

**NATIONAL MUSEUMS LIVERPOOL**  
**MARITIME ARCHIVES & LIBRARY**

**INFORMATION SHEET 38**

**SHIPWRECKS**

The Maritime Archives & Library holds information on shipwrecks in both original archive sources and publications. These sources can assist in increasing knowledge of the specific ship, locating an accurate date of shipwreck and furthering knowledge of the incident itself.

**ARCHIVE SOURCES**

**Liverpool Registers of Merchant Ships**

The Maritime Archives & Library holds volumes of the original official certificates of registry for merchant vessels registered in the port of Liverpool 1739-1942. Originally kept in the Liverpool Customs House these are often referred to as Custom's Registers. The Liverpool Ship Registers also contain some data for the port of Runcorn (1862-1915).

When a vessel registered in Liverpool was wrecked this information would be recorded in the record of registry for that specific vessel before the registry was cancelled. This record can often be useful in pinpointing the date of a shipwreck and occasionally further information regarding location and context.

Wool Act Register C/EX/L/2/1	1739 - 1792
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Plantation Registers C/EX/L/3/1 - 4	1743 - 1784
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Volumes of Certificates of Registry C/EX/L/4/1 - 121	1786 - 1942
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**Board of Trade Reports of Enquiries**

The Board of Trade Enquiry Reports held at the Maritime Archives & Library are reports of enquiries into accidents and disasters at sea. They vary in detail and length and are not a complete series.

The Board of Trade Enquiry Reports 1878 - 1925 531/BOA/R/OS	2 Volumes
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The Southampton City Archives' Maritime Collection holds a more complete series.

Board of Trade Enquiries into Wrecks: 1876 - 1972

The National Maritime Museum, Greenwich holds the following Admiralty/Board of Trade Registers regarding ship losses.

Board of Trade Wreck Registers: 1855 - 1895

### **M.D.H.B. Wreck Files 1881-1950**

These are records relating to wrecks in and around the Mersey and it's approaches. 235 files survive, varying in length, but all are quite comprehensive, including *Notices to Mariners* and newscuttings.

The Mersey Docks and Harbour Board usually took responsibility for any salvage work and records relating to this can be located in other sections of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Archive.

MDHB/ WR /1 - 235	1881 - 1950	26 Boxes
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### **The Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society**

The Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society was founded in 1839 following a hurricane that wreaked havoc in the Irish Channel and the Mersey area on 7-8 January 1839. The absence of funds available to aid the unfortunate victims of what was said to have been the first hurricane ever met in the area, prompted a public meeting, on 9 January 1839, to raise funds to assist the victims and to reward the heroes.

The medals and awards of the Society cover three main areas: Marine, Fire, and General. Life-saving proficiency medals and awards are also given.

D/LS	1839 - 1990	6 Boxes
Minutes	1839 - 1975	
Annual Reports	1901 - 1990	

### **PUBLISHED SOURCES**

- Lloyd's Marine Collection

The Lloyd's Marine Collection can be an invaluable source for locating data on shipwrecks and ship losses.

The Loss and Casualty Books (1837-1988) are large manuscript volumes containing reports of shipping casualties. These reports can also be located in Lloyd's List which, in addition, contains subsequent reports regarding salvage and further details. The Index to Lloyd's List, commencing in 1838, is invaluable in locating ships, shipping movements and related marine casualties. There is presently a project to compile a further index prior to 1838.

The Maritime Archives & Library holds both the Lloyd's List (1741-1974) and Lloyd's List Indexes (1838-1927), but does not hold the Loss and Casualty Books.

Lloyds Weekly Shipping Index (1880-1920) and the Lloyd's Weekly Casualty Reports provide a short report on marine casualties. The Maritime Archives & Library holds these records within the Lloyd's Shipping Index, a summary of information contained in Lloyd's Lists, which is listed alphabetically and split into two sections for sailing vessels and steamers.

Lloyd's War Losses (1914-1918) and (1939-1945) record vessels lost during First World War and Second World War. Both also have an alphabetical index of ship names. The Maritime Archives & Library holds these publications along with further library sources on British Merchant ship losses in both World Wars.

