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Dublin Core

Title

Fishguard's Charterhouse Lifeboat | Bad Achub Charterhouse Abergwaun

Subject

RNLI

Lifeboats

Badau Achub

Charterhouse (boat)

Creator

Natasha de Chroustchoff

Publisher

Ports, Past and Present Project

Date

2023

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Relation

https://perma.cc/QJH4-39US

Format

Curatescape story

Language

English

Welsh

Coverage

52.00346181356354, -4.95159521752632

Curatescape Story Item Type Metadata

Lede

The story of the Charterhouse Lifeboat, from its role in a famous rescue off Fishguard's Needle Rock to its conservation and role in the present.

Lede (Welsh)

Stori Bad Achub Charterhouse, o'i rôl mewn achubiad enwog oddi ar Graig y Nodwydd yn Abergwaun i'w gadwraeth a'i rôl yn y presennol.

Story

A cold dark night in December 1920 saw the most celebrated of the Fishguard's many lifeboat rescues. The boat in question was *Charterhouse*, funded by the school of that name and presented to the RNLI station in 1908. The boat was built for rough weather with a multi-layered hull, buoyancy tanks fore and aft, and an open deck allowing water to run off. *Charterhouse* was the first motorised lifeboat in Wales, with a 50 gallon fuel tank allowing the engine to run for 18 hours.

On the night in question the three-masted Dutch motor schooner Hermina, en route to Rotterdam, had taken shelter in Fishguard Bay but with a heavy sea running in the north-west gale the anchors started to drag. The captain ordered flares to be fired and *Charterhouse* responded, putting out to sea under the command of 65-year-old coxswain John Howells.

The lifeboat anchored alongside the stricken vessel but getting a line aboard the Hermina proved challenging as the waves lifted *Charterhouse* as high as the schooner's rigging. After an hour seven of the Hermina's crew had been taken off but the captain, chief officer and second mate insisted on remaining aboard despite the imminent danger of the ship running on to Needle Rock, a jagged pinnacle jutting out of the water below sheer cliffs.

Charterhouse started back to shore but by now the engine was drenched and had cut out. The crew had no option but to rely on oars alone to make their way back across the turbulent waters with the seven rescued men. Worse was to come: the mizzen sail ripped in the wind and the mast fell into the sea. Two crew members managed to crawl across the bows to set the jib sail. By dint of exemplary courage and superlative seamanship *Charterhouse* was manoeuvred away from the cliffs and out into a position where she could re-enter the harbour, the whole endeavour taking over three hours.

No sooner had the lifeboat reached safety that flares went up from Hermina once again: she was breaking up on Needle Rock. One man was washed away and drowned but the other two were rescued by a local man, William Howells, who was lowered on a rope and managed to bring them up to the cliff top. (Remnants of the schooner are still visible below at the lowest tides.)

For this heroic rescue the coxswain was awarded a RNLI gold medal and rest of the crew silver and bronze. They all, along with *Charterhouse* herself as guest of honour, travelled to London by train to receive their awards from the Prince of Wales in person.

During her twenty-seven years' service at Fishguard *Charterhouse* was launched on 20 rescue missions and saved 47 lives. In 1930 she replaced by the White Star lifeboat. But that is not the end of the story. In 2008 a local historian, Phil Davies, set out to trace *Charterhouse* and discovered she had been converted into a yacht, renamed Marian and had ended up in North Wales as the holiday houseboat of a family called Lomas. When tracked down, she was barely seaworthy and badly in need of attention. The Lomas family generously offered to donate her back to the community of Fishguard and Goodwick where a group of enthusiasts set to work on a long restoration job.

The work was led by the Charterhouse Trust in Fishguard. The original hope of the Trust was to exhibit the lifeboat in Goodwick. This turned out to be a difficult aim, as none of the buildings already on the seafront were available or suitable.

Things came to a head when the Charterhouse Trust was informed that the boat could no longer be kept at Fishguard port. It had been housed there since it was returned to Goodwick in 2008. There was only one place the Trust could think of to rehome *Charterhouse*: the West Wales Maritime Heritage Museum.

