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4: Y Napoleon

Gan T. Meirion Hughes

Yn y flwyddyn 1843 adeiladodd Humphrey Owen, Rhyddgaer, sgwner newydd 69 tunnell ar gyfer 6 o drigolion Caernarfon. Enwau'r perchnogion ydoedd: John Owen, Ty Coch, (ei fab), William Thomas, Owen Edwards, Nehemiah Bracegirdle, John Jones a David

Davies. Ni chysylltwyd enw Humphrey Owen ag adeiladu llongau cyn hynny, ond daeth enw'r sgwner hon yn enw adnabyddus iawn yn Nghaernarfon a hi oedd yr unig long i gael ei lansio yn y dref yn ystod y flwyddyn honno. Ni wyddys pwy a ddewisodd yr enw na pha reswm a roddai am wneud hynny, ond i ni heddiw, anodd yw dyfalu pam y rhoddwyd enw cyn archelyn Prydain, sef Napoleon arni, a hynny lai na 30 mlynedd ar ôl brwydr waedlyd Waterloo. Boed hynny fel y bo, daeth pobl Caernarfon i gysylltu enw'r sgwner â chyfenw yr ail ar restr y perchnogion, sef Thomas. William Thomas oedd Meistr cyntaf y Napoleon, a bu'r teulu yn gysylltiedig â'r llong am ddegawdau lawer yn ystod y l9eg ganrif. Roedd diwrnod lansio llongau ym Mhorthladd Caernarfon yn ystod y ganrif ddiwethaf yn ddydd o ddathlu, gyda'r adeiladydd yn rhoi gwledd i'w weithwyr yn un o westai'r dref, ond cyn i hynny ddigwydd arferid gwahodd offeiriad nen weinidog ar fwrdd y llong i gynnal gwasanaeth, a'r sawl a gafodd y fraint honno yn achos y Napoleon oedd neb llai na'r bardd a'r emynydd enwog Caledfryn, Y Parchedig William Williams, (1801-1869)

4: The Napoleon

By T. Meirion Hughes

It was in the year 1843 that Humphrey Owen, Rhyddgaer, built a new 69 tonne schooner for 6 Caernarfon residents. The names of the owners were: John Owen, Ty Coch, (his son), William Thomas, Owen Edwards, Nehemiah Bracegirdle, John Jones and David Davies. Humphrey Owen's name had not previously been associated with ship building, but the name of this schooner was to become very well known in Caernarfon and she was the only ship to be launched in the town that year. It is not known who chose the name nor for what reason, but to us today, it is strange to say the least, that the name of Britain's former arch enemy, Napoleon, should have been decided upon, especially as it was less than 30 years after the bloody Battle of Waterloo. Be that as it may, Caernarfon people came to associate the name of the schooner with the second name on the list of owners, i.e. Thomas. William Thomas was the Napoleon's first Master and his family name was to become synonymous with that of the schooner for many decades during the 19th century. Launching day was a day of celebration in the Port of Caernarfon at that time and it was customary for the builder to treat his workers to a feast at one of the town's hotels, but not until after a clergyman or minister had been

invited on board the new vessel to conduct a

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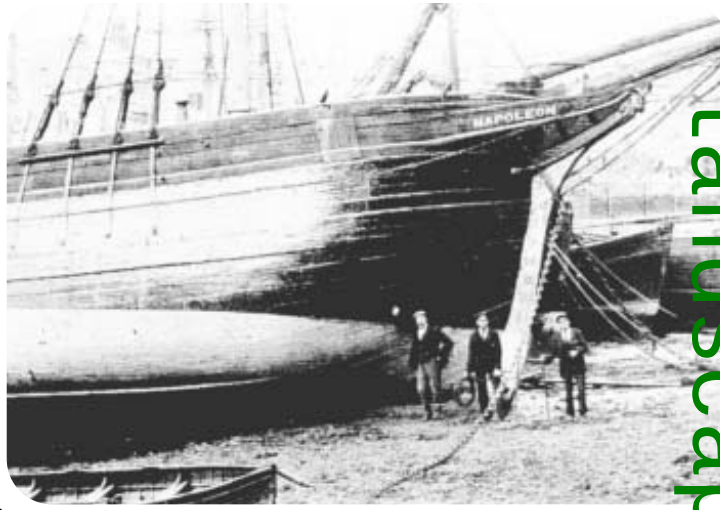
gweinidog gyda'r Annibynwyr yng Nghapel Pendref. Adroddwyd yn y Carnarvon & Denbigh Herald iddo draddodi pregeth yn y Gymraeg, ac wedi bendithio'r llong, cafwyd perl o englyn ganddo:

Y don na wged dani,- na chwerwed
Mellt na chorwynt wrthi;
Sêr a lloer wrth groesi'r lli
Tyner y bônt ohoni.



Englyn a weddai i'r dim i'r achlysur, ac un sy'n mynegi deisyfiad pob morwr a phob un a oedd gan anwyliaid yn hwylio'r cefnfor. Mewn gair, gweddi ydyw sy'n erfyn ar i'r elfennau fod yn garedig tuag at y llong a'i chriw a'u cadw rhag peryglon y môr. Llong a hwyliai o amgylch yr arfordir (Coaster) oedd y Napoleon, ond ni olygai hynny ei bod yn rhydd o deimlo fflangell y gwynt ac ambell foryn cynddeiriog, fel y profwyd sawl tro. Brodor o blwyf Llanbedrog yn Llyn oedd ei Meistr cyntaf, William Thomas (1815-1874) ac yn ôl Cofrestr Lloyds, 1852, ceir ei fod erbyn hynny yn brif berchennog y sgwner yn ogystal, ac o'r flwyddyn 1855 hyd 1860 bu'n berchennog ac yn Feistr sgwner arall y Don Quixote a gollwyd fis Ebrill, 1860. Credir mai dyma'r cyfnod y rhoes y Napoleon yng ngofal ei frawd Capten Griffith Thomas (1822-1905), ac ar ôl colli'r Don Quixote prynodd William Thomas sgwner newydd 120 tunnell, a adeiladwyd yn 1859 yn Bridport Harbour, Dorset, a galwodd hi yr Eleanor Thomas, yr un enw â'i wraig. Bu'n gapten ar yr Eleanor Thomas o 1860 hyd at ganol 1872, pryd y trosglwyddodd yr awenau drosodd i'w fab hynaf William Robert Thomas, 27 oed. Credir mai ei reswm dros ymddeol yr gynnar oedd cyflwr ei iechyd, oherwydd bu farw ar 19 Fehefin

service, and it was no less a person than the poet and hymnist, The Rev. William Williams, (Caledfryn), (1801-1869) who had that honour at the launching of the Napoleon. He preached a sermon in Welsh and after blessing the ship, he read out a stanza which he had composed especially for the event. A free translation reads as follows:

Let not a wave scowl angrily beneath her; -
nor Lightening or whirlwind smite her;
The moon and the stars, when crossing the sea, may they be gentle towards her.

A stanza worthy of the occasion and which expresses the thoughts of all sailors and their loved ones. In a word, a prayer and a wish that the elements be kind towards the ship and her crew and keep them free of the perils of the sea. The Napoleon was a Coaster, but that did not mean that she could avoid the lash of the wind and an angry sea, as was proved on many occasions.

Her first Master was a native of Llanbedrog in Llyn, William Thomas, (1815 - 1874), and according to Lloyds Register of 1852, he was, by then, also the main owner of the Napoleon and from 1855 to 1860 he became owner and Master of the schooner Don Quixote which was lost in April 1860. It is believed that it was during this period that he handed over control of the Napoleon to his

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