

MIZEN HEAD SHIPWRECKS

Introduction

It is impossible to tell how many ships and boats have been wrecked on this coast. In many cases no-one survived to tell the tale and the boat was so damaged in the wreck that it was unidentifiable or disappeared altogether. Wrecks round the rugged Co. Cork coast go back to the first settlers and traders. In the days of sail, coming close to shore for orders after a long, uncertain but safe journey across the ocean, the land held dangers of fog, rough seas, severe gales and cliffs. Human error was a common reason for shipwreck.

From the land side wrecks were often beneficial. Animal cargoes that got ashore alive were valuable to the local population. In the poverty stricken days of the 19thC a good wreck could make the difference between life and death. A saying at that time was 'We'll starve for Christmas or we may have a wreck and be full and plenty.'

The Lloyds' agent had a difficult job trying to save as much as possible for the underwriters. Salvage was a goods employer too.

The contribution of the local population to the rescue of shipwreck survivors is reported as well. The kindness and care of local people for the survivors is cited in many reports.

To be expanded?.....

25.1.1780 LA SOLIDADA Spanish Frigate captured by some Liverpool privateers, sank at Crookhaven (C.H.C. 27.1.1780)

28.2.1794 FANNY of Crookhaven, on passage from Dublin to Limerick laden with iron bedsteads and bedding for soldiers was wrecked in gale at Ballyrizzard (Ballyrisode) near her home port. Richard Notter, her master and owner and two crewmen were drowned (Cork Gazette, 8.3.1794)

20.12.1794 LADY HARRIETT brig of Cork, Matthias Twohig, master. From Cadiz to Dublin with a cargo of fruit. Forced to take shelter in Long Island Sound, off Schull. She was boarded by 'a mob of people who plundered and destroyed the cargo and hull' (Cork Gazette 27.12.1794)

30.12. 1796 L'IMPATIENTE 38 Gun Frigate Bombardiere. Member of the French Fleet to Bantry Bay in 1796. Cargo: Troops & 44 carriage mounted cannon. Captain de Vaisseau Deniau, 300 seamen and 250 soldiers. Only 7 survived. The survivors including the Irish pilot were taken on board the British '74 MONARCH. Wreckage near caves below cliffs at Mizen car park. Cannon can still be seen. Lies in 15m.

1822 HMS CONFIANCE 5th. Rate 36 Gun Brig 393 tons. Troops & 18 carriage mounted cannon. At Coosaculaun near 3 Castle Head. Cannon found 1980

26.2.1827 TRIO Owners: Robt.& William McIntyre, Londonderry. Master: Stephen Bexfield. Palermo to Londonderry. Cargo: Lemons, shumac (a plant used in tanning and dyeing) etc. Vessel sank under the cliffs at Mizen Head. The master and mate were saved and 5 crew drowned. (Southern Reporter, 1.3.1827)

23.10.1838 LADY CHARLOTTE Barque of 190 tons, built in Liverpool, 1831. Owned by Gill & Co. From Callao & Lima to Liverpool. Wrecked in fog on barrel Rocks N/W of Cape Clear. Capt. John Burton Gill and 8 crew died. One survivor, John Maddington. Cargo: Peruvian bark, Hides, llama wool, Treasure of Dollars, silver plates, gold bars, silver ore, silver bars and sterling.

25.8.1841 WILLIAM HINCH Brig. Master: Parker Out 21 days from Halifax went on shore in Dunlough Bay in fog. The captain and crew did not know where they were. With the assistance of the Lloyd's agent and his men from Crookhaven, the vessel was refloated and brought round to Crookhaven.

10.11.1847 STEVE WHITNEY Packet Ship 1034 Tons Red Star Line of Thos and Jos. Sands & Co, Liverpool. Built in New York, 1640. Loss of 100 lives. Wrecked off Cape Clear. Led to the building of the Fastnet Rock Lighthouse. Cargo: Apples, cheese, bills of exchange.

14.12.1850 MOUNTAINEER Grounded in Dunmanus bay in severe gale. Crew saved by beaching on mud beneath Coastguard Station saving Capt. John Harisson and crew. Cargo: Timber.

30.3.1850 RANGER Brig from North Shields. Capt. John Robertson to Cork or Falmouth for orders. Wrecked in Dunmanus Bay. Cargo: Egyptian wheat.

9.12.1852 BROAD OAK Sailing Ship from Pernambuco to Liverpool. Wrecked in Dunlough. Captain and 15 crew lost; Mate and 4 sailors saved by Magistrate Mr. Simmons and local constabulary. Cargo: Cotton and Sugar.

