: An extract on the *Twelve Apostles* launching.

Newspaper: Dublin Daily Express

Published: Monday 30th May 1864

Content: On Saturday 19th May the *Twelve Apostles* sailing from Danzig passed in towards Dublin.

Newspaper: Morning Advertiser

Published: Tuesday 1st December 1868

Content: Gothenburg, Sweden. The *Twelve Apostles* was sailing from Stettin to Dublin and put into Kalfsund harbour due to a leak on the 28th November.

Newspaper: London Evening Standard

Published: Tuesday 1st December 1868

Content: Gothenburg, Sweden. The *Twelve Apostles* was sailing from Stettin to Dublin on the 20th November and it put into Kalfsund harbour on the 28th November leaking.

Newspaper: London Evening Standard

Published: Monday 7th December 1868

Content: Gothenburg, Sweden. The *Twelve Apostles* was sailing from Stettin to Dublin on the 20th November and it put into Kalfsund harbour on the 28th of November leaking and with 3 feet of water in her hold.

Newspaper: Shipping and Mercantile Gazette

Published: Saturday 23rd October 1869

Content: Dungeness, United Kingdom. The *Twelve Apostles* passed on the 22nd.

Newspaper: Shipping and Mercantile Gazette

Published: Thursday 28th October 1869

Content: Penzance, United Kingdom. The *Twelve Apostles* was sailing from the Baltic to Porthmadoc and anchored in Mount's Bay on the 26th October.

Newspaper: Shipping and Mercantile Gazette

Published: Friday 29th October 1869

Content: At Penzance on the 28th October the *Twelve Apostles* was at anchor in the bay, it was sailing from Nykopings for Port Talbot.

Newspaper: Shipping and Mercantile Gazette

Published: Tuesday 26th March 1872

Content: On the 23rd March the *Twelve Apostles* was at anchor in Sonrabaya.

Newspaper: Shipping and Mercantile Gazette

Published: Thursday 14th November 1872

Content: St. Catharine's Point, United Kingdom the *Twelve Apostles* passed west at 12:00 on the 13th November.

Newspaper: Shipping and Mercantile Gazette

Published: Monday 12th August 1872

Content: London, United Kingdom *Twelve Apostles* passed up the channel on the 11th August at 12:30pm.

Newspaper: Shipping and Mercantile Gazette

Published: Saturday 12th April 1873

Content: Skagen, Denmark the *Twelve Apostles* passed south on the 9th April.

Newspaper: Shipping and Mercantile Gazette

Published: Saturday 10th May 1873

Content: Skagen, Denmark the *Twelve Apostles* passed west on the 5th May.

Newspaper: Shipping and Mercantile Gazette

Published: Tuesday 25th July 1876

Content: St. Catherine's Point, United Kingdom the *Twelve Apostles* passed down on the 25th July.

Newspaper: Shipping and Mercantile Gazette

Published: Wednesday 13th March 1878

Content: Prawle Point on the 12th March the *Twelve Apostles* was NFTV at 4pm.

Newspaper: Shipping and Mercantile Gazette

Published: Tuesday 20th August 1878

Content: St. Catherine's Point, United Kingdom the *Twelve Apostles* passed at noon on the 19th August.

Newspaper: Shipping and Mercantile Gazette

Published: Monday 11th November 1878

Content: *Twelve Apostles* was at Copenhagen and on the 10th November it was reported at 4pm to be aground by Telegraph.

Newspaper: Glasgow Herald

Published: Monday 11th November 1878

Content: In Copenhagen on November 9th the *Twelve Apostles* with the Captain Williams, from Stettin to Penzance, with potatoes has grounded at Amager. A Switzer steamer had been sent to get her off.

Newspaper: Shipping and Mercantile Gazette

Published: Friday 20th Decemeber 1878

Content: The *Twelve Apostles* arrived in Ryde, the roads windbound, sailing from Settin to Penzance.

Newspaper: Western Morning News

Published: Monday 27th December 1880

Content: On Saturday the 25th the *Twelve Apostles*, Williams, with manure for Pgwelly.

Newspaper: Western Morning News

Published: Wednesday 15th October 1884

Content: The *Twelve Apostles* was Bound up to-day at 10 am at Prawle Point on Tuesday 14th.