Any Lloyd's records not available at the Maritime Archives & Library can be accessed by visiting or contacting the Guildhall Library or utilising their enquiry service at [search@guildhall@corpoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:search@guildhall@corpoflondon.gov.uk)

- LARN, Richard and Bridget. *Shipwreck Index of the British Isles*. London: Lloyd's Register of Shipping. 1995.

This index, held at the Maritime Archives & Library, was compiled by Richard and Bridget Larn, it records every known shipping loss around the coast of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, from about 1100 AD to 1995. It is an historical record of many thousands of vessels, compiled on a regional basis, which is unique to the British Isles.

Due to the requirements of fishermen, divers and the offshore exploration industry, the offshore area covered is 30 miles and around the Scottish Islands 70 miles. This work forms the basis of the MAR (Maritime Archaeological Records) of underwater sites for England.

Lloyd's Register publish all six volumes of this work, under the title *Shipwreck Index of the British Isles*. The volumes are: Volume 1: *The South West*; Volume 2: *The South Coast*; Volume 3: *The East Coast*; Volume 4: *Scotland*; Volume 5: *West Coast and Wales*; Volume 6: *Ireland*. Each volume catalogues shipwrecks in date order. The series of six volumes is accompanied by accumulative alphabetical index of all the shipwrecks in all volumes to date.

Direct enquiries are welcome, but should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope, and a search fee may be necessary if any enquiry requires any degree of research or other work. Please contact:

Shipwreck & Marine  
'Tamale'  
Buzza Hill Road  
St. Mary's  
Isles of Scilly  
Cornwall TR21 0NQ  
Tel/fax: +44 (0)1720 423679

- HOCKING, Charles. *Dictionary of Disasters at Sea in the Age of Steam, 1824-1962, including sailing ships and ships of war lost in action, 1824-1962*. London: Lloyd's Register of Shipping. 1969.

One of the most comprehensive works on shipping losses worldwide, this dictionary contains details of:

- Ships of war (surface) lost in enemy action or by marine risk.
- British Merchant ships of 500 tons and over, foreign vessels of 1,000 tons and over, lost by ordinary marine risk with loss of four or more lives. In addition ships of 10,000 tons and over with or without loss of life.
- British and foreign merchant ships, of 500 and 1,000 tons, lost by enemy action in First World War and Second World War, whether loss of life reported or not.

Other losses outside these categories have been included for reasons of general interest.

- HOOKE, Norman. *Maritime Casualties, 1963-1996*. London: Lloyd's Information Services. 1997.

Contains reports relating to all Merchant and Naval vessels of 500 tons or over reported to have been totally lost or constructive losses due to all causes, including war losses, for the period 1963-1996.

- *Nautical Magazine*

Contains reports of wrecks and courts of enquiry. The Maritime Archives & Library holds the incomplete series around the following periods: 1839-1848, 1867, 1955-1992.

The *Nautical Magazine* is also available at the:

Guildhall Library, Aldermanbury, London  
National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London  
Southampton City Archives, Southampton

- *The Times Index*

Can also be utilised for locating wrecks and shipping losses. Complete collection held at the:

British Library Newspaper Library  
Colindale Avenue  
London  
NW9 5HE  
Tel 020 7412 7379  
[www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk)

## **FURTHER READING**

### **General**

BOURKE, Edward J. *Shipwrecks of the Irish Coast, Vols. 1-3, 932-2000*. Dublin: Published by Author. 2000.

MICHAEL, Chris. *The Wrecks of Liverpool Bay*. Liverpool: Liverpool Marine Press. 1994.

WILSON, Ian. *Shipwrecks of the Ulster Coast*. Coleraine: Impact. 1979.

WYNNE JONES, Ivor. *Shipwrecks of North Wales*. Ashbourne: Landmark Publishing. 2001.

### **Famous Ship Losses**

BALLARD, Robert D. & MARSCHALL, Ken. *Lost Liners*. London: Hodder and Stoughton. 1998.

BARKER, Ralph. *Children of Benares, A War Crime and it's Victims*. London: Methuen. 1987.

BEVAN, David. *Drums of the Birkenhead*. Aylesbury: Larson. 1972.

LEMON, Andrew & MORGAN, Marjorie. *Poor Souls, They Perished, The Cataraqui, Australia's Worst Shipwreck*. Melbourne: Hargreen Publishing, Australia. 1986.

