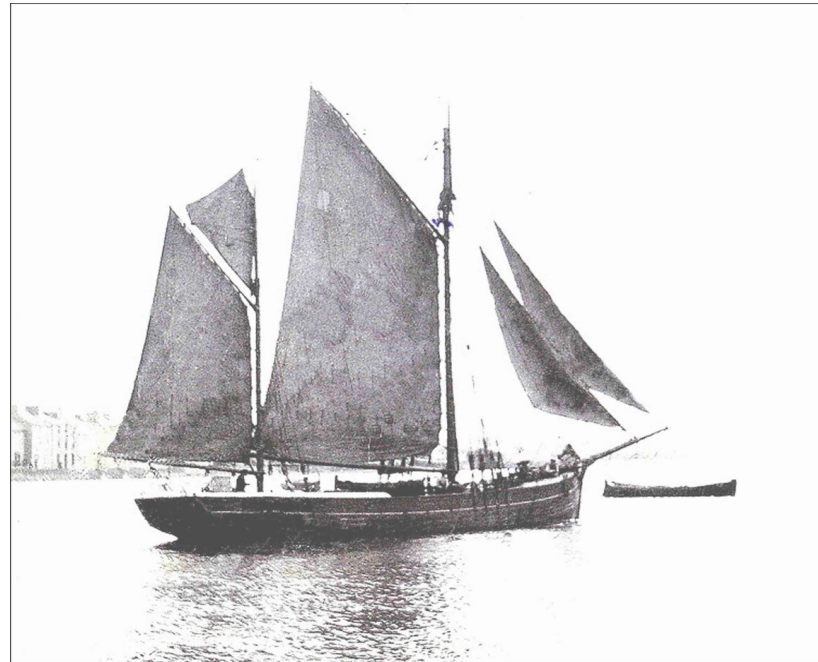


*A wee bit  
of maritime  
history... 23*



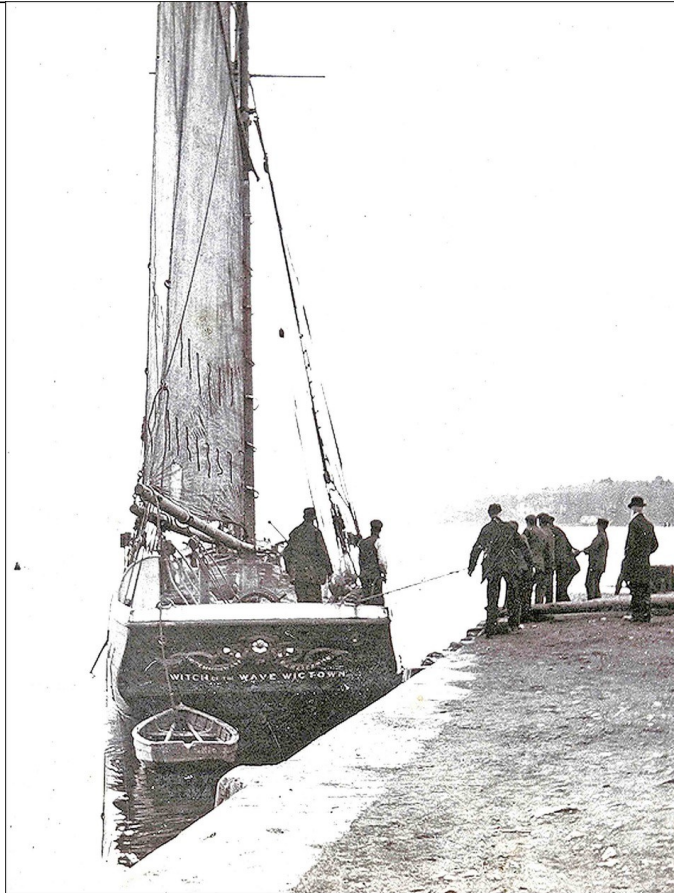
**FREE**

**Witch of the Wave (official no. 1553)**



The *Witch of the Wave* was a 60-foot wooden merchant sailing schooner of 47 gross registered tons built in 1854 at Garliestown (nr Wigtown, Scotland) by John Hanna, then aged 43. She spent her early years based in the Solway Firth, changing hands a number of times, and then, on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1891, all 64 shares of the vessel were purchased for £125 by her final owner, James Elliott of Portaferry, from Andrew McCracken, a mariner, of Drummore, Wigtownshire.

She provided useful service for many years.



The *Witch of the Wave* carried goods to and from, not only Portaferry, but also places such as Strangford, Killyleagh and Kircubbin to ports throughout the Irish Sea - Belfast and Carrickfergus, Campbelltown, Irvine, Troon and Ayr, Maryport, Workington, Whitehaven and Portmadoc as well as the Bristol Channel.

The main export was potatoes and the main import was coal but she also carried scrap metal, salt brick, fertiliser, sugar, wheat meal, flour and cattle.

This was during a period of great change when wind was replaced by the internal combustion engine as the source of propulsion for ships. Vessels became less dependent on favourable winds, improving punctuality and safety.

Eventually, in 1920, the *Witch of the Wave* joined the trend and a 24hp Gleniffer petrol/paraffin engine was installed and she continued to trade for another few years, but improvements in lorries and roads meant that it was harder for small coastal sailing vessels to compete commercially and so she was then drawn up on the shore to await her fate. Her register entry was closed on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1927. She was sold to Andrew Johnstone of Tully Farm and Frank McCausland of Isle O' Valla and broken up with difficulty. Some of her timbers remain in good condition to this day in the rafters of a barn. One is being used as a mantelpiece and her rudder has been found inside a wall, presumably acting as reinforcement.



Recycled  
into barn  
rafters ...

...and a  
mantle-  
piece.





Like nearly all vessels in the coasting trade, she had her fair share of incidents, many requiring lifeboat aid:  
 21 Dec 1894   dismasted North Channel, sheltered Isle of Man  
 16/17 Mar 1907   Cloughey lifeboat called crew saved  
 23 Feb 1911    Cloughey lifeboat called crew saved  
 16 Aug 1911    lifeboat called assistance required  
 28 Dec 1915    sheltered from storm in Cloughey Bay -  
 damaged by 'thumping'

**THE "JOHN" LIFE BOAT.**

1906, Dec, 26 <sup>th</sup>	S S "HAZELDENE" of Newcastle.	20.
1907, March 16 <sup>th</sup> 17 <sup>th</sup>	Ketch "WITCH of WAVE" of Belfast.	3.
1908, Sept. 30 <sup>th</sup>	S S "CLASSFORD" of Glasgow Landed.	10.
1908, Nov. 14 <sup>th</sup>	Barque "CROISSET" of Rouen.	26.
1911, Feb. 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Ketch "WITCH of WAVE" of Belfast, Landed.	3.
1911, Feb. 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Ketch "AZUR" of Belfast Landed.	3.
1912, Jan. 20 <sup>th</sup> 21 <sup>st</sup>	S. S. "CITY of LAHORE" & a Shore boat stood by vessel and from boat saved	5.
1913, Jan. 26 <sup>th</sup> 27 <sup>th</sup>	Barque "CARMEL" of Larwick Landed	10.
1913, Nov, 6 <sup>th</sup>	S.S. "READING" of Cardiff, Landed.	21.
1915, Feb, 14 <sup>th</sup>	S.S. "ANTONIO" of Bilbao.	24.
1916, Feb, 16 <sup>th</sup>	Ketch "SUSANNAH" of Belfast.	3.

Despite these hazardous events she lived to the ripe old age of 73 before being broken up.



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