Newspaper: London Evening Standard

Published: Thursday 16th April 1891

Content: The *Twelve Apostles* sailing from Port Madoc for Stettin had to pull into Elsinore with loss of yards, sails, bulwarks, having experienced heavy weather.

Newspaper: Liverpool Mercury

Published: Tuesday 15th September 1891

Content: The *Twelve Apostles* was eight miles south-west of Lemin on the 9th September.

6.0 Results

Vessel	Name	Twelve Apostles		
	Type	Schooner		
		Cargo		
Built	Date	Laid down: Unknown		
		Launched: 13 th May 1858		
		Commissioned: Unknown		
	Builder	Name: Unknown		
Location: Pwllheli				
Construction	Materials	Wood, Iron Bolts		
	Decks	?		
	Bulkheads	?		
Propulsion	Type	Sail		
	Details	Square Rigged		
Dimensions	Length	86ft	2ins	26.3m
	Breadth	22ft	2ins	6.8m
	Depth	11ft	4ins	3.5m
Tonnage	Gross	118		
	Net	128		
Owner	First	John Pritchard		
	Address	Penrhos, Caernarvonshire		
	Last	John James Jones		
	Address	Ivy terrace, Borth-y-gest, Porthmadog, Carnarvon		
	Others	Hugh Hughes, Elizabeth Hughes		
Registry	Port	Pwllheli (1858-?) and Carnarvon (earliest known date 1883 – wrecking)		
	Flag	British		
	Number	21329		
History	Routes	From Pwllheli, Wales to Statein, Germany (Captain Prichard's memoirs)		
		From Southampton, England to Porthmadog, Wales (Date of wrecking)		
		Penzance, England to Stettin, Poland		
		Nyköping, Sweden to Port Talbot, Wales		
		Stettin, Poland to Dublin, Ireland		
		Danzig, Poland to Dublin, Ireland		
		Known to trade from Bangor and Carnarvon to the Baltic a lot		
	Cargo	Slate		
Final Voyage	From	Southampton		
	To	Porthmadog		
	Captain	H. Hughes, J. Williams, T. Williams, R. Jones		
	Crew	Numbers: 11		
	Cargo	Type of Goods		
Wrecking	Date	23 rd November 1898		
	Location	Porth Neigwl also known as 'Hell's Mouth'		
	Cause	Gale and leak		
	Loss of life	None		
	Outcome	Total Loss		

Table 2: *Twelve Apostles* basic information results table.

6.1 Additional Important Information

I could not find any information on building plans or a builder's name in association with the *Twelve Apostles* Schooner. However, there are photographs (Fig. 4 and 5), drawings (Fig. 6) and paintings (Fig. 7) that give us some idea of what the ship looked like. We also have images of other schooners from the same period of the *Twelve Apostles'* construction which could give a more generalised idea of her appearance.

Some general repairs to the *Twelve Apostles* had been catalogued in the Lloyds Register between 1863 and 1874. In 1883 the Lloyd's Register also mentions that damages had to be repaired, which is recorded differently to the general repairs, however there is not a record as to what was damaged or how. However, there are several events where the ship faces difficulties as noted in the newspapers. For example, in 1868 when the ship started leaking and had to take refuge in Kalfsund harbour, Sweden. Another time was when she pulled into Elsinore, Denmark due to having lost yards, sails and bulwarks because of bad heavy weather.

There is not very much in the way of accessible information regarding the personal histories of the crew, captains or owners. From 1867 to 1883 Henry Hughes and Company owned the *Twelve Apostles*, however after Hughes' death his wife Elizabeth Hughes inherited the ship until she passed it on to John James Jones. The *Twelve Apostles* is also mentioned in *Captain Pritchard's Memoirs* and recounts his time briefly but with fondness, saying 'I rather think I made another voyage in the *Twelve Apostles'* (Pritchard, 2017).

