



Huw Erith at Aberdaron Bay. (Trwyn Penrhyn on the left and Ynysoedd Gwylanod on the right)

Porth y Swnt area and the Sea

The main characteristic of the coast at the far end of Llŷn is the ancient Pre-Cambrian rocks with attractive sandy beaches between them. This influenced the way of life in the rural areas all through the centuries. The pilgrims could choose to walk along their routes and visit the wells and churches or sail in coracles from cove to cove. They would evangelize in the communities on their way to Ynys Enlli / Bardsey Island.

Many smallholders would have boats, and mackerel and herring would be popular in season. People knew exactly where to find crabs in holes in the rocks in spring and summer, and many of the holes had names linked to their history. People could spend leisure time fishing off the rocks, hoping to catch wrasse or pollack. On the beaches, sandeels were numerous under the sand at daybreak, and there would be plenty of winkles on the rocks at low tide.

Food from the sea was essential to support a small farmer's family, especially after a poor season or when

market prices were low. If goods that could not be produced locally were needed, they could be brought in on small ships that would visit the smaller ports. These ships would bring cargoes of lime and coal, earthenware pots, iron and salt or tea and spirits for those who could afford them.

The ships would take away farm produce or even people who were emigrating, setting off on their journey from here to what seemed a better life in America. After storms had struck, there would be treasures to be found after ships had been thrown onto the rocks. People would gather on the cliff tops and then venture to collect any booty that had arrived, be it crockery to put on the dresser, driftwood for building or whisky that would disrupt the influential temperance movement that was closely linked with religion in those days.

Nowhere in Llŷn is far from the sea, and these days although the emphasis has shifted the beaches and rocks remain. By now the Wales Coast Path is a resource allowing us to enjoy the splendid views.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government





The Anchor from Porth Felen (SH 144248)



There is an anchor in the National Museum in Cardiff that was found in Porth Felen, Uwchmynydd in 1974. It may have come from a Mediterranean trading ship on its way to the copper mines near Amlwch or the Great Orme, or to Segontium.

It has been dated from the late C2nd BC or early C1st BC – the earliest evidence that a Mediterranean trading ship travelled so far north. It's 1.18m long and weighs 71.5kg; this is an anchor from a comparatively small ship. There are markings on it that may be involved with maritime superstition.

No other relevant evidence was found in the stormy water at Porth Felen.

Trade in Llŷn



Pen Cob, Pwllheli in the train and buses era

Travelling on land was very difficult before the turnpike roads were built, from Porthdinllaen to Boduan and the branch towards Pwllheli and Porthmadog, in the early C19th. The turnpike road from Llanbedrog to Pwllheli was built in 1824.

In Llŷn, there would only be footpaths and tracks for donkey carts, but there wasn't much need to wander far because there were fairs in Aberdaron, Sarn, Nefyn and Pwllheli. At the fairs, farm produce would be sold, farmhands and maids would be hired, and stalls selling crockery and sweets would be popular.

There was a demand for cattle from Llŷn and the drovers would take them long distances to the big markets, following the drovers' routes. Animals from Llŷn would be gathered together in Sarn Mellteyrn, Botwnnog or Llanengan and Llangian, and walked through Rhydyclafdy and Efailnewydd to Y Ffôr, avoiding crossing the marshland at Pwllheli. They would meet others coming from the direction of Nefyn. Cattle would be shod in Efailnewydd to help them walk on the harder roads.

It was often much more convenient to travel by sea. The residents of Enlli / Bardsey would often be more familiar with the city of Liverpool than some nearby areas in Llŷn. There is mention of a girl from Uwchmynydd who would go around the area collecting eggs and take them on a sloop from Aberdaron to sell in Liverpool.

The biggest trading ships would come to the port of Pwllheli, which was the main port on the southern coast of Llŷn. Porthdinllaen harbour developed on the north coast. Ships could bring coal and limestone, unloading on the beach just as they did on other beaches. Local traders, carriers and farmers would meet them on the shore.

But the smaller ports were also busy, for example Porth Ysgaden, Porth Colmon, Porth Ferin.

Unloading on the Beach



It was a great advantage for farmers and coal traders in the area to be able to take their carts onto the beach to collect their loads. This was how ships were unloaded in Porthdinllaen, Aberdaron, Abersoch and Llanbedrog. It would have to be timed carefully, to make sure the sailing ships brought their loads in at high tide. On some beaches,



there would be 'Carreg y Ring' – The Ring Stone – a rock with a metal loop fitted in it, like the one on Aberdaron beach, for tying the ship to. At low tide, the ships would be unloaded and the carts ready on the beach to take the goods. Then the ship could leave easily at high tide.

At Porthdinllaen, there were landing stages and storage buildings at Bwlch Brudyn (SH 28224084) and the remains of Abersoch coal yards (SH 31522693) are to be seen on the Golf Course near Traeth Lleferin beach.

At Porth Ysgaden, Porth Colmon and Porth Ferin there were storage yards near the shore that the ships could get close to.

Imports of coal increased when the tax on coal was removed in 1813. Ships came regularly from the coalfields and the 'Maggie Purvis' and the 'Tryfan' continued to carry coal until the beginning of the Second World War, to Porthdinllaen and Porth Ysgaden.

There are remains of lime kilns in a number of places on the coast, showing that lime was sold to sweeten the land or prepare mortar. Names like Cae'r Odyn (field of the kiln) as just as common.

The 'soap-waste' that came here from Ireland was an effective fertilizer for the land, and popular with farmers. The waste from the shops of Dublin would be mixed with it, and children would dig in to look for treasures.