The Museum were more than happy to offer her a home and so she was moved there in January 2020, originally on loan. The Trust continued their work, fundraising to build a shelter to protect *Charterhouse* on land. In time, it was decided that the West Wales Maritime Heritage Museum was a very apt place for a permanent home for *Charterhouse*. In April 2021 *Charterhouse* was formally donated to the Museum and they are now its owners. There are no plans for it to be returned to Goodwick or to ever be moved again. *Charterhouse* has a permanent home now: the rescuer rescued.

This piece was updated from its original version with extra information from the Charterhouse Trust. Thank you to Councillor Jackie Stokes for this information.

Story (Welsh)

Ar noson dywyll oer ym mis Rhagfyr 1920 y digwyddodd y mwyaf cofiadwy o gyrchoedd achub bad achub Abergwaun. Enw'r bad dan sylw oedd *Charterhouse*, a ariannwyd gan yr ysgol o'r enw hwnnw ac a gyflwynwyd i orsaf yr RNLI ym 1908. Cafodd y bad ei adeiladu ar gyfer tywydd garw gyda chorff aml-haen, tanciau arnofio yn y blaen a'r cefn, a dec agored a oedd yn caniatáu i'r dŵr redeg i ffwrdd. *Charterhouse* oedd y bad achub cyntaf â modur yng Nghymru, gyda thanc tanwydd 50 galwyn yn caniatáu i'r injan redeg am 18 awr.

Ar y noson dan sylw, roedd sgwner modur tri mast o'r Iseldiroedd *Hermina*, ar ei ffordd i Rotterdam, wedi cysgodi ym Mae Abergwaun ond am fod y tonnau'n fawr yn y gwynt mawr o'r gogledd-orllewin dechreuodd yr angorau lusgo. Gorchmynnodd y capten i ffaglau gael eu tanio ac ymatebodd *Charterhouse,* gan gychwyn allan i'r môr o dan orchymyn y cocs 65 oed, John Howells.

Angorodd y bad achub ochr yn ochr â'r llong anffodus ond roedd anfon rhaff ar fwrdd yr *Hermina* yn her wrth i'r tonnau godi *Charterhouse* mor uchel â rigin y sgwner. Ymhen awr roedd saith o griw *Hermina* wedi'u codi oddi ar y llong ond mynnodd y capten, y prif swyddog a'r ail is-gapten aros ar ei bwrdd er gwaethaf y perygl y byddai'r llong cyn hir yn taro Craig y Nodwydd, sef pinacl miniog yn codi o'r dŵr o dan glogwyni serth.

Dechreuodd Charterhouse yn ôl i'r lan ond erbyn hyn roedd y peiriant wedi'i drochi ac wedi methu. Doedd gan y criw ddim dewis ond dibynnu ar rwyfau yn unig i wneud eu ffordd yn ôl ar draws y dyfroedd cythryblus gyda'r saith dyn a achubwyd. Roedd gwaeth i ddod: cafodd hwyl y llyw ei rhwygo yn y gwynt a syrthiodd y mast i'r môr. Llwyddodd dau aelod o'r criw i gropian ar draws pen blaen y bad i godi'r hwyl flaen. Drwy ddewrder rhagorol a morwriaeth

wych, cafodd *Charterhouse* ei symud i ffwrdd o'r clogwyni ac allan i fan lle gallai fynd yn ôl i'r harbwr, sef ymdrech a gymerodd dros dair awr.

Nid cynt y cyrhaeddodd y bad achub ddiogelwch na bod ffaglau wedi'u tanio o *Hermina* unwaith eto: roedd hi'n chwalu ar graig y Nodwydd. Cafodd un dyn ei olchi i ffwrdd a'i foddi ond cafodd y ddau arall eu hachub gan ddyn lleol, William Howells, a gafodd ei ostwng ar raff a llwyddo i'w codi i ben y clogwyn. (Mae gweddillion y sgwner i'w gweld o hyd o dan y clogwyn ar y llanw isaf.)

I gydnabod yr achubiad arwrol hwn dyfarnwyd medal aur yr RNLI i'r cocs, ac arian ac efydd i weddill y criw. Teithiodd pob un ohonynt, ynghyd â *Charterhouse* ei hun fel gwestai anrhydeddus, i Lundain ar y trên i gael eu gwobrau gan Dywysog Cymru yn bersonol.