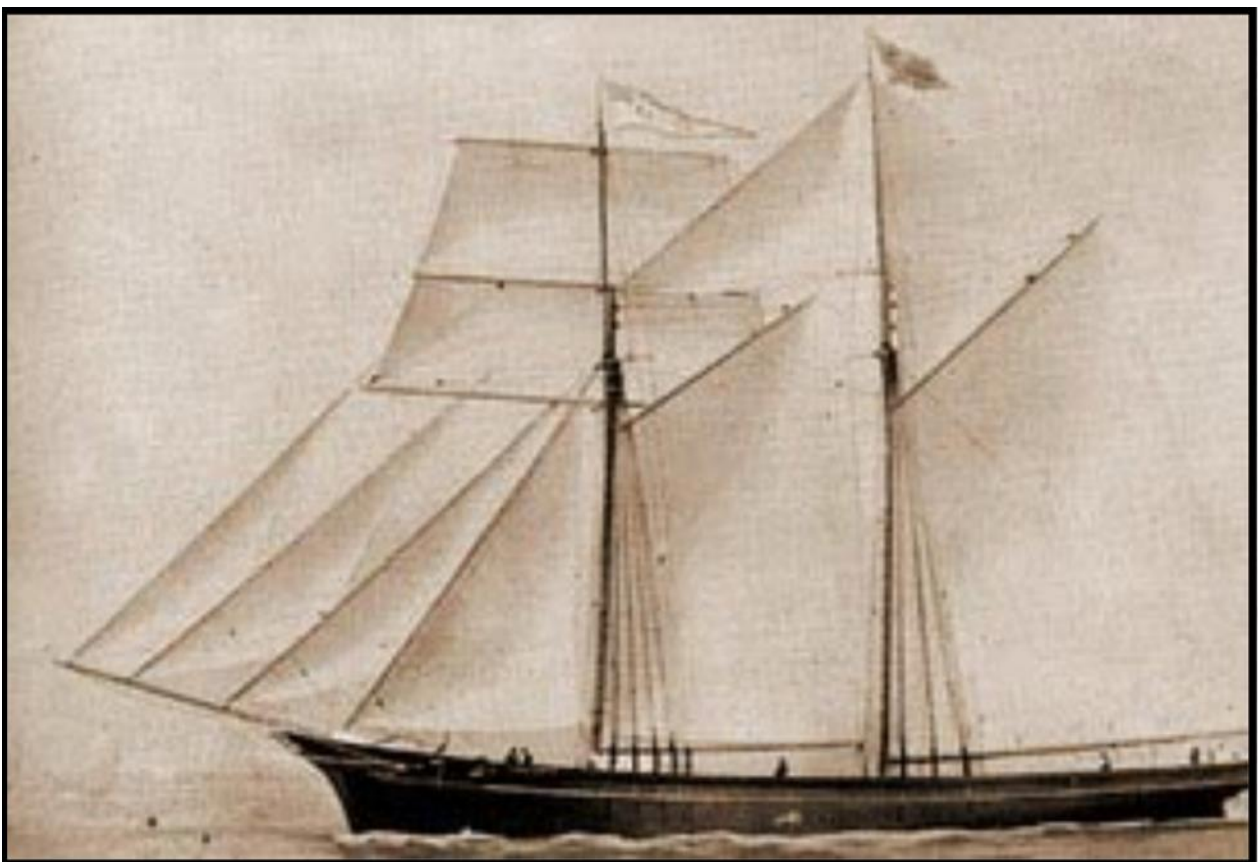


Fig. 5: Photograph of the *Twelve Apostles* Shipwrecks (Unknown Photographer).



Fig. 6: The *Twelve Apostles* St Paul's figurehead (Taken from Ian Warburton, 2020).