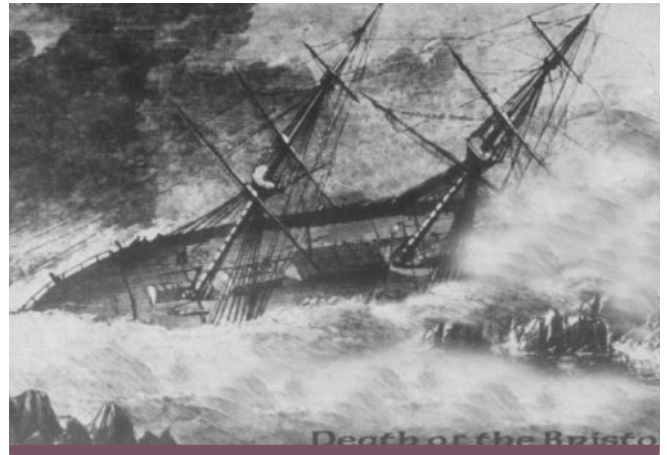
*'A corpulent ship unloading coal
lying dry on the sand
and carts at work in their turn
and more arriving'*

Translated from the works of J Glyn Davies

*'Llong gestog yn dadlwytho glo
yn sych ar dywod,
a throliau wrthi yn eu tro
a mwy yn dyfod.'*

J Glyn Davies

Shipwrecks



'Bristol' in Porth Ysgo (1819)

It's only to be expected that the Llŷn peninsula, extending out into the busy Irish Sea, would have been a problem for ship owners and captains over the years. The coast of northern Llŷn is rocky and dangerous and it's difficult to reach some of the bays to shelter because of their soft cliffs.

With an increase in worldwide trade and more activity in the port of Liverpool, this area of sea became busier. A report from 1863 says that as many as 206 ships were wrecked in a quarter of a century in the Porthdinllaen area. There was a real need for a lighthouse, like the one on Ynys Enlli / Bardsey Island that came there in 1821.

The northern part of Cardigan Bay also became busier when the slate quarries opened in the Ffestiniog area. Ships sailed regularly from Porthmadog, but they could not see the light at Enlli. Because of that, a lighthouse was built on one of the St Tudwal's Islands in 1877.

Another danger in Cardigan Bay is Sarn Badrig – St Patrick's Causeway – and its shallow water, and many ships were also wrecked in Porth Neigwl (Hell's Mouth). But if a storm came up, there was nowhere better than the Roads – the sheltered haven between St. Tudwal's Islands and the mainland. Despite that, ships continued to get into difficulties even in here, and a response was needed.

A lifeboat service came to Penrhyn Du, Abersoch in 1844, Porthdinllaen in 1864 and Pwllheli in 1889. There were also demands for a lifeboat station in Trefor, and in the late C19th with an increase in the export of setts from the Eifl quarries one was set up there. But it did not remain there for long.



Local Shipwrecks



'Stuart' – Porth Tŷ Mawr (1901)

It stands to reason that the majority of shipwrecks happened around the far end of Llŷn – the part of the coast that ships had to avoid on a voyage on the Irish Sea. The lighthouse at Enlli / Bardsey was a great help many times but there was nothing to protect the ships from the strength of the south-westerly wind driving them onto the rocks.

One night in 1859 there was a great storm, which was called *Awel y 'Royal Charter'* (the wind of the Royal Charter). Nine schooners came ashore in Porthor and the 'Villa' went onto the rocks at Porth Colmon. One boy who saw this reported:

'We children would not dare go near it because the crew on board were some kind of half savages, and carrying swords in sheaths on the belts around their waists.'

In 1814 the 'Dunahoo' came to Porth Baco (cove + tobacco). The captain lost his life and he was buried on the cliff top. It is said one of the crew jumped on his grave and said 'It's not because of your virtue that you are buried here.'

The area's most famous shipwreck happened at Porth Tŷ Mawr. On the morning of Easter Sunday 1901 the 'Stuart' came ashore here, in calm weather with light rain. That was amazing, but what brought so much publicity for it was that a substantial part of the cargo was whisky, and what happened to that whisky afterwards. The ship came to rest on the skeleton of the 'Sorrento'. In another place, was it perhaps the magnetism of Maen Mellt that drew the 'Lovely' towards it in 1807? Divers raised 30 elephants' tusks, copper and lead from that site.

South of Porth Iago is Ogor Lliain Glas (cave + cloth + blue) where a ship with blue sails on it went on the rocks. And there is Ogor Newry in Porth Ysgfarnog (cove + hare) where the 'Newry' was wrecked in 1833.

The Aberdaron area had its share of tragedies but the cargo would always be welcomed.

Although Porth Neigwl has no jagged rocks, there were a number of tragedies there as well.

Stuart' – Whisky Ship (SH 18903304)



A tube off the 'Stuart' amongst the rocks of Porth Tŷ Mawr

The 'Stuart' got into difficulties at Porth Tŷ Mawr, Llangwnnadr (SH 18903304) and what made this wreck famous was the whisky carried as part of the cargo.

The ship set off from Liverpool for New Zealand, on Good Friday 1901 with a crew of nineteen and the officers were young. It was probably the lack of experience that was the main cause of the 'accident' because the weather was not bad – nothing worse than mist and light rain, it's said. Others say it's because there was too much whisky on board.

