

ST DOGMAELS AND CARDIGAN. A MARITIME HERITAGE.

John Rhys

• **Social history.** Understanding our past and how we lived. Rebecca Riots, the Poor Law, non-conformism and the chapels

- World history. Connections to major events. Crimea, the Irish famine, US Civil War, Boer War, Empire......
- **Economic history.** Technological change. The railways. Sail and steam co-existed for a long time! Into the 1930s!

A Maritime Heritage and Global Connections

- Barques and Cape Horn. The Hawarden Castle
- Mariner families.
- Wrecked in the Gallegos River.
- "From Hawse Pipe to Cabin Door". The story of Billy Probert of Cardigan.
- The Loss of the Claverdale. Pirates, war or weather?
- My Beautiful Imperial. Civil War in Chile.
- Three Shipwrecks and Chapel Expulsions. Poor navigation, Christmas cheer and moral outrage.
- The Record Breaking Voyage(s) of Captain Williams, Cannon House
- Adventures with the Corsairs the Barbary Pirates. The East India Company and the Saunders family.
- The Mathias family of Hendre, Colonel Britton Evans and the Texas War of Independence. Family letters from 1791 and later.
- Thomas Williams gives evidence to Parliament (on the Rebecca Riots and the Poor Law)
- David Phillips of Blaenwaun and the Albion.

The most important object in Welsh history? The case for the copper barque

- The copper ore barque Delta, built Cardiff 1865, owned by Henry Bath of Swansea
- Three or more masts, square rigged except for the mizzen mast fore and aft
- Workhorse of the South American trade – coal, copper ore, guano





THE MEDWAY

 Training ship of the Devitt and Moore line

 Sailed during WW1 by Captain Williams, Cannon House





Hazards for seamen. "Below 40° South there is no law. Below 50° South there is no God." Contemporary saying.

- "Roaring forties, furious fifties, screaming sixties"
- Cape Horn is 56° South; icebergs year round
- Rounding Cape Horn, East to West against prevailing winds in square rigged ships
- With no land to East or West, 60 to 70 ft waves not uncommon*, with "rogues" of up to 100 ft
- Ports notorious for yellow fever; premium pay demanded; "most voyages would lose a few crew to yellow fever" – Potato Jones
- Combustible cargoes of damp coal. Shifting cargoes

* the mathematics of wave height; a function of wind speed, duration and "fetch" - the distance over which the wave can build



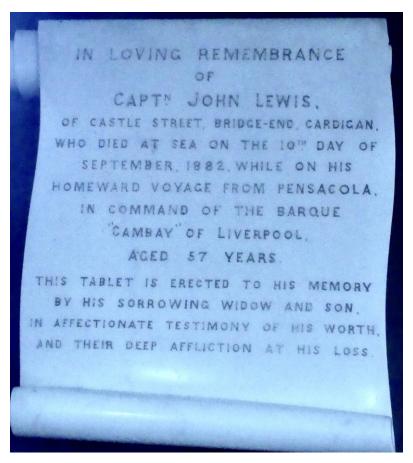
A five masted barque



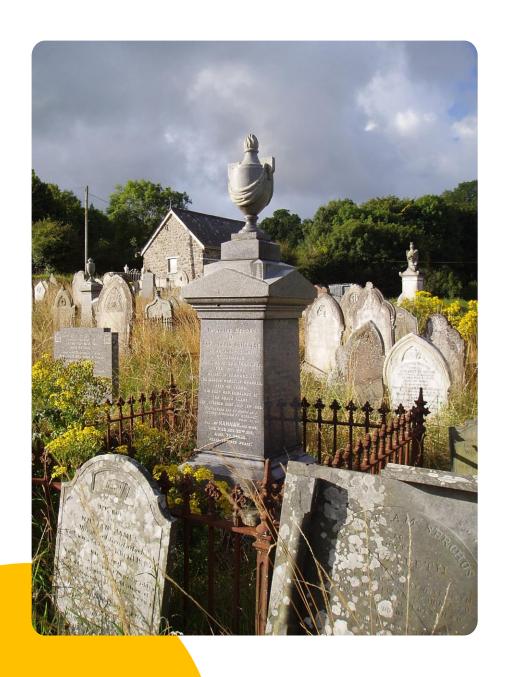
The role of the barque, and the ever present risks

In St Thomas church and churchyard. The Cambay of Liverpool – homeward from Pensacola. More later on the Cambay of Liverpool.