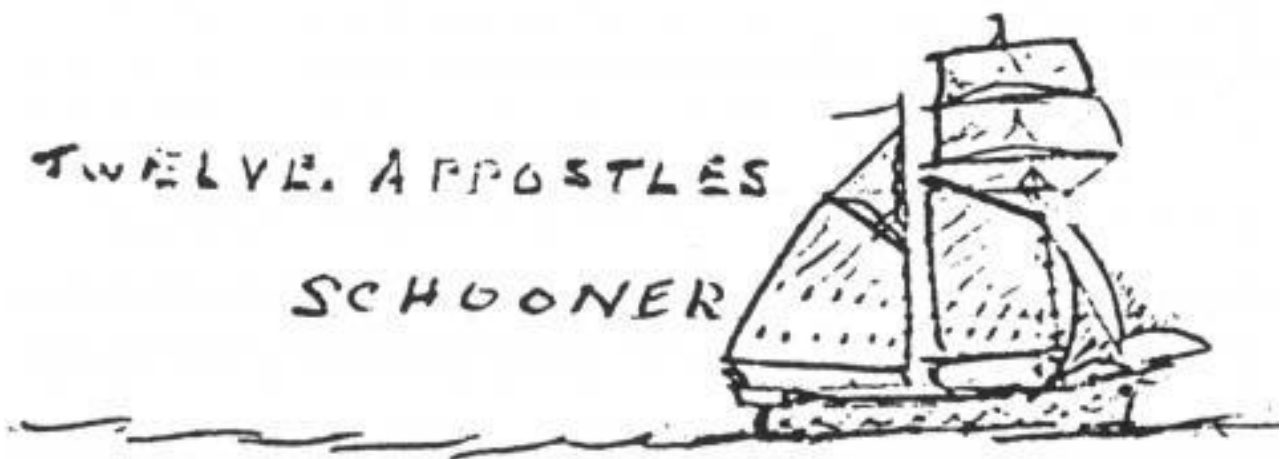


Fig. 7: A drawing done of the *Twelve Apostles* Schooner (Captain Pritchard, 1893).



Fig. 8: A 19th century water-colour of the ‘*Twelve Apostles* of Pwllheli, Commander John Williams, 1891’ (Painter unknown).

6.2 Timeline of events

13th May 1858	•The <i>Twelve Apostles</i> was launched in Pwllheli.
1867	•Owners changed from Pritchard to Hughes and Co.
28th November 1868	•The <i>Twelve Apostles</i> was sailing from Stettin to Dublin when she sprung a leak and had to pull into Kalfsund harbour.
9th November 1878	•The <i>Twelve Apostles</i> grounded at Amager, near Copenhagen whilst on a voyage from Stettin to Penzance .
1894	•The ship was armatured by John James Jones from Elizabeth Hughes after her husbands death.
1893	•Captain Pritchard joined the voyage from Pwllheli to Statein, Germany as a member of the crew under Captain Willams.
16th April 1891	•The <i>Twelve Apostles</i> had to pull into Elisnore with loss of yards, sails, bulwarks, having experieced heavy weather.
7th October 1895	•The first ship to ever take a load of slate through the Kiel Canal in Germany (Rhiw, N.D.).
23rd November 1898	•The date that the <i>Twelve Apostles</i> wrecked.

Table 3: Timeline of known events in the *Twelve Apostles* history.

7.0 Analysis

The *Twelve Apostles* is a ship with some general research having been done in the past about her life and build. Her name cropped up in multiple books, internet searches and historical sources like the Lloyds Register and the Appropriation Books. However, any research that was conducted into the personal histories of the crew, captain and owners did not amount to much other than the brief entry in *Captain Pritchard Memoir's*.

From the three tables of information I collated on the *Twelve Apostles* shipwreck it is known that she traded a lot with the Baltic nations including countries such as Germany and Sweden. The general historical timeline of the *Twelve Apostles* ship was also revealed through extensive online research where each source corroborated. The materials, size and captains were also consistently noted in all of the sources.

The ship was also very much admired in popular culture, it was an icon and in several sources including Rhiw.com (N.D) and Bennett (1992) it discusses the *Twelve Apostles* status as high amongst the local Cardigan Bay ports.

Helpful Websites:

- <http://www.crewlist.org.uk/data/vesselsalpha?shipsearch=twelve+apostles&SearchType=Exact&submit=search>
- <https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/271548/details/twelve-apostles>
- https://www.rhiw.com/y_mor/shipwrecks/Twelve_apostles.htm
- <https://www.timbowenantiques.co.uk/paintings/the-twelve-apostles-of-pwllheli>
- <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C10098790>
- <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/results/r?name=Search& cr1=BT%2099/1054& aq=21329>
- <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/search/results/1858-01-01/1898-12-31?basicsearch=%2btwelve%20%2bapostles%20schooner%20pwllheli&freesearch=twelve%20apostles&somesearch=schooner%20pwllheli&retrievecountrycounts=false&sortorder=score>

Whilst having access to the National Archives and the Gwynedd Archives Service was useful I did not manage to look at any of the records due to that that involving physically going to the archives. Thus, there may be more information that I have been unable to gather on the *Twelve Apostles* shipwreck.