Yn ystod ei saith mlynedd ar hugain o wasanaeth cafodd *Charterhouse Abergwaun* ei lansio ar 20 o gyrchoedd achub, gan achub 47 o fywydau. Ym 1930, cafodd ei ddisodli gan fad achub y White Star. Ond nid dyna ddiwedd y stori. Yn 2008 aeth hanesydd lleol, Phil Davies, ati i chwilio am *Charterhouse* a chafodd ei fod wedi'i droi'n iot, wedi'i ailenwi'n *Marian* ac wedi cyrraedd Gogledd Cymru fel cwch gwyliau i deulu o'r enw Lomas. Pan gafodd ei olrhain, prin ei bod yn addas i hwylio ac roedd angen sylw mawr i'w gyflwr. Yn hael iawn, cynigiodd y teulu Lomas ei roi yn ôl i gymuned Abergwaun ac Wdig lle dechreuodd grŵp o selogion ar waith adfer hir.

Cafodd y gwaith ei arwain gan Ymddiriedolaeth Charterhouse yn Abergwaun. Gobaith gwreiddiol yr Ymddiriedolaeth oedd arddangos y bad achub yn Wdig. Fel digwyddodd pethau, roedd hyn yn dalcen caled, gan nad oedd yr un o'r adeiladau presennol ar lan y môr ar gael nac yn addas.

Aeth hi'n ben set pan gafodd Ymddiriedolaeth Charterhouse wybod nad oedd modd cadw'r cwch ym mhorthladd Abergwaun mwyach. Roedd wedi cael ei gartrefu yno ers dychwelyd i Wdig yn 2008. Dim ond un lle y gallai'r Ymddiriedolaeth feddwl amdano i ailgartrefu *Charterhouse*: Amgueddfa Treftadaeth Forol y Gorllewin.

Roedd yr Amgueddfa'n fwy na pharod i gynnig cartref iddo ac felly cafodd ei symud yno ym mis Ionawr 2020, ar fenthyg yn wreiddiol. Parhaodd yr Ymddiriedolaeth â'u gwaith, gan godi arian i adeiladu lloches i ddiogelu *Charterhouse* ar y tir. Ymhen amser, penderfynwyd bod Amgueddfa Treftadaeth Forol y Gorllewin yn lle addas iawn i fod yn gartref parhaol i *Charterhouse*. Ym mis Ebrill 2021 cafodd *Charterhouse* ei roi'n ffurfiol i'r Amgueddfa a nhw yw'r perchnogion erbyn hyn. Does dim cynlluniau iddo ddychwelyd i Wdig na symud byth eto. Erbyn hyn mae gan *Charterhouse* gartref parhaol: achubwyd yr achubwr.

Cafodd y darn hwn ei ddiweddaru o'i gymharu â'r fersiwn wreiddiol gyda gwybodaeth ychwanegol gan Ymddiriedolaeth Charterhouse. Diolch i'r Cynghorydd Jackie Stokes am yr wybodaeth hon.

Factoid

A copper pin from the Hermina was recovered and reported to the Receiver of Wrecks in 2008. The full character and extent of archaeological remains is presently unknown.

Cafodd pin copr o'r Hermina ei adennill a'i hysbysu i'r Derbynnydd Llongddrylliadau yn 2008. Nid yw cymeriad llawn na graddau'r olion archaeolegol yn hysbys ar hyn o bryd.

Mr Emlyn Morgan passed away in April 2021 at the age of 106, the oldest man in Pembrokeshire. Mr Morgan was one of the crowd of people who ran to the cliffs above the

wreck of the Hermina. His father then descended the cliffs, with the help of a rope, and rescued one of the stranded crew members.

Bu farw Mr Emlyn Morgan ym mis Ebrill 2021 yn 106 oed – y dyn hynaf yn Sir Benfro. Roedd Mr Morgan yn un o'r dorf o bobl a redodd i'r clogwyni uwchben llongddrylliad yr Hermina. Yna disgynnodd ei dad ar hyd y clogwyn, gyda chymorth rhaff, ac achub un o aelodau'r criw.

Related Resources

Charterhouse Returns, 'The Story of Charterhouse: In Service', archived at https://perma.cc/2WG8-A4KC

1921 RNLI Fishguard and Scilly Isles, 'Prince of Wales visiting Fishguard lifeboat crew and awarding a Gold Medal to Coxswain John Howells, *YouTube*, https://youtu.be/taCT9ZsDoKY

Official Website