After the ship had come ashore, people believed it could sail again but the wind from the sea got up a few days later and the masts broke, falling onto the ship and breaking it open. As a result of this, the cargo was scattered out and it included crockery, whisky, stout, candles, matches, pianos, floor coverings and more. The crockery can still be seen on a number of dressers in the area and some of the whisky bottles are still unopened.

There was probably a lot of plundering here, and we get the picture that everyone was doing their best to get the whisky bottles or drink as much as possible. There's no doubt that 1901 was a memorable year in the area and there was considerable concern amongst the nonconformist religious leaders in Llŷn.

The 'Stuart' was the subject of poetry and essays at eisteddfodau. One of the tubes from the 'Stuart' was on the shore amongst the yellow rocks for many years and part of the body of the ship itself can be seen at very low tide.

This place got a new name because of the shipwreck - Porth Wisgi.



Poem and Essay on the 'Stuart'



At the Eisteddfod in Rhoshirwaun in 1902, the subject set was the 'Stuart' and the winner was John Owen, Brychdir. Below is a translation of another composition, this time by Gwilym y Rhos (Wil Crydd / 'Will the Cobbler')

'A grand vessel from Liverpool got into trouble, it's true, and was gradually turned into splinters on the yellow rocks of Tymawr; The beautiful barque the Steward, it must be said looked like a swan on a lake. But the rocks of Llangwnnadr surprisingly caused such damage that time.'

And he went on to describe the event slightly more humorously:

'Who was seen on the beach at Porth Llyfesig in so disrespectful a state, on the edge of the meadow of Trefgraig, looking like a body in a coffin? Eight others drinking so heavily in a sweaty and querulous way, till they were rendered so very helpless by too much of a store of old wine.'

'Who was the young woman full of whisky who violently demanded the bottles and then undoubtedly hid them in her bloomers? The bloomers so quickly released all the liquor to the ground. It ran like a slim yellow river on the small beach at Porth Tŷ Mawr.'

At Pen-y-graig literary association in 1925, the subject was 'A brief essay on the embarking and wreck of the ship Stuart on the rocks of Porth Tŷ Mawr, Llŷn'. The winner was J.O. Roberts, Tŷ Mawr Penllech:

'The 'stain' of the blood on the lips was proof that some people had no way of pulling the cork from the bottle. So there was nothing for it but to strike the neck against a rock and pour the hot liquid inside them, forgetting about the sharp edges of glass! In one place slightly out of the way a cask had been opened by knocking in one end of it and it was discovered very soon what it contained – 'whisky'! Necessity is the mother of invention as the saying goes – one was seen taking off his shoe and drinking from it as

if it were the best kind of glass, another drinking from a tobacco box.

Nearby was a small stream, as clear and clean as crystal, whispering its way between the stones; and flowing in small waterfalls over the rocks down to the sea, its course as clean as the air. But man preferred to sear his innards, dull his brain, harden his conscience like iron, and throw his soul to threatened destruction with the liquid from the cask rather than take the drink provided by God – water. Such foolishness – and for how long?'

The 'Sorrento'



A jug off the 'Sorrento'

The 'Sorrento' sank in very stormy weather at Porth Tŷ Mawr, Llangwnnadr in October 1870. She was a three masted ship carrying a mixed cargo from Liverpool to New Orleans. Although the crew cut the masts in an attempt to save the ship, she went onto the rocks at Porth Tŷ Mawr. One of the crew tried to get ashore with a rope around his waist but was drowned. The rest of them stayed on board, as the tide went out. They eventually managed to reach the land and walked to Tŷ Mawr farm, where the grandparents of Hugh Jones and their son and daughter were living. Hugh Jones told the story like this:

'At that time there was a rumour the Irish were intending to attack Wales and when the old lady heard the sound of the sailors outside she shouted 'They've arrived, Cadi!' and prepared to jump out of the back window to get away. The son got up, got hold of an old gun, went downstairs and opened the door. The Americans came in, very wet. John Hughes, Tŷ Mawr couldn't speak any English at all and the sailors got a matchbox, put three matches on it to show three masts and pushed it along the table and against the wall to show a ship going onto the rocks. That way they were able to understand each other.'



Some of the crockery from the cargo is still around. Some of the cargo was saved and sold but the rest disappeared.

The 'Stuart' came ashore here in 1901 and could not be freed again from the shore. This happened because it struck the skeleton of the 'Sorrento'.

Smuggling



With all the inlets that were available, this part of the coast of Llŷn was ideal for smugglers and there are a number of interesting tales of the adventures of the area's residents.

The reason for smuggling was to avoid taxes by buying goods cheaply. It was at its busiest in the 18th and 19th centuries, when the English Crown and its fleet were extending the boundaries of the British Empire. The government raised money by putting unreasonably high taxes on goods: on spices, spirits and tobacco for the rich and salt, soap and candles for ordinary families.

Salt was essential before the days of freezers, to preserve meat, butter and herrings. In the early C19th, salt cost a penny a pound in Ireland but over here it had an additional three pence in tax on it. It would be smuggled to Llŷn and sold tax free for two pence.

The taxes in the ports of Porthdinllaen and Pwllheli were collected by Officers (the 'seismyn' as Excise Officers were called). Officers would ride between these ports, looking for any signs of smuggling. There are examples of conflicts between officers and smugglers, and the smugglers would very often be helped by the local community. People who ended up in court were severely punished.

