

## Wreck, Camas na Gualainn, Loch Ailort.

A broken-up wreck lies partly-buried in the foreshore of the beach at Camas na Gualainn, on the eastern shore of Loch Ailort, at NM 723 787 (hand held GPS and OS 1:25000 map positioning).

The wreck is that of the paddle-steamer *Cygnets*, owned by David MacBrayne, which stranded in Loch Ailort on 18<sup>th</sup> September 1882. She was carrying equipment and materials for sheep-smearing (Canmore ID 119356). The incident is referred to at RCAHMS (Canmore ID 119356) but the location of the wreckage has not been recorded.

A dangerous drying reef in the middle of the bay at NM 726 791 (hand held GPS and OS 1:25000 map positioning), about 500m north-east of the wreckage and nowadays marked with a perch, is known locally as *Cygnets* Rock and has long been described as the site of the stranding, and a painting, dated 1883, by the Victorian water-colourist Jemima Blackburn, who lived on the surrounding Roshven estate, shows a diver preparing to visit the wreck, which was then brought ashore at Camas na Gualainn for salvage (pers. comm. Alan Blackburn, August 2010).

The wreckage on the beach consists partly of curved gunwales of steel, one of which is at least ten metres long, with hardwood inwales, still in good condition, attached in places. Other wreckage, including substantial riveted plates, is scattered nearby. The plates are encrusted in places with coal slack and pieces of coal are present in the wreck. Metal detection indicates a substantial amount of buried metal under the surrounding area of sand and pebbles: trial trenches repeatedly reveal rusted plates. The wreckage is not always visible, being subject to shifting sand, but the gunwale parts can be 30 cm or more proud of the beach on occasions, such as in September 2010.

The base of a broken glass bottle found in the wreckage carries an embossed stag emblem within the words 'Trade Mark', and, below, 'Oban, Established 1846': around the back is the bottle-manufacturer's name, 'Carrington Shaw & Co. Ltd., St. Helens'. This has been identified (BBR Auctions)(Powys County Records) as coming from Alex. Robertson, a chemist's business in Oban which later became the Argyle Chemical Company (SCRAN) and specialised in sheep-dip chemicals to the extent that they exported them to New Zealand (Timaru Herald) and Argentina. As previously mentioned, the *Cygnets* was carrying equipment and materials for sheep-smearing when she stranded (Canmore ID 119356).

### References.

BBR Auctions. *Antique Bottles*. [http://www.onlinebbr.com/auctions/results/pdf\\_results/2006-03-05/innards.pdf](http://www.onlinebbr.com/auctions/results/pdf_results/2006-03-05/innards.pdf), accessed 29<sup>th</sup> September 2010.

Powys County Records. *Records relating to William Jones and Margaret Catherine Jones of Llwynfynwent, Penbuellt, Llangamarch*. [http://www.powys.gov.uk/uploads/media/B\\_DX9\\_bi.pdf](http://www.powys.gov.uk/uploads/media/B_DX9_bi.pdf), accessed 29<sup>th</sup> September 2010.

SCRAN. ID 000-000-569-700-C. <http://www.scran.ac.uk/database/record.php?usi=000-000-569-700-C&scache=4i7h584604&searchdb=scran>, accessed 29<sup>th</sup> September 2010.

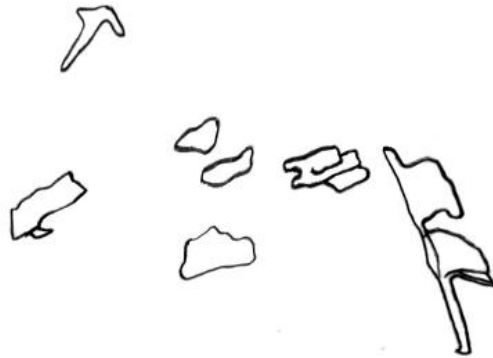
Timaru Herald, Volume LX, Issue 2661, 25 March 1898, Page 3. *Classified advertisement by Wright Stephenson and Co*. <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=search&d=THD18980325.2.35.3&srpos=2&e=-----10--1----0>, accessed 24<sup>th</sup> December 2010.