The barque Talca – Swansea to Capetown.







Blaenwaun and other memorials tell many stories

Captain Griffiths of Brynivor House. His ship, the barque Mabel

Died in San Francisco. Embalmed and buried in Blaenwaun



The Hawarden Castle. Its last voyage(s).

"The iron clipper ship Hawarden Castle, which has been here on previous voyages, comes on this occasion with general cargo.

In this is a line of dynamite ... and [this] ... necessitated her being brought up at the outer anchorage A survey by the Government analyst, previous to the commodity being lightered."

There follows an account of the passage including severe gales in the North Sea, winds and passage round the Cape of Good Hope, etc.

"... still under the command of Captain D Davies, and he has brought her into port clean and in admirable order"

The Hawarden Castle. NSW loading for Valparaiso.

The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate. 5 March 1890

 A lucky escape in harbour when a tug fails to pull against current from the river

Prompt action in dropping the anchor

• "... in ballast and after discharging will load Wallsend coal for Valparaiso"

Mr Evans is the Chief Officer

Malcolm, and

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of flour, she loads New Lambton coal for Kahului.

SHIP HAWARDEN CASTLE.

A LUCKY ESCAPE.

The Hawarden Castle, an old trader to the colonies, paid another visit to this port yesterday, this time from Melbourne. Captain Davies. who is a stranger here, is in command. When the vessel had crossed the breakwater, and was being towed into the harbour by the tug Jamecock, she met with the full force of the strong current, occasioned by the fresh in the river, which was sweeping all before it to seaward, and in spite of the efforts of the tuz to keep to the windward, she started to drift towards the lee shore, dragging the tug with her, and refused to answer to her helm. Had it not been droppfor the promptitude displayed in ing the anchor the vessel would in another instant have drifted on to the sandy beech. Fortunately the tug Bungaree put in an appearance, and after a delay of about half an-hour the fine ship was safely at anchor in the harbour. Of the voyage Captain Davies reports leaving Melbourne on the 3rd inst., with strong south-east winds till midnight, then light variables and head winds all the way till Wednesday last, when Broken Bay was reached. The vessel stood off there till yesterday morning, when she made for Newcastle. She is in ballast, and after discharging will load Wallsend coal for Valparaiso. Mr. Evans is the chief officer She is in to the agency of Mesers

The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate.
5 March 1890

"In ballast and after discharging will load Wallsend coal for Valparaiso."

St Thomas' s churchyard:

Lost with all hands between Newcastle, NSW and Valparaiso

THE HAWARDEN CASTLE.

The iron clipper ship Hawarden Castle, which has been here on previous voyages, comes on this occasion from Hamburg, with general cargo. In this is a line of dynamite, and the presence of the explosive on board necessitated her being brought up at the outer anchorage. A survey of the packages was taken by Mr. Dunn, the Government analyst, previous to the commodity being lightered. The Hawarden Castle had a hard time of it at the commencement of the passage, and after coming out into the North Sea terrific gales from S.W. and S.E. were encountered. Down Channel the weather was just as stormy, and, although the ship left Hamburg on October 1. Start Point was not passed until October 21. After this three weeks of struggling with the elements she had a milder time of it, and moderate breezes carried her comfortably across the region of the N.E. trades, out of which into the S.E. trades without a break. The equator was crossed on Novemlon, 27deg. 12min, W., but the ber 27, in trades, although fresh and favourable, did not extend further than Trinidad, where they gave way to lighter and more variable winds. The latter lasted, off and on, until the meridian of the Cape of Good Hope was crossed on December 19, in lat, 48deg. S. The easting was made mostly on the parallels of 43deg. and 45deg., and between these lines of latitude the ship had the winds from W.S.W. to N.M.W. until on the meridian of Adelaide, 10 days ago, when they withdrew their support, and left her to the very dubious assistance of light easterly and variable winds. The ship Cambrian Prince, for Sydney, which left London on October 3, was in company with the Hawarden Castle off Start Point, and again off Trinidad. They were in company more or less for three weeks afterwards, but parted off the Cape of Good Hope. The Hawarden Castle is still under the command of Captain D. Davies, and he has brought her into port clean and in admirable order. The agents of the ship on this voyage are Mesers. Schmedes, Erbsich, and Schuchard.