To be successful, smuggling depended on cooperation between the sailors and people on shore in Llŷn. The goods would be brought from other countries in large ships and transferred, usually to warehouses in Ireland and the Isle of Man, and collected from there in smaller ships. The goods would reach Llŷn in vessels that could be sailed easily in and out of inlets, or goods would arrive hidden amongst legal cargoes on trading ships. The men on shore knew when to expect a ship, and the captain would send a message to them with a special lamp when it was within reach.

Smuggling in the area



The inlets in Llŷn were attractive to smugglers – a sparsely populated area, good places to hide the goods and out of reach of the Excise Officers. The headquarters were in Ynys Enlli / Bardsey Island. Salt was essential for people, and the tax on salt would affect the whole population.

In 1816 the Excise Officers saw salt being unloaded in Porth Colmon and they found it hidden in the houses of four smallholders in Llangwennadl. The smallholders were taken to court and fined £386 each. They could not afford to pay that much, and were thrown into jail for life in Chester. Although their families were suffering, there was no mercy to be had.

When the Custom House Officer from Caernarfon went to see them, there were only three still in jail. The fourth had managed to escape by getting between the prison bars because he was so thin. Back at home, his mother hid him in the churn and then he escaped to America dressed in woman's clothing. No one knows what happened to the other three.

Officers saw men unloading salt in Bae Cadlan and found two sacks in a wheat field. The crew escaped and left the ship to the Officers.

The smugglers could also be threatening. A ship came to Aberdaron in 1767 with the seamen carrying swords and hand guns, selling brandy and tea. The Officer dare not intervene.

There was said to be a hidden tunnel from Gegin Fawr, Aberdaron to the beach, and a tunnel from under the hearthstone of Tŷ Hen, Llangwennadl to Ogof Mari Lewis (cave + Mari Lewis) in the sea cliffs.

The people of Aberdaron would be warned of the danger of 'Bwgan Pendre' (ghost + Pendref) when there were lights to be seen moving from the beach, through the village and up the hill. No one would investigate then.

Some smugglers grew to be legendary characters, like Huw Andro the salt smuggler from Aberdaron and Boaz Pritchard the brandy smuggler.



Ports of Llŷn



The coast of Llŷn has remarkable variety. It has wide sandy beaches and bays, ports and creeks with easy access to them, and steep, inaccessible rocky cliffs. In other places, such as Porth Neigwl (Hell's Mouth) the waves are constantly eating away at the land and fields are lost to the sea. The Pwllheli area is part of a project studying the dangers that can come from global warming as the sea level rises and threatens to permanently flood the town.

No one can be far from the sea in Llŷn and it has been a great influence on the lives of the inhabitants all through the centuries. Indeed, it would have been easier to bring goods in by ship than by cart. The drovers were probably the only ones who saw a need for better roads. The railway reached Pwllheli in 1867 and a variety of goods could come in with it. There was then a great reduction in trade through the ports, and that intervened in traditions that had continued for centuries.

In a document dated 1524, we can see that the names of ports where it was possible to land:

The bay of Dynlley between karrek y llan and the barre of carn'

The bay between Karrek y llam and penrhyn Dynllayn

The Crik of abergyerch

The Crik of porth yskadan

The Crik of porth y Gwylen

The Crik of porth ychen

The Crik of porth penllegh

The Crik of porth Colmon

The Crik of porth Veryn

The Crik of porth Yeagowe

The Crik of porthor and the lle of Bardsey

The Crik of porth Muduy

The bay of Aberdaron

The bay of Nygull

The Roode of the two llonder of Stidwall

The Crik of Aber Soigh

The bay of Castellmarch

The baye of stydwalles to the geist

The haven of pullele in the myddes of the said baye

We can easily recognise them, and can see that the coastal names of Llŷn are centuries old.

Wherever the coast is rocky there are many names, but there are far fewer for sandy bays and beaches.

The names were given to them by people who went fishing or catching crabs, and they are still in daily use now. There is a story behind every name, be it a description of a rock, who discovered a particular hole where crabs could be caught, or names could refer to people or events, some long forgotten by now.

The Llŷn Coast Path is these days part of the Wales Coast Path and everyone has the opportunity to appreciate the beauty by going from port to beach, on a route that almost never leaves the shore.

Porth Ychain (SH 211360)



Directions: Take the narrow Tudweiliog – Llangwnnadr road off the B4417. After passing Tyddyn Sander from one direction or Penllech Bach from the other, turn towards the sea and past Tyddyn Belyn. A narrow road and a path lead to the cove.

A small quiet cove between Porth Ysgaden and the beach at Traeth Penllech.



There are interesting coastal names. In the direction of Porth Ysgaden we have Ogor Twtil Bach, Ogor Foch (cave + pigs), Ogor Deg (cave + fair), Porth Cesyg (cave + mares), Cilcyn Coch (fragment + red) and Ogor Fari (cave + Mari). Then towards Traeth Penllech we have Trwyn Agosaf Allan (point + closest + out), Ogor Fach Tŷ Mawr (cave + small + Tŷ Mawr), Ogor Las (cave + blue/green), Porth Defaid (cove + sheep) and Trwyn Penrhyn Melyn (headland + peninsula + yellow).

There is a story that 13 cows from Tŷ Mawr Penllech went over the cliff at Ogor Fari and that event gave the cave its name.

A ship came ashore here once with a cargo of rum on it. There were no people on board, but there was a ticking watch and a live black pig. The pig was sold to the bailiff of Cefnamwlch. But where were the crew? The log book had been neatly completed for the previous day.

There are a number of holes in the rocks where crabs can be caught, and many of them have names, such as Twll Llaw Chwith (hole + hand + left), Crochan (cauldron), Twll Dan Garreg (hole + under + stone) and Cefnan Sian (ridge + Sian).