Ken and Jean Bowker  
24<sup>th</sup> December 2010

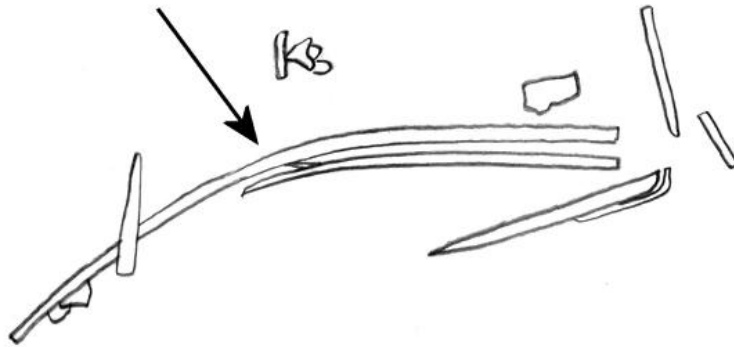
← Raised beach 100m

Foreshore

Loch Ailort →



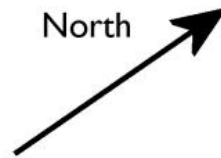
*This metal gunwale has an inwale of hardwood (not visible).  
All other visible wreckage is metal.*



PTI  
X



North



Wreck of the paddlesteamer Cygnet,  
Camas na Gualainn, Loch Ailort  
NGR NM 72341 78704 at PT I  
Surveyed by Ken & Jean Bowker  
Date 10/10/2010. Original scale 1:100







Water colour by the Victorian artist Jemima Blackburn showing the salvage of the *Cygnet* in 1883: the Blackburns owned the Roshven Estate, which included the beach where the wreckage now lies.

*Image courtesy of Mr. Alan Blackburn.*



This bottle, identified as from A E Robertsons, Chemists, of Oban, would have contained sheep-smearing chemicals

### Establishing the provenance of the bottle found in the wreckage of the Cygnet.

A. From BBR Auctions online sale catalogue, page 17, item 144.

See [http://www.onlinebbr.com/auctions/results/pdf\\_results/2006-03-05/innards.pdf](http://www.onlinebbr.com/auctions/results/pdf_results/2006-03-05/innards.pdf), accessed 23/12/2010.

**144. SODA SYPHON.** 10.5 ins tall, clear glass acid etched 'ALEX ROBERTSON & SONS/ CHEMISTS/ OBAN ESTABLISHED 1846', stag pictorial t.m. Good. NR £20-30+.

B. [http://www.powys.gov.uk/uploads/media/B\\_DX9\\_bi.pdf](http://www.powys.gov.uk/uploads/media/B_DX9_bi.pdf)

B/DX/9

Records relating to William Jones and Margaret Catherine Jones of Llwynfynwent, Penbuelit, Llangamarch AccNo.175

Deposited by Mrs E. Puw, 12th February 1986

**B/DX/9/1**

#### Personal and related items

B/DX/9/2/541 Alexander Robertson, Argyle Chemical Works, Oban : sheep-dips 'Highland Dip' and 'Scotch Powder Dip' (Hugh Jones, Chemist, Blaenau Ffestiniog) (in Welsh) Post 1896 n/d

B/DX/9/2/542

Same : Highland Sheep Dip

n/d

C. From the Timaru Herald, New Zealand, Volume LX, Issue 2661, 25 March 1898, Page 3

<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=search&d=THD18980325.2.35.3&srpos=2&e=-----10--1---0>

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IT IS THE CHEAPEST DIP IN THE MARKET, because it gives you a Larger Quantity of INSECT-DESTROYING INGREDIENTS for your money than any other Dip. The analysis of the HIGHLAND DIP is published openly. Send for pamphlets and examine for yourselves.

Manufactured by Alex. Robertson, Argyle Chemical Works, Oban, Scotland.

Sole Agents for South Island, New Zealand:

WRIGHT STEPHENSON & CO.

Agents for South Canterbury: GUINNESS & LECREN.