

Looking back

Have you got old snaps of Carmarthenshire? We would love to see them. You can email them to journal.star@swwmedia.co.uk or upload them at www.carmarthenjournal.co.uk

Storms reveal shipwreck



THE widespread storm damage and flooding caused by the winter storms have been widely reported in newspapers and on television, with the devastation caused to Aberystwyth seafront making the headlines across the world.

As the storms subsided other effects of the storms became apparent. Sand had been stripped from beaches at numerous locations around the Welsh coast, revealing 6,000 year old tree stumps.

At some locations this submerged forest can be seen at every low tide, but at others it is only revealed after storms.

For instance, in the year 1188, Gerald of Wales wrote that submerged forest was revealed at Newgale in Pembrokeshire following 'the sandy shores of South Wales being laid bare by the extraordinary violence of a storm'.

He thought the submerged forest was evidence of the Biblical flood.

Over 400 years after Gerald of Wales, in about the year 1600, the Pembrokeshire Antiquary, George Owen also saw the submerged forest at Newgale, once again having been revealed after a storm. And now 400 years later the forest is once again visible.

Other remains have also been uncovered around our coast, including long forgotten shipwrecks.

One of the most dramatic shipwrecks to be revealed was on Marros Beach in Carmarthenshire.

Before the storms all that could be seen of this wreck were a few of its ribs sticking up through the sand, as can be seen in the photograph taken in 2013.

Digging up the Past
Dyfed Archaeological Trust

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The storms completely changed the appearance of the beach and entirely exposed the wreck.

A local Rambler, Nigel Lee, came across the wreck soon after the storms, and alerted Dyfed Archaeological Trust.

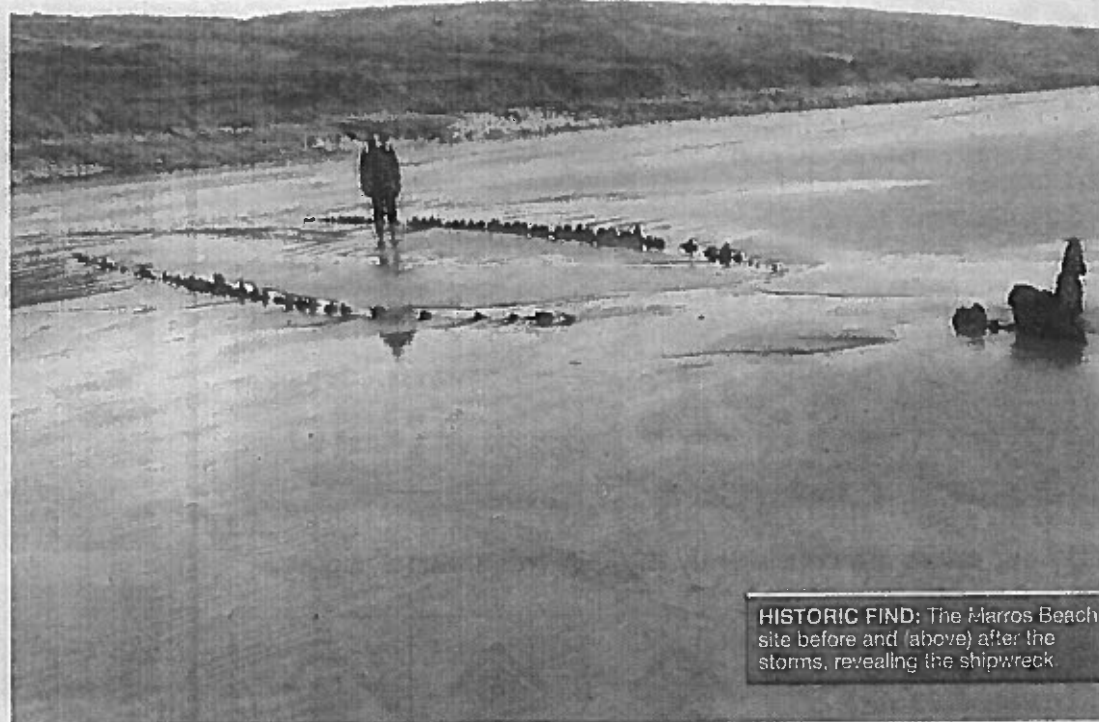
Nigel, with the help of other volunteers, is making a detailed record of the wreck. But time is limited, as each tide brings the sand back, and within days, weeks or months the wreck will once again be covered over.

Research done by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales suggests that the wreck is that of The Rover, which was lost on 8th December 1886.

The Rover is recorded as being 71 foot long, which matches the length of the wreck on Marros beach, and at the time of its loss it was owned by J Codd of Wexford and was carrying culm, a type of coal, from Saundersfoot.

It got in difficulty in a gale and was stranded on Marros beach. The wreck seems to be deliberately moored in a narrow channel, so presumably J Murphy, the master, had enough control to safely beach the vessel.

One can only assume that the vessel was so badly damaged that it



HISTORIC FIND: The Marros Beach site before and (above) after the storms, revealing the shipwreck

was not worth recovery. Wrecks such as The Rover are virtually the only surviving physical remains of what was one a thriving coastal trade.

Further research will flesh out the bare bones of the story, perhaps discovering when and where the vessel was built.

The photographs show the effects

of the storms, with one showing the wreck before and one after.

If you are out walking and come across a wreck revealed by coastal erosion you can now use the new Archwilio mobile phone application, free to download via Google Play, to take photographs and send them through to the Dyfed Archaeological Trust directly.

Although some sites may already be recorded, the storms may have revealed more of a known site, or uncovered a previously unrecorded site. What can be seen today may never have been visible before or may not be visible again for a generation or more, so it's important we record as much as possible while we can.