You can follow the Wales Coast Path north and reach Porth Gwylan (SH 21653685) which belongs to the National Trust.

Near Porth Gwylan there is a cave in the rocks called Ogor Gigfran (cave + raven) and here ravens and shags nest in the rocks. The postcard photograph was taken almost a century ago.

The beach at Traeth Penllech (SH 205346)



Directions: One way is to take the narrow Llangwnnagl – Tudweiliog road through Penllech parish and park in the parking ground near Bryn Geinach, then walk along the public footpath to the beach. Or walk east along the Wales Coastal Path from Porth Colmon.

This is a comparatively large sandy beach, extending from Penrhyn Melyn at the northern end to the edges of Porth Colmon.

It has a number of rocky coves with names like Porth Sion Dafydd, Pont Bridd (bridge + earth) and Tŷ Nain (house + grandmother). In Creigiau Duon Berth Aur (rocks + black + hedge + golden) there is Ogor Huw Sion Dafydd – a round cave about 1m above the sand. Who was Huw Sion Dafydd and why is there a hole in its floor made with a bit? Mysteries we'll never be able to solve.

In the middle of the beach, the headland of Penrhyn Blawd (headland + flour) extends outwards and near it the stream Afon Fawr crosses the beach. Slightly higher upstream are Pwll Gerwin (pool + severe) and Pwll Diwaelod (pool + bottomless).

Although this is a safe bathing beach J Bodfan Annwyl, the lexicographer, drowned here. He lived in the area and used to swim every day.

Porth Colmon (SH 19503425)



Directions: From the B4417 turn towards the sea in the direction of 'Llangwnnagl' and follow the signs for 'Porth Colmon' (2.5km)

There is a parking area near the sea but make sure to leave room for the fishermen to move their boats.

A century or more ago Porth Colmon was a busy port, especially for importing lime, coal and bone meal. There was a kiln nearby for burning the lime, and a line of carts would be queuing to come here to collect coal.

The shop at Siop y Bont was run at one time by the Llangwnnagl cooperative company, and they would import coal. They bought a steam engine to unload coal from ships. The pilot to guide ships in safely would be Wil from Llainfatw.



Porth Colmon would have developed a great deal if the scheme to mine coal locally had succeeded.

Because this was a secluded and sheltered place it was popular with smugglers. Four local men bought salt illegally and were imprisoned for it. In 1825 fifty people emigrated from this area to America and they had an earnest prayer meeting before leaving.

In the mid C20th there was a dispute between local residents and a landowner who wanted to prevent cars parking here. The local people won the day and it is still open to the public and fishermen to this day.

The rocky coastline attracts crabs to come ashore into holes in the rocks, from spring to late summer. Local fishermen are able to catch them by hand or using a hook, and get a good catch if they know where to look. Many of the holes have individual names.

You can go left and follow the Wales CoastPath. To the right is the sandy beach at Traeth Penllech, safe for swimming. At the furthest northern end is Trwyn Penrhyn Melyn (headland + peninsula + yellow) and the peaks of the Eifl and Garn Boduan can be seen from there, as well as the hill of Mynydd Cefnamwlch.

Porth Tŷ Mawr



Directions: You can walk south from Porth Colmon (SH195034253), along the Wales Coast Path. Or follow the coast road (Llangwnnadr – Aberdaron) to SH19623262 and take the track to Porth Tŷ Mawr.

Porth Tŷ Mawr is part of the folklore of Llŷn because of the 'Stuart', a ship with a rather special cargo, that came ashore here in Easter 1901. The sea was not stormy; there was only some mist and light rain. The crew were young and inexperienced, and it's said that's why they got into difficulties.

After the ship went onto the rocks and its structure was broken it could not return to the sea. In a few days the wind got up, its masts were broken and they fell onto the ship and broke it open.

This shipwreck was very popular and large numbers of local people came to Porth Tŷ Mawr to take what they could from the cargo. It was a mixed cargo, being taken to New Zealand: crockery, pianos, candles, floor coverings etc. But it was the whisky she was carrying that was most popular. There are all sorts of stories of what happened after that – the festivity and celebration, also the protests from the religious and temperance organizations and the way they deplored what had happened.

The crockery is still to be seen, on dressers in the area. There are a number of ballads and television programmes telling the story.

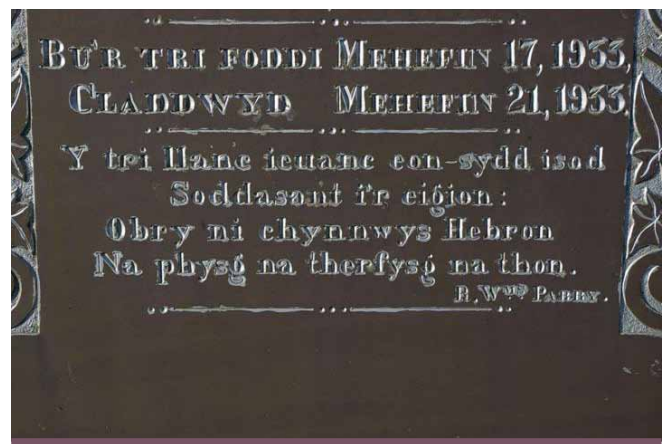
A large tube from the ship was on the shore for many years after the wreck happened and the ship's ribs can be seen at a very low tide.

It's also said she was caught on the ribs of another ship, that came here in 1870, the 'Sorrento'.