17.12.1867 HELVELLYN Sunk off Cape Clear Cargo: Coal and Iron. Captain and crew shipped to Waterford

- 5.4.1867 GEORGE AND MARY Schooner Capt. McCarthy, Limerick to Port William, Durham. Blown into Mizen Head in a flat calm sea by an indraught. The Captain and crew escaped in a boat and came ashore at Barleycove. They were put up by Mr. Noonan of the Clinton Arms, Crookhaven.
- 9.2.1874 CAMPODINICE Sulina to Cork. Cargo: Maize Sank off Crookhaven. Capt. Lagna and Crew saved by rocket.
- 10.2.1874 ELIZA YOUNG 530 tons Dragged anchor in Crookhaven in Gale. From Granda, Spain to Barrow in Furness. Cargo: Timber Sailed on 18.12.1873. Crew put up at Mr. Nanty's, Crookhaven, then sent to the Sailors' Home in Cork.
- 3.3.1874 SAILOR PRINCE offered for sale as wreck as seen at anchor in Crookhaven, below Coastguard Station. Built New Brunswick, 1862. Cargo: 2000 Havana Sugar Boxes, also on offer.
- 7.2.1881 BOHEMIAN 3052 Tons 400' Steamer. Built Harland and Wolff, Belfast 1870. Owned by F. Leyland & Co. Left Boston 27.1.1881 for Liverpool. Sank in thick fog off Caher, near Mizen Head. Capt. Grundy & 3 crew lost. 54 crew saved. Cargo: Cotton and Bacon
- 21.11.1885 IBERIAN 2930 tons 390' x 37.2' x 29.3' 350 h.p. Compound inverted engines. Owned by F. Leyland & Co. Built 1867. From Boston to Liverpool. Sank in thick fog half a mile west of Bird Island, Dunmanus Bay. Crew of 54 saved in boats. Vessel broke up 15.10.1886 Cargo: Cattle
- 5.12.1886 AUGUSTA 54 tons 136' Steamer. Built Swansea, 1849. Owned by Hodder & Co., 1881. Wrecked in Dunmanus bay.
- 8.11.89 QUEENSMORE 4195 tons Steamer. 400'x 46'x 29' 500 HP Triple expansion engines. Owned by William Johnston & Co.; built by Harland and Wolff, Belfast. On maiden voyage 27.10.89 from Baltimore to Liverpool. Cargo: 900 cattle, 2000 bales cotton, 850 tons copper matte, 60,000 bushels wheat, lard, tobacco, flour and organs. 77 people & 2 stowaways. On Nov. 5th the cotton cargo caught fire; after three days the crew had it under control but the fog came down when they were in sight of Cape Clear and they ran into Dunlough Bay, striking Bully Rock off Three castle head. She drifted off and sank in 30 fathoms of water. All the passengers and crew (77 people and 2 stowaways) were saved but only 11 bullocks survived.
- 31.12.89 CHERWELL Iron Barque Over 1000 tons. Sailed from Dundee to Newport, Wales and then to Mauritius with a cargo of coal. Then to

Brazil, back to Mauritius, on to Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Calcutta and the west coast of South America returning to Liverpool with a cargo of nitrates (guano) from Chile. They were bound for Cobh for orders. The sun hadn't show for 5 days and the Captain had no reckoning. They ran into Dunlough bay, lowered a boat. The 19 crew stripped off their clothes and 17 got in the boat, 2 didn't make it went down with the ship. The crew spent the night on Carboy Island and had to wait till morning to make for Dunmanus where they found food and shelter.

31.12.90 CITY OF ROME of the Anchor Line from Boston to Liverpool. She ran aground on the Fastnet Rock and floated off. Lucky escape. 8,415 gross tons, length 560.2ft x beam 52.3ft, clipper bows, three funnels, four masts (rigged for sail), iron hull, single screw, speed 16 knots, accommodation for 271-1st, 250-2nd and 810-steerage class passengers. Built by Barrow Shipbuilding Co., Barrow, she was launched on 14th Jun.1881 for the Inman Line and started her maiden voyage on 13th Oct.1881 when she left Liverpool for Queenstown and New York. After five voyages, she transferred to the Anchor Line in 1882 but continued on the same route. In 1891 she was refitted to accommodate 75-1st, 250-2nd and 1,000-steerage class passengers and transferred to Glasgow - Moville - New York sailings. In Sep.1898 she repatriated 1,690 Spanish troops from Portsmouth, USA to Santander after the Spanish-American War and commenced her final Glasgow - Moville - New York - Glasgow voyage on 26th Sep.1901. In 1902 she was scrapped in Germany. [North Atlantic Seaway, vol.1,p.243 by N.R.P.Bonsor]

17.11.1896 MEMPHIS 3191 Tons 345.6' x 40.9' x 26.7' 278 n.h.p. triple expansion engines. Built by Harland and Wolff, 1890. Owned by African SS Co. Dominion Line. Chartered by Elder Dempsey Line. From Montreal to Avonmouth, Sank in Dunlough Bay near Carraig na Coos, south of the bay. 9 Crew died but some were rescued by the O'Leary family. The remains of the ship are scattered with only the boiler and the anchors identifiable. Cargo: Timber, flour, bacon, butter, cattle and general cargo.