A SOCIETY BUILT AROUND SEAFARING



The schooner John and Henry. 88 tons. Built 1844, Aberaeron. Possibly the oldest surviving picture of a locally built ship

- In earlier times, with smaller boats, a lot of coastal trade "the Cwm Traders" culm and other commodities captains as small scale entrepreneurs looking for profitable cargoes.
- But still plenty of Irish, Mediterranean and trans-Atlantic trade. The Revd Phillips of Blaenwaun and emigration to Canada. The "Albion". 1820s.
- With bigger ships and improving communications, captains as employees of the big shipping companies, further afield with the great expansion of world trade.
- In St Dogmaels, mariners and seafarers substantially outnumber fishermen. The small lane of Alltfach, has at least 5 mariners' families in the 1860s and 1870s
- "Hwyl fawr" "Big sail"

The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the													
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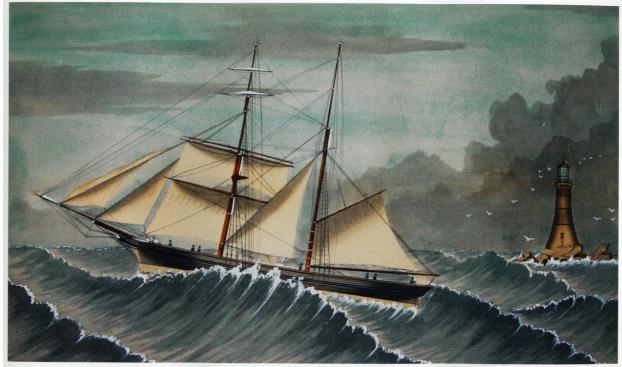
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SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

- The personal, social and cultural impact of long "deep sea" voyages must have been huge, not least ...
- the level of personal risk involved
- explains the often matriarchal nature of society ... and much else in the social and religious domain.
- More awareness of the world than most of their urban contemporaries
- "More at home in Valparaiso than in London or Cardiff?"
- House names. Lee Cottage, Abigail House, Almora. Pomona, Norwood House, Milo, Sloop, Mariners....
- Or ... The Lovely Peggy, St Dogmaels
- MI s often show a great pride in the sea and in their ship, as well as the numerous tragedies at sea

Madona. 163 ton brigantine



Adeiladwyd Madona yn 1864 gan y prifadeiladwr llongau, David Jones, yn iard longau Neptune. Gwnaethpwyd y llun o'r frigantin 163 tunnell yn nhref Bari, yn ne'r Eidal, yn 1879. Roedd yn arferol y pryd hwnnw i'r arlunydd wneud y cefndir yn gyntaf ac yna beintio'r llong arno'n ddiweddarach.

Madona, built in 1864 by master shipbuilder David Jones at his Neptune shipyard. The painting of the 163-ton brigantine was made at Bari, southern Italy, in 1879. It was the practice at the time for the artist to do a background first, and then superimpose the ship later.

Sarah Elizabeth Williams (m. Owen) of Tivy View, Feidr Fawr

Husband. Captain James Owen. Master Mariner. 1873 – 1954.

Father. James Williams, Master Mariner. 1848 – 1882.

Paternal grandfather. John Williams of Abbey. Sea captain.

Maternal grandfather. Rees Lewis. Master Mariner. Of Lee Cottage, Alltfach, and captain of the *Lee*.