A short distance away towards Porth Colmon is Ogor Mari Lewis, which said to extend inland for 1km to Tŷ Hen and come up under the hearthstone – part of the smuggling tradition of Llŷn.

To the left of Porth Tŷ Mawr is the headland of Trwyn Bodferin and Porth Widlin (SH 18353267) and the bay that has such a tragic history to it.

Porth Widlin (SH 189331)



The gravestone in the cemetery at Capel Hebron

Directions: Follow the coast road (Llangwnnadr – Aberdaron). After going 2.5 km from Llangwnnadr, turn towards the sea (SH 1862531766) and follow the signs for the Wales Coast Path



One of the saddest tragedies of Llŷn happened in Porth Widlin, in early summer 1933. Three brothers from Tir Dyrus, Rhoshirwaun went out in a boat to lift a net. No one knows what happened but the three of them were drowned.

The report of the funeral in the newspaper is striking:

Translation

The three brothers were buried in the same grave, on Wednesday afternoon, and it's said such a crowd of people was never seen before in Llŷn. The funeral procession was about a mile long, and there were people in the fields and roads along the route. The coffins were transported on a horse drawn lorry. Their mother was too ill to be present, and their father attended the funeral despite him having been confined to bed for some days as a result of the bereavement.

R Williams Parry composed an englyn poem to put on their gravestone in Hebron cemetery:

*Y tri llanc ieuanc eon – sydd isod
Soddasant i'r eigion;
Obry ni chynnwys Hebron
Na physg, na therfysg, na thon.*

*The three daring lads – now below
Went down into the depths
Here in Hebron there are
No fish, no storms, no waves.*

Porth Ferin (SH 17203195)



Directions: Take the coast road (Llangwennadl – Aberdaron). At 3.5 km from Llangwennadl, 6km from Aberdaron, turn towards the sea (SH 17773105) and follow the signs for the Wales Coastal Path northwards.

This section of coast is not part of the Wales Coast Path.

Porth Ferin was one of the small, busy ports of Llŷn in the age when it was easier to move goods by sea than by land. Ships carrying coal and lime would come here regularly until the 1920s. Explosives had to be used to blast some of the rocks to make room for ships and make it easier to unload machinery and equipment.

A rock can be seen at the entrance to Porth Ferin when the tide is out – this is Carreg Draï (rock + low tide) and it would show the ships' captains whether there was enough depth of water to come in.

Nearby is Llam y Lleidr (leap + thief) which is linked with Bodferin Church. A thief tried to steal the bell from Bodferin church but he tripped and dropped it when he tried to jump over this cleft in the rock.

A record in the notebook for the school, Ysgol Llidiardau, Rhoshirwaun explains the name of a cave at Porth Ferin:

'1814 Ogof Sion y Coldy (cave + Sion of Coldy)

Officers in the area were gathering together young men for the great battle against Napoleon. They visited John Jones of Coldy and Thomas Griffith the weaver. Sion was taken by them, but after travelling a short distance he escaped towards the sea cliff and disappeared, and was not seen after that.'

To the right of Porth Ferin is Porth Bach (SH 17353204), a very sheltered place to keep boats.

In his book Pigau'r Sêr Jac Williams refers regularly to sailing with his uncle and grandmother. This is where his Uncle Huw kept his boat, the Pilgrim, and it was from here they would set off to go fishing years ago.

Porth Iago (SH 16753165)



Directions: Take the coast road (Llangwennadl – Aberdaron). At 3.5 km from Llangwennadl, 6km from Aberdaron turn towards the sea (SH 17773105) and follow the signs for the Wales Coastal Path northwards.



Follow the instructions for 'Porth Ferin' but turn left onto a farm road and go to Tŷ Mawr Bodferin (parking)

This is a small sandy beach facing the south west and very sheltered. The Wales Coast path does not go past here. The Pilgrim Route is very close – does this name have some religious connections perhaps?

Out to sea northwards from Tyllborth is Maen Mellt. This was a problem for ships for centuries because the rock in it is magnetic and interfered with ships' compasses.

It was south of Porth Iago that the ship 'Newry' went on the rocks at Ogof Newry (cave + Newry):

'The Newry was quite a large ship and in April 1833 it was carrying emigrants from Ireland to Quebec. It went on the rocks and twenty five people were lost out of the four hundred on board. The losses would have been much greater were it not for the bravery of Dafydd Griffith, a former sailor who lived at Morfa Trwyn Glas. His actions earned him a medal from the R.N.L.I. and £20. The medal was transferred from one Dafydd Griffith to another. Where is it by now? The people from the Newry who died were buried in the cemetery of Saint Hywyn's Church, Aberdaron.

The Rossi got into difficulties in almost the same place four years later, but fortunately no lives were lost at that time.'

There are a number of interesting names on the coast here, such as Porth Ysgyfarnog (cove + hare), Ogof Lliain Glas – because a ship with blue sails was lost there, Porth Geirch (cove + oats), Ogof Arw (cove + rough) and Porth y Wrach (cove + witch).

Porthor (SH 167300)



Directions: Take the coast road (Llangwnnadr – Aberdaron) and 6.75 km from Llangwnnadr, 3.75km from Aberdaron turn towards the sea at the sign for Porthor.

You can also get there from Porth Gyfyng (SH 16753024). From the coast road (Llangwnnadr – Aberdaron) follow the sign for the Wales Coastal Path (SH 17403033) towards the sea (near the prominent old building that was once a tithe barn). This is close to Methlem farm.

