# AMGUEDDFA CYMRU

# Welsh Pirates

This resource is an introduction to Welsh pirates and their history.

The National Waterfront Museum has several pirate themed physical and virtual sessions for school groups. This resource can be used to compliment those sessions. For more information on those sessions click on the below link.

*A school trip to National Waterfront Museum*

## Contents |

Almost as soon as people started to travel by boat, pirates took to the water to attack and steal from them. Some targeted ships while others terrorised coastlines.
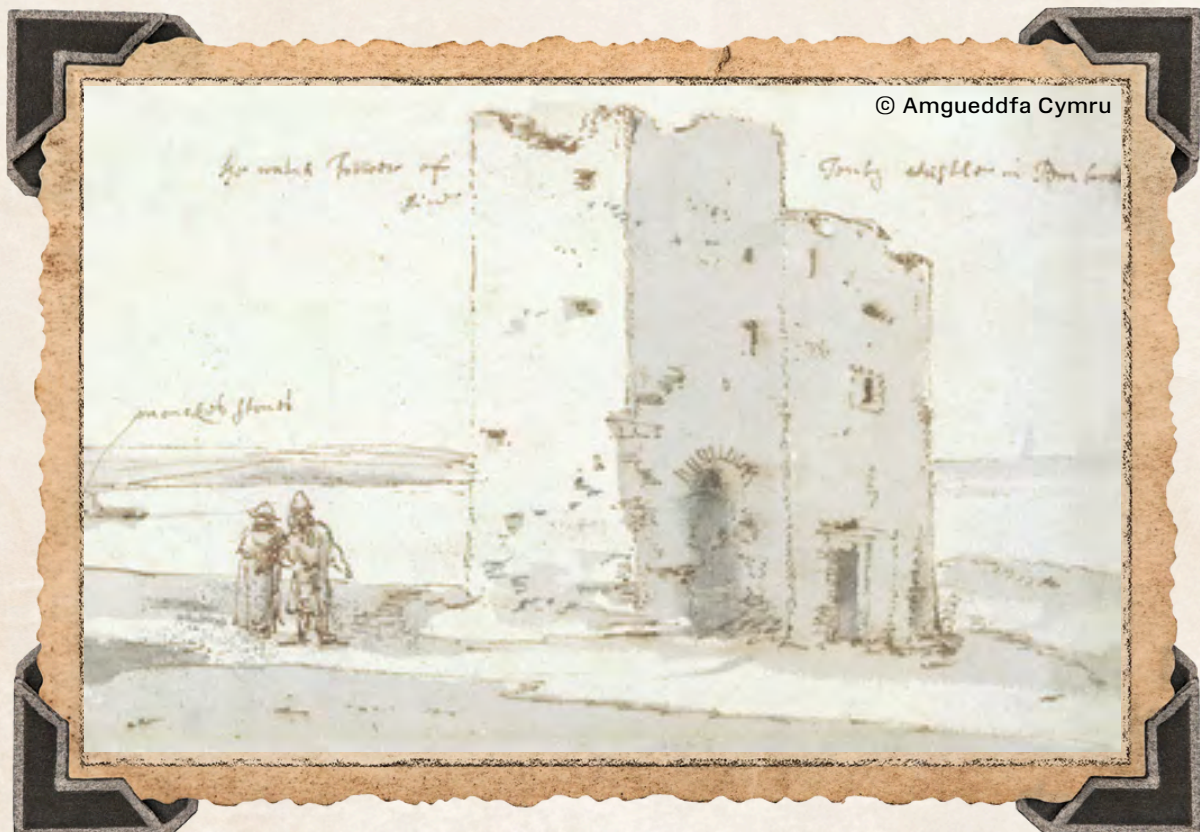
From ancient times, fortunes were won and lost to piracy across the world.  Pirates attacked ships that carried valuable cargos, such as precious metals, fabric, spices, or even people captured as slaves. Sometimes they were supported by governments or landowners.

# The coast of Wales

The coast of Wales was plagued by pirates from ancient times into the 18th century. Roman Wales was under threat from Irish pirates while Vikings plundered Anglesey in the 9th and 10th centuries.

During the 17th century, watchtowers along the north Wales coast warned against pirates. In 18th century Fishguard, cannons were installed to repel sea-borne attacks.