Father in law. William Owen. Mariner and Fishguard pilot, lost with the steamer *Thomas Vaughan* in Jack Sound, 1882, attempting to take the leaking ship from Fishguard to Milford Haven for repair.

Great grandfather. John Lloyd d. 1815. Master of the *Peggy* of Cardigan, and husband of Peggy Martin (of whom more later). Brother of George Lloyd.

Great grandfather. James Lewis. River pilot.

Lloyd relations include Shadrach Lloyd of Abigail House and Captain Williams, Cannon House. Both Master Mariners. The Lloyds were one of the notable maritime families of St Dogmaels.

Three sons at sea.

A great uncle, or rather his wife, ran the Rose and Crown (Bethsaida) when her husband was at sea.



James Williams and the John Byers



The Mediterranean trade. James Williams. 1848-1882



REES LEWIS, MASTER MARINER, OF LEE COTTAGE, ALLTFACH. 1819- 1892





"In The Mersey." by Max Sinclair. 1889.

James Owen. 1873-1954

"In the Mersey"*. The Lord Clyde is the 3-masted barque in the foreground.



First voyage for James Owen, age 14. Swansea – Rosario – Cape Horn – Valparaiso/ Coquimbo - Port Nolloth -

Ten years later. 1898. First mate on the "Bootle", another 500 ton square rigger. Captained by a Fishguard uncle.

^{*} National Maritime Museum. Liverpool.

FAST FORWARD 10 YEARS. 1898. CAPE HORN

"Below 40° South there is no law. Below 50° South there is no God." Contemporary saying.



Lloyds Weekly Shipping Index for January of 1898

<u>Jan 21.</u> Information received by the owners from their agents at Punta del Gada (Straits of Magellan) per cable from Valparaiso, states that the **Bootle** has been lost, all hands saved.

<u>Jan 25.</u> Concepcion Chili. **Bootle** totally lost off Gallegos River. All on board saved.



Lloyds Weekly Shipping Index for January of 1898

Lloyds Weekly Shipping Index for January of 1898

- <u>Jan 27.</u> Montevideo. 12.35 pm. The following information is from the Lloyds agent at Punta Arenas, Straits of Magellan. **Bootle,** Cardiff for Punta del Gada wrecked and totally lost, ship and cargo at Cape Fairweather. All on board saved.
- <u>Feb 25.</u> The brigantine **Bootle**, from Cardiff for Punta Delgada got on a reef off Cape Fairweather on Jan 3 and was broken up by a gale on the 5th. No cargo could be saved.
- At about this time or soon after, James Owen must have met Sarah Williams of Tivy View. He had joined the RNVR training at the "Battery". Very likely explains how they met.

A story of the barque Cambay

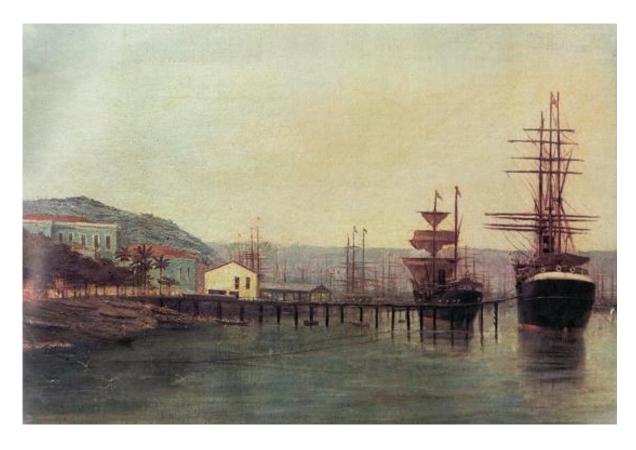
- "From Hawse Pipe to Cabin Door".
- Lady Jenkins (Llangoedmore)
- "Dedicated to the Memory of the Old Sailing Ships and the Intrepid Men Who Sailed and Worked Them".
- True story of a Cardigan boy, Billy Probert. Story is 1890
- The Cambay gets a mention in an MI at St Thomas'
- Poverty and tragedy in Cardigan and Liverpool
- A young man, not yet qualified and no master's certificate
- Desperate for work, signs on as second mate on the Cambay
- Equivalent of a modern Do Not Travel notice is in force
- ... due to a major yellow fever outbreak in Brazil



- Billy Probert is successful in recruiting local crew ...
- who prove surprisingly able sailors
- Manages to ensure the return of the ship,
- a successful and profitable career
- a large house on the Aberystwyth Road, "Rosario Hall"?