Porthor is famous for its sand that whistles when you walk on it – the sound is made by the grains of sand rubbing against each other. Ships used to come here to unload cargoes of coal and lime, but they moved later to Porth Ferin because it was difficult to unload on this beach.

Porthor beach was fairly busy in the past. Herring and farm produce would be exported from here, and two ships were built here in the C19th. There was also some mining at a site supervised by Mr Bacon – called Gwaith Bacon (works + Bacon).

In 1859, at the same time as the 'Royal Charter' was wrecked on the coast of Anglesey, nine ships came into this bay to shelter.

There was a tragedy here in 1977 when a school pupil and his headmaster from Ysgol Deunant, Aberdaron were drowned during a school trip.

In 1989 Eifion Owen from Chwilog achieved an amazing feat in windsurfing from Porthor to Wicklow in Ireland. He is the only one to have done this, and made the journey in seven hours.

At the northern end of the beach is Porth Gyfyng (cove + restricted) (SH 16753024) with the remains of a lime kiln on the headland.

Porth Orion (SH 15612877)



Porth Orion with its purple jasper



Directions: Take the narrow coastal road (Llangwnnadr – Aberdaron) until you reach the junction near the former chapel of Capel Carmel (SH 16262840) and go westwards for 139m. Get onto the Wales CoastPath here and follow it towards the sea.

Or – from the same road, turn off near Carreg Plas (SH 16262900) and follow the sign to the Wales Coast Path and Dinas Fawr / Dinas Bach.

Porth Orion is a small beach with a mixture of stone and gravel. The prominent rock is purple jasper that was mined here at the quarry in Carreg Plas (on the path).

To the north are Dinas Fawr (SH 15782936) and Dinas Bach (SH 15562907)(refuge + large and refuge + small). They are a good place for fishing off the rocks and have a number of holes in them where crabs can be caught at low tide: Tyllau Gwmannog (holes + weedy), Tyllau Plu'r Gweunydd (holes + bog cotton), Tyllau'r Ebolion (holes + foals) and Twll Dyfn (hole + deep).

This area, and on towards the furthest tip of Llŷn, is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

To the south is the mountain of Mynydd Anelog (SH 15102730).

Porth Llanllawen (SH 145266)



Porth Llanllawen with Mynydd Anelog in the background

Directions: Take the narrow road (Aberdaron – Uwchmynydd) to the chapel, Capel Uwchmynydd (SH 15502635). Go towards the sea and follow the Wales Coast Path southwards.

Or: Go through Uwchmynydd to the end of the road, onto the National Trust land and park on the flatter area overlooking Swnt Enlli / Bardsey Sound (between Mynydd Mawr and Mynydd Gwyddel (SH 14202560). Walk back northwards towards Porth Llanllawen.

Llawen was one of the followers of Saint Cadfan, who established an abbey on Ynys Enlli / Bardsey Island. The area is a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

There are excellent views here and the cliffs are very steep. The only place to reach the sea is at Porth Llanllawen.

The Wales Coast Path runs through from the north and towards Mynydd Anelog (SH 151273) and Porth Orion (SH 15612877).

There are interesting names on parts of the coast, such as Ogor Gadi (cave + Catherine), Pwll Mathew (pool + Mathew), Trwyn Bodisa (peninsula + Bodisa), Ogor Ddu (cave + black) and Ogor Goch (cave + red).

To the south are Mynydd Mawr and Braich y Pwll at the very furthest tip of Llŷn. A concrete road leads to the top of Mynydd Mawr and there is a very striking view from here of Enlli, over the sea of the Swnt. This was a lookout site during the Second World War and signs of that remain – including buildings where there is an exhibition relating to the area.

This is where the poet Cyman referred to in the very last piece he wrote 'Pen Draw'r Byd' – the far end of the world. He was fascinated by it:

*'Rhwng banciau o borffor ac aur yn stôr,
Ac yn sydyn oddi tanom dim ond môr,
Môr a môr at y gorwel a'i hud
A ninnau wedi cyrraedd pen draw'r byd.
A'r wybren o'n hól yn denau a chllir
Ar fynyddoedd chwe gwahanol sir.'*

*'Between banks of purple with a wealth of gold,
And suddenly nothing below us but sea,
Sea and more sea to the magic of the horizon
And us having reached the far end of the earth.
And the sky behind us thin and clear
Above the mountains of six different counties.'*

On the cliff top and facing the storms from the sea over the Swnt is Maen Melyn Llŷn (rock + yellow + Llŷn)(SH138252)

South of Mynydd Mawr at the bottom of steep steps down to the edge of the sea is Ffynnon Fair (well + Mary) (SH13952519) and further on is Porth Felen (cove + yellow) (SH 14402480).



Porth Felen (SH 144248)



Directions: Take the narrow road from Aberdaron through Uwchmynydd to the end of the road, onto the National Trust land. Park on the flatter area overlooking Swnt Enlli / Bardsey Sound (between Mynydd Mawr (SH 14002590) and Mynydd Gwyddel (SH 14202520)). Walk down towards the sea to the east of Mynydd Gwyddel, in the direction of Porth Felen.

From here there are splendid views over the sea of the Swnt towards Ynys Enlli / Bardsey Island, and a road leading to the top of Mynydd Mawr.

A diver recovered an anchor from the sea at Porth Felen. It had been lost in the second or first century BC, from a ship from the Mediterranean. This is the earliest evidence of a ship from that area trading as far north. (It's now in the National Museum in Cardiff).