© Amgueddfa Cymru
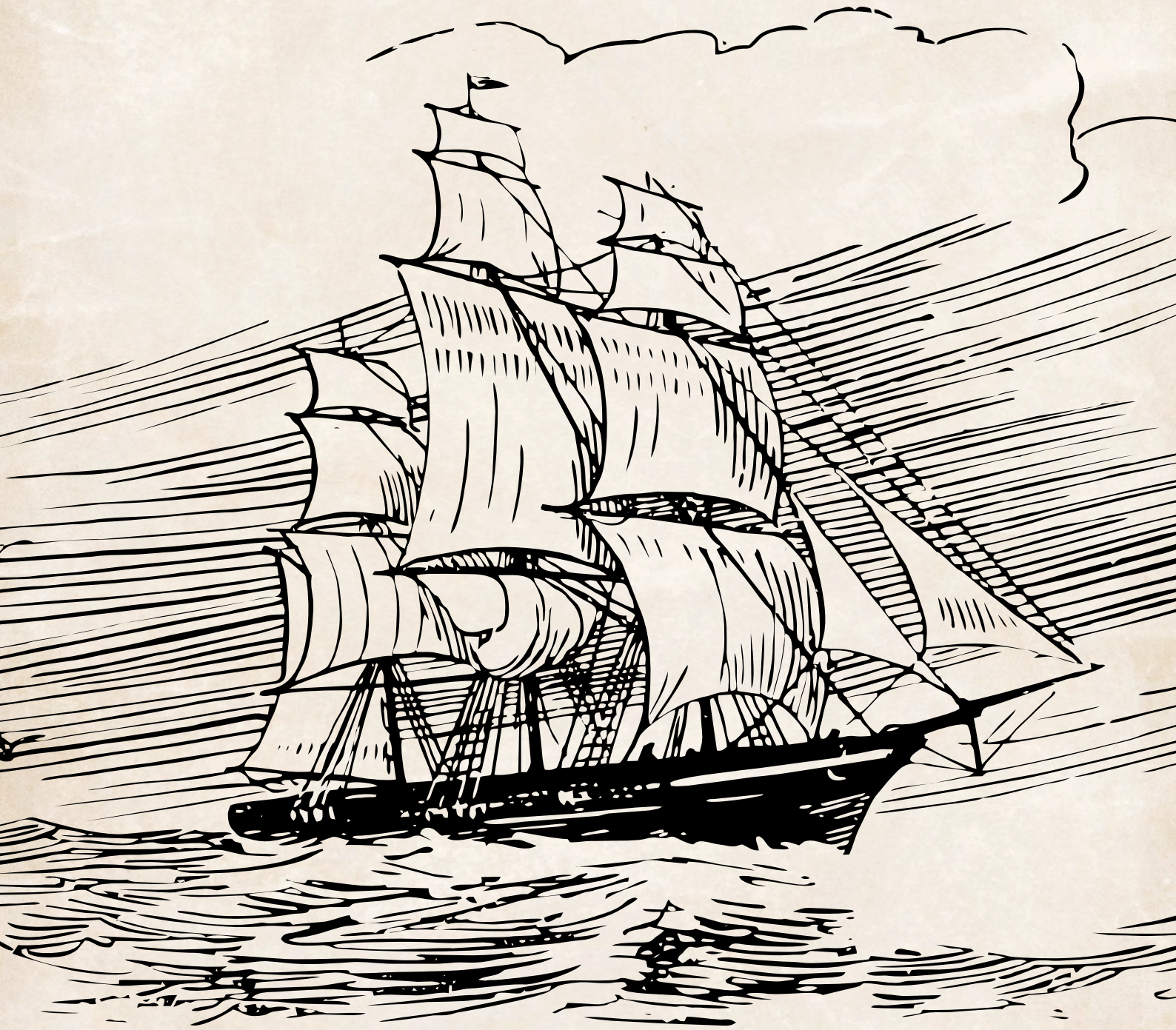
*Tenby Watchtower, 1678*

# The coast of Wales

The caves and coves of Wales were ideal places to land stolen goods. Pirates were often supported by local landowners and magistrates happy to share their profits. While capturing pirates and bringing them to justice could bring a share of their cargo, local people often sided with them.

# Pirates from Wales

During the Golden Age of piracy, many pirates came from Wales. Documents often show pirates with Welsh names and there are records of Welsh being spoken, alongside many other languages, on board pirate ships.

# Pirates from Wales

Two of the most famous pirates of all time came from Wales. Black Bart was an ordinary sailor who turned to piracy but maintained his religious and teetotal habits. Henry Morgan was a Caribbean privateer who is said to have stolen a million pieces of eight in his lifetime and who gave his name to Captain Morgan's rum.

*Sketch of 'Barti Ddu' (Black Bart)*

# Pirate Fact File
## John (Bartholomew) Roberts (1682-1722)

**Pirate name:**

Black Bart or Barti Ddu

**From:**

Newport, Pembrokeshire, Wales

**Manner of death:**

Killed by grapeshot in his throat in a battle with the authorities.

**Claim to fame:**

One of the most notorious of pirates, he probably seized over 400 ships in two years, netting millions of pounds worth of treasure.

# Pirates from Wales

Black Bart was famous for the scarlet silk clothing he wore and for the sashes over his shoulders with two pistols in each.

Black Bart witnessed the vicious murder of a woman while on board Howell Davis's pirate ship. As a captain, he made the crime of bringing a woman on board disguised as a man punishable by death. He insisted that a guard was posted to protect any woman found aboard. It was a system exploited by his pirates, who often abused the position of guard.

# Pirate Fact File
## Howell Davis (Hywl Davies) (?-1719)

**Pirate name:**

Cavalier prince of pirates

**From:**

Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire, Wales

**Manner of death:**

Davis and his fellow pirates were ambushed in Cape Verde Islands by the Governor of the islands' men. It took five bullets and a cut throat to kill Davis.

**Claim to fame:**

A master of disguise, Davis imitated a gentleman to gain access to the homes of the wealthy prior to robbing them or holding them to ransom.

# Privateers

Not all pirates were criminals, some operated firmly within the law of their land. They were called privateers and worked for governments, often in Britain, France and Spain. 'Letters of marque' allowed them to attack enemy ships and to steal their cargo, keeping some of it for themselves.

Henry Morgan
"Use your best endeavours to surprise, take, sink, disperse, and destroy all the enemies' ships or vessels which shall come within your view."

GOVERNOR OF JAMAICA
1669

# Privateers

Privateers operated, with the support of royalty or government, from medieval times until the 19th century.

Lots of privateers became rich and used their money to buy land or build large homes. Many, like Welshman Henry Morgan, came from wealthy backgrounds and went on to hold positions of power.

S.<sup>r</sup> HEN: MORGAN
Part. 2. Chap. 4.

Ho! Henry Morgan sails today
To harry the Spanish Main,
With a pretty bill for the Dons to pay
Ere he comes back again.

Him cheat him friend of his last guinea,
Him kill both friar and priest - Oh Dear!
Him cut de t'roat of piccaninny,
Bloody, bloody buccaneer.

**West Indian ballad**

# Pirate Fact File
## Henry Morgan (1