SANTOS NOW, AND IN 1889

- The Cambay sails and docks at Santos (Sao Paulo),
 called the "port of death" in the 19th century
- Within days most of crew contract yellow fever
- The rest, including the captain, desert the ship



AUTHOR. Lady Jenkins of Llangoedmor

- Lady Jenkins, wife of Sir Lawrence Jenkins of Llangoedmor,
- a notable travel writer who travelled extensively in Tibet.
- He was a distinguished judge, of a very liberal bent, in the Indian judiciary.
- Family origins in Pantirion Farm, St Dogmaels





PLATE IV.

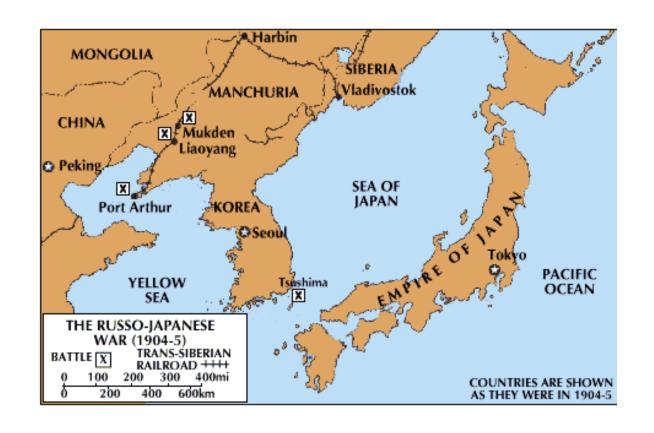
LADAKI WOMAN AND BABY.

The Loss of the Claverdale. 1904

Hwyliodd o China i Vladivostock Hydref 1904. Ni chlywyd dim oddi wrthynt drachefn yn yr SS Claverdale.

[... sailed from China to Vladivostock in October 1904. Nothing more was heard of them in the SS Claverdale]

H. H. Thomas, Cardigan,commander;D. Llewellyn, St. Dogmaels,first mate







It's hard to overstate the historical significance of the Russo-Japanese war

- First defeat of a European by an Asian power
- Emboldened Japanese imperial ambitions
- Tactic of surprise attack was to be repeated at Pearl Harbour

[Russian navy almost completely destroyed in Strait of Tsushima, 2005.]

So the risks in running the blockade must have been huge

Maiden voyage of the Claverdale

31 January 1905.

The Claverdale left Barry on September 1 (1904) for Manila, with a cargo of between 5,000 and 6,000 tons of coal on Russian account. On October 29 she was reported at Sabang, and on November 23 left Hong Kong for Vladivostok. Nothing has been heard of her since, and it is presumed that in running the blockade she kept in too close to the land and struck a sunken rock. Captain Thomas, the master of the Claverdale, is a native of Cardigan, and is well known in Cardiff shipping circles. ...

Dispatches received in London reveal for the first time the identity of the wreck which has frequently been sighted **to the south** of Vladivostok, near the mouth of the Tandse River. The vessel turns out to be the British steamer Claverdale, which left a Chinese port last November with a full cargo of coal for the Russian cruisers at Vladivostok, and which has not since been heard of.

As the result of a visit paid to the stranded steamer, it has been ascertained that the vessel has been pillaged by the natives in the neighbourhood, and every article of value taken away. The inhabitants residing in the vicinity, who were interrogated, declared that the crew of the Claverdale' were removed shortly after the wreck by two boats presumed to be Japanese.