MARSHALL, Logan. *The Tragic Story of the Empress of Ireland*. London: Patrick Stephens Ltd. 1972.

MCKEE, Alexander. *The Golden Wreck: The Tragedy of the Royal Charter*. London: Souvenir Press. 1986.

WEST, John L. *The Loss of the Lancastria*. Rossendale: Millgate Publishing. 1988.

## USEFUL ADDRESSES FOR MARITIME RESEARCH

<p>1. <b>London Metropolitan Archives (for Lloyd's)</b>  40 Northampton Road  London EC1R 0HB  Tel: 020 7332 3820  Email: <a href="mailto:ask.lma@cityoflondon.gov.uk">ask.lma@cityoflondon.gov.uk</a>  Website: <a href="https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/london-metropolitan-archives">https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/london-metropolitan-archives</a></p>	<p>6. <b>The National Archives (PRO)</b>  Ruskin Avenue  Kew, Richmond  Surrey TW9 4DU  Tel: 020 8876 3444  Email: <a href="mailto:enquiry@nationalarchives.gov.uk">enquiry@nationalarchives.gov.uk</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk">www.nationalarchives.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>2. <b>Imperial War Museum</b>  <u>Department of Documents</u>  Lambeth Road  London  SE1 6HZ  Tel: 020 7416 5000  Email: <a href="mailto:docs@iwm.org.uk">docs@iwm.org.uk</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections-research">http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections-research</a></p>	<p>7. <b>Registry of Shipping and Seamen</b>  MCA, Cardiff  Anchor Court  Ocean Way  Cardiff CF24 5JW  Tel: 02920 448800  Email: <a href="mailto:seafarers_registry@mcga.gov.uk">seafarers_registry@mcga.gov.uk</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.mcga.gov.uk">www.mcga.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>3. <b>Liverpool Record Office and Local Studies Service</b>  Central Library  William Brown Street  Liverpool L3 8EW  Tel: 0151 233 3069  Email: <a href="mailto:archives@liverpool.gov.uk">archives@liverpool.gov.uk</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.liverpool.gov.uk/libraries">www.liverpool.gov.uk/libraries</a></p>	<p>8. <b>Archives and Library</b>  <u>Royal Naval Museum</u>  HM Naval Base  Portsmouth  Hampshire PO1 3NH  Tel: 02392 723795  Email: <a href="mailto:library@nmrn.org.uk">library@nmrn.org.uk</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.nmrn-portsmouth.org.uk/">www.nmrn-portsmouth.org.uk/</a></p>
<p>4. <b>Maritime History Archive</b>  Memorial University of Newfoundland  St. John's  Newfoundland  Canada A1C 5S7  Tel: 709 737 8428/9  Fax: 709 737 3123  Email: <a href="mailto:mha@mun.ca">mha@mun.ca</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.mun.ca/mha">www.mun.ca/mha</a></p>	<p>9. <b>University of Liverpool</b>  <u>Special Collections and Archives</u>  Sydney Jones Library  PO Box 123  Liverpool  L69 3DA  Tel: 0151 794 2696  Website: <a href="http://www.liv.ac.uk/library/sca/">www.liv.ac.uk/library/sca/</a>  Email: <a href="mailto:scastaff@liv.ac.uk">scastaff@liv.ac.uk</a></p>
<p>5. <b>National Maritime Museum</b>  Romney Road  Greenwich  London SE10 9NF  Tel: Caird Library – 0208 3126516  Email: General/donations etc – <a href="mailto:rmgenquiries@rmg.co.uk">rmgenquiries@rmg.co.uk</a>  Caird Library – <a href="mailto:library@rmg.co.uk">library@rmg.co.uk</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.rmg.co.uk">www.rmg.co.uk</a></p>	<p>10. <b>Southampton City Archives</b>  Southampton City Council  Civic Centre  Civic Centre Road  Southampton SO14 7LY  Tel: 023 8083 2251  Email: <a href="mailto:city.archives@southampton.gov.uk">city.archives@southampton.gov.uk</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.southampton.gov.uk/libraries-museums/local-family-history/southampton-archives">http://www.southampton.gov.uk/libraries-museums/local-family-history/southampton-archives</a></p>