12.3.1899 OSWESTRY 2419 tons 300' Owned by Sivewright, Bacon & Co, Built by E. Withy & Co., Hartlepool, 1888/ From Newport and Norfolk,VA. For Manchester. Wrecked in fog on the north side of Mizen head. Lies between the BOHEMIAN and the MEMPHIS. Capt. Wilson and 24 crew were saved by locals. Sometimes called the Copper Boat . Cargo: Cotton, Deal and Indian Maize and other goods such as lead and copper bars valued at €250,000. The Lloyds Agent at Bere, where much of the cargo washed up, contacted Capt. Hugh Williams, the owner's representative and a ship the PERSEVERANCE was

hired from Cork to carry the cargo to a larger steamer for transport to Liverpool.. This was one of the largest losses for Lloyd's insurers according to the underwriters' agent Capt. McLean.

26.5.1906 RIBBLE Steam Trawler. 183 tons. 114.3' x 20.8' x 11.2' Built by Smith's Dock Co., North Shields. 3 cylinder triple expansion engine. 52 h.p. Owners: Wyre Steam trawling Co., Fleetwood. Struck Cloghane Island under the fog signal station and sank. Capt. R. Collinson, 8 crew and 2 passengers were all rescued.

1.10.1908 MANAOS Steam Trawler. Owners: Hancock & Harris & Co., Milford Haven. Built by Smith's Dock Co., North Shields. 82 tons. 116.3' x 21.2' x 10.9' 3 cylinder triple expansion engine. 52 h.p. Returning from fishing off the Blaskets she became wedged at the bottom of the cliffs of Cloghane Island. Skipper Salter and crew scrambled onto the island and were rescued by construction workers from the Fog Signal Station 10 hours later. The mate, Charles McKenna, drowned.

22.12.1908 IRADA 8124 Tons 501' Owned by J H Welsford & Co, Built by Workman, Clark & Co. , Belfast, 1900. Caught between Cloghane Island and the mainland north of Mizen Head in fog. Irish Lights workers building the Fog Signal Station helped the survivors. Capt. Arthur Wellesley Roberts and five crew died and were buried in Kilmoe graveyard. Cargo: 22,000 bales cotton

30.1.1915 IBERIAN Steamship 5223 tons 437' x 48.8' x 29.9' 470 n.h.p. Triple expansion engines. 12 knots Owned by F. Leyland & Co. Built by Sir J. Laing & Sons, 1900. Intercepted by a German submarine 9 miles S by W of the Fastnet on July 30th 1915 . The ship was shelled starting from 45 miles. When it was quite near the Submarine captain hailed Capt. Iago, telling him to lower the boats and abandon ship. The German captain handed Dr. Patrick Burns and the captain some bandages for the wounded. The submarine then sank the Iberian. During the shelling 7 people were killed, but there were 63 survivors, two of whom died, were rescued after 6 hours in rough seas.

15.5.1915 ANTONETTA Fishing boat. Owner: John Cadogan, Sherkin. Sank after hitting a mass of floating debris from the wreck of the LUSITANIA off the Fastnet. The crew of 6 barely had time to take to a small punt. They were picked up and taken by Denis Donovan's motor boat to Union Hall and brought to Baltimore.

28.5.1915 GLENHOLM Sailing ship. Owners: William Price & Co., 3204 tons . Chile to Queenstown (Cobh) for orders. Cargo: nitrate 27 Crew including Captain Campbell's 20 year old daughter. Attacked by a German submarine 12

miles south of Mizen 16 miles WSW of the Fastnet. The captain was told to lower the boats and hand over the ships papers. The captain, his daughter and 23 crew took to the boats, but the captain did not hand over the papers so they were attacked, only getting away by dint of vigorous rowing to the safety of Castletownbere after many hours. The ship was torpedoed and sunk.

2.1.1917 NESTORIAN 6395 tons 396.6' x 51.9' x 34.6' 4 cylinder quadruple expansion steam engine. 510 h.p. Owned by F. Leyland. Built by Hawthorn Leslie & Co., Newcastle upon Tyne, 1911. Capt. A. Coulsting. Ran aground at Bulling Rock below the cliffs at the SW tip of Cape Clear Island near Port na Long. From Galveston to Liverpool. 79 of the 80 crew were saved by the Daly and O'Driscoll families. One man died when he fell from the rig. Cargo: Cotton, Steel and Shell Heads.

6.3.1917 ADALANDS Torpedoed off Fastnet

August 1979 The Fastnet Race is organised by the Royal Ocean Racing Club (RORC) and the Royal Yacht Association (RYA) as the culmination of Cowes Week biennially from Cowes, (on the Isle of Wight off the south coast of England) round the Fastnet and back. In 1979 an extraordinary storm blew up and created havoc with the yachts. Of the 302 boats in 6 classes that started 217 retired, 16 were abandoned, 5 were lost, believed sunk and 19 crew were drowned. 13 lifeboats put to sea to aid the yachts.

On August 13th 1979 Baltimore Lifeboat went to the rescue of the yacht REGARDLESS, saving the boat and rescuing 9 crew and then MARIONETTE, saving the boat and rescuing 12 crew. They were at sea for 32 hours.

29.9.1985 TAURIMA Pleasure Yacht owned by Charles Haughey, TD, Taoiseach at that time. Wrecked below the Mizen Light. Rescued by Baltimore Lifeboat and the Lightkeepers. Richard Foran, Acting principal Keeper was commended by the Commissioners of Irish Lights for his rôle in the rescue.

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