.... It was claimed that the ship had been boarded by Manchurian pirates and the crew thrown overboard.

When the Claverdale reached Hong Kong it was revealed that she would be going on to Vladivostok, which was being blockaded by the Japanese during the Russo-Japanese War. Several ships had already fallen victim to the blockade. Consequently the crew, who had been hitherto unaware that they would be sailing through a war-zone, were given the option to leave the ship. Seven men did so including David Jones, the second mate, aged 29, born in Cardigan, address 1 Greenfield Row, Cardigan; there is a brief interview with him on page 2 of the Cardiff Evening Express dated 12/1/1905.

It seems pretty certain that to avoid the Japanese blockade she took the much longer route to the east of Japan and was thus having to negotiate the la Perouse strait and approach Vladivostok **from the north**. Possibly her rudder was put out of action in the hostile winter environment, as happened to at least one other vessel at this time. The precise location of the wreck is also a mystery. Contemporary reports, including one from the Salvage Association, say that she was found at the mouth of the Taudse (or Tandse?) River, north of Ternei Bay, but I have been unable to discover a river of that name.

This stretch of coast affords little shelter from north-east winds which can 'cause a very heavy sea', NGIA, *Sailing Directions: East Coast of Russia*, 180. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the *Claverdale* had lost its rudder and/or propeller, R. Nash, pers. comm. Several reports on the loss of another steamer, the *Carlisle*, mention that the *Claverdale* also had lost propeller blades, although this does not appear to have been confirmed by more authoritative maritime sources: e.g. *Evening Express* (Cardiff), 8 Dec. 1905.

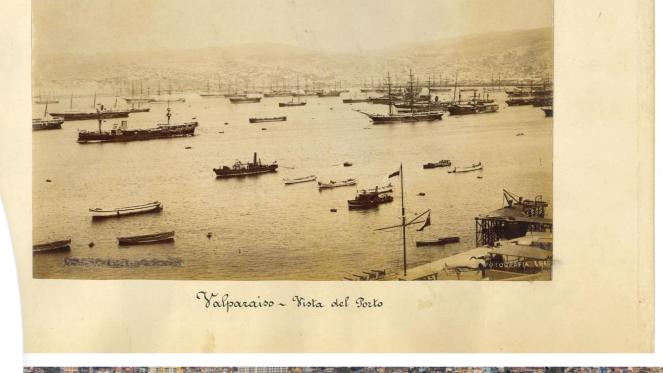


A Blend of Fact and Fiction. The story of the author's great-great uncle.

- 1891. Civil war erupts in Chile.
- The steamship Imperial is commandeered by the Chilean government in Valparaiso.
- 2600 mile coastline makes the ship invaluable for moving troops

Valparaiso then and now

- Captain David Davies of Cardigan
- Story relies on contemporary accounts by Times journalist Hervey and events in the book are substantially true.
- Episodes include an attempt to blow up the ship ...
- ... and pursuit by the Chilean navy which had mutinied





Involvement in Civil War

- The importance of the ship to the Chilean government can be judged by the fact that Captain Davies was known personally by President Balmaceda ...
- ... who gave him the nickname "Jefferson"
- In later life "Captain Jeff" was sometimes to be found in the Black Lion in Cardigan

Footnote. Balmaceda lost the civil war and committed suicide. He had been a liberal reforming politician, but the history is a complex one.



Sources and recommended books

- My Beautiful Imperial Rhiannon Lewis
- From Hawse Pipe to Cabin Door Lady Jenkins (out of print)
- The War with Cape Horn Alan Villers
- Master Under God. Fred Nicholls. (Fiction)
- Welsh Mariners website (for family historians). Lists nearly 24000 captains, mates and engineers. Certificate references. Then records at Greenwich, etc. https://www.welshmariners.org.uk
- Strangers From a Secret Land. Peter Thomas. Migration on the Albion
- *If God Will Spare My Life.* Mike Lewis of Aberporth. Not maritime but story of Will James of Dinas who joined the ill-fated US 7th Cavalry