Mynydd Gwyddel (mountain + Irishman) (SH14202520) hints at the close connections that existed between Llŷn and Ireland.

At the edge of the cliff is Maen Melyn Llŷn (rock + yellow + Llŷn). This gave its name to the mediaeval administrative division of land, Cymydmaen (commote + rock). It was made famous by the bard Dafydd Namor describing Llio's hair as golden yellow like the yellow rock of Llŷn:

'Mewn molawnd o aur a melyn

Mae'n un lliw â'r maen yn Llŷn.'

The remains of North of Mynydd Gwyddel, steps lead down to Ffynnon Fair (well + Mary) (SH 13952519).

This is where the poet Cyman referred to in the piece he wrote 'Pen Draw'r Byd' – the far end of the world:

'We stood there on Mynydd Mawr

To watch the sun going down in Llŷn.

Holding our breath and without speaking a word
(Like the saints after drinking from Ffynnon Fair)

Feeling that Enlli and its holy portals

Was like the word of the Lord in the midst of
the miracle.'

To the south, the Wales Coast Path leads to Porth Felen, Mynydd Bychestyn and Pen y Cil (SH 15702430), and in clear weather the coast of Cardigan Bay can be seen.

Before reaching Pen y Cil there is a view of exceptionally steep cliffs at Parwyd (SH 15402445).

In the sea of the Swnt (sound) close to the mainland is Carreg Ddu (SH 14902396)

Porth Meudwy



Directions: From Aberdaron, follow the signs for Uwchmynydd. Keep left at a junction and left again past the farm at Cwrw (National Trust) and go to a parking area on the left. From there, walk down the track towards the sea.

Or: Take the Wales Coast Path from Aberdaron or from Pen y Cil (SH 15702430).

This cove is the port from which to get a boat to visit Ynys Enlli / Bardsey Island.

The name Porth Meudwy suggests it was from here that pilgrims would sail to Enlli in the C5/6th. There are two farms called Bodermyd in this area; the element 'ermid' is an old form of 'meudwy' (hermit). In 1524 it was listed as 'The Crick of porth Muduy'.

To the south is Porth y Gloch (SH 16302507) where the bell of Bala abbey fell from a boat to the sea bed when it was being taken for safe keeping to the Abbey on Enlli. That gave rise to the saying 'mor sownd â chloch y Bala' (as fixed as the bell of Bala). A path from the road leads to Craig Cwlwm (SH 6202490).

At Porth y Pistyll (cove + spout) (SH 16122485) there are the remains of the Trwyn Dwmi quarry workings. Some of the quarrymen would go down to their work using ladders on the steep cliff. Further south are Henborth and then Pen y Cil.

Out at sea are the islands of Ynys Gwylan Fawr and Ynys Gwylan Fach (island + gull + greater and lesser) and Trwyn y Penrhyn to the east.

The village of Aberdaron is to the north.



Traeth Aberdaron (SH 177263)



Directions: Take one of the three roads from the east to where they end in Aberdaron. The B4417 from the direction of Nefyn then the B4413 along the middle of the peninsula, or the northern coastal road from the direction of Llangwnnagl, or the southern coastal road from the direction of Mynytho and through Rhiw.

This is an expansive sandy beach between the village and the sea. There are close links here with the visiting pilgrims on their way to Ynys Enlli / Bardsey Island.

At the western end of the beach are the remains of the jetty for Gwaith y Bompren (works + wooden bridge) at Porth Simdde (cove + chimney)(SH 16732637) where the river Saint flows to the sea. Closer to the village the river Daron flows over the beach, and at the water's edge at a very low tide you can find Carreg y Ring (rock + ring). Ships would be tied to a ring fixed in this rock, for unloading on the beach.

It's worth visiting the church of St. Hywyn to see the Norman entrance and the stones of Cerrig Anelog. It was from here that Gruffudd ap Cynan fled to Ireland to get away from the Normans. Later Gruffudd ap Rhys was given sanctuary to get away from Gruffudd ap Cynan in 1115, before he got away to the Tywi valley.

R S Thomas was the priest here from 1967 to 1978.

At the eastern end of the beach at Wig, there are Ogof Deuddrws (cave + two entrances) and Llech Cranc (smooth rock + crab), before reaching the peninsula of Trwyn y Penrhyn. This is where T Rowland Hughes was referring to in his poem 'Pe Bawn i yn artist mi dynnwn lun....' (If I were an artist I'd picture....)

'Uwchmynydd a'i graig yn borffor fin nos

A Bae Aberdaron yn aur a rhos.

Dan Drwyn y Penrhyn a'r wylan a'i chri

Yn treoelli uwchben mi eisteddwn i

Nosweithiau hirion nes llithio bob lliw

O Greigiau Gwylan a'r tonnau a'r Rhiw. '

"Ond wêl neb mo Enlli o fin y lli."

"Pe bawn i yn artist", ddywedais i.'

Uwchmynydd and its rock purple in the evening

And Aberdaron Bay coloured in gold and rose.

Beneath Trwyn y Penrhyn with its calling gulls

Circling overhead I'll go and sit

Long evenings until all colour slips away

From Creigiau Gwylan and the waves and Rhiw. '

"But no one can see Enlli from the edge of the sea."

"It was "If I were an artist" I said.

In fact, we would have to go away from here, towards Porth Ysgo to be able to see Enlli.



Follow the Story...

Find out more about the area's industrial past by visiting Porth y Swnt, Aberdaron – Learn more about at the heritage and development of the area in the National Trust's interpretation centre.