8.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

I spent roughly 40 hours on researching and writing this report. A good proportion of my time was spent conducting the on-line research part of the report and the writing up of my report was a much shorter process.

In conclusion, I did not find any conflicting accounts about the *Twelve Apostles* in the literature however there were some embellished stories from sources like Rhiw.com about the events of the wrecking. All of the evidence that I recovered from the newspaper archives also often presented similar, if not the same stories of accidents and sailing routes.

The wreck site still has not been located but as it was beached in the shallows it may be something that could be geographically located. However, according to Holden and Rhiw.com the ship was most likely pounded to pieces and then scavenged for scrap after the storm blew over, thus there may not be much in the way of archaeology left to record (Holden, 2003: 45). The vessel subsequently would probably not be a contender for the NAS Adopt-a-Wreck scheme due to it being unlocated and in all likelihood incredibly broken up.

In terms of on-line and historical research, I think it would be worth visiting the GAS and NA to access the crew lists to further enrich our knowledge of the ship's history in more than just the launch and her wrecking. Most of the on-line research websites were free to access however the BNA only allowed free access to three newspaper clippings of choice before requiring payment to view more.

Doing this report has opened my eyes to the amount of information that can be found out about archaeology through on-line research alone. The project has answered my original questions, aims and objectives. I was able to better understand the launch and wrecking of the *Twelve Apostles*, the crew, captains and owners as well as the goods the ship traded in.

My research has led me to pose additional questions as to what sort of journeys, life and crew the *Twelve Apostles* had. I would like to know more about the personal histories of the ship due to her fame amongst the local ports of Porthmadog.

I would like to recommend trying to identify the site location because it has such a rich and varied history and it would be lovely to locate the ship. I also believe that the ship should be researched further in terms of the archives as it has such an interesting history in relation to Wales and Cardigan Bay.

9.0 References

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Maritime Officer., (2013) *Coflein: Twelve Apostles* [Online]. Available at: <https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/271548/details/twelve-apostles> (Accessed 4th September 2020).

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Rhiw., (N.D.) *Twelve Apostles* [Online]. Available at: https://www.rhiw.com/y_mor/shipwrecks/Twelve_apostles.htm (Accessed 4th September 2020).

The British Newspaper Archive., (N.D.) *Search Results* [Online]. Available at: <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/search/results/1858-01-01/1898-12-31?basicsearch=%2btwelve%20%2bapostles%20schooner%20pwillheli&freesearch=twelve%20apostles&somesearch=schooner%20pwillheli&retrievecountrycounts=false&sortorder=score> (Accessed 12th September 2020).

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Appendix B – The Appropriation Books

20		21320	Shrimms of the 34	"	"	19	"	July 8
7		21321	Shrimms of the 38	"	"	18	"	"
14		21322	Royal Charter 119	"	Warrington 20. 1868	20	First Registry	April 26
5	Common	21323	Pauline Morris 103	"	"	21	"	"
15		21324	William Owen 96	"	"	23	"	May 17
10		21325	William Morris 91	"	"	24	"	" 26
2		21326	Allen 140	"	"	25	"	" 27
7	lost	21327	Thomas Wade 200	"	"	29	"	June 9
9		21328	Edward 106	"	"	30	"	"
10		21329	Richard Roberts 124	"	"	32	"	" 25
14		21330	Book Book 210	"	Warrington 27 March	27	First Registry	May 27
19	lost	21331	Morro 133	"	"	11 May	"	May 11
22	lost	21332	Dumail 771	"	"	2 May 1859	"	2 May 59
5		21333	Corca 581	"	"	3 May 1859	"	25 May 1859
9	lost	21334	Colina 227	"	"	4 "	"	11 Oct "
		21335	Edith 131	"	Cardinal 11. 1858	11	First Registry	April 17
20	Common	21336	Book Book 123	"	"	18 "	1858	" 8
1	lost	21337	Book 128	"	"	9 "	"	May 9
29		21338	Phantom 24	"	"	17 "	"	April 17
16		21339	Phantom 24	"	"	6 May	"	May 6
6	lost	21340	Book 312	"	Plymouth 22 Dec 1828	22	Cardinal	May 17
		21341	Blue Book 153	"	Cardinal 25 n 1858	25	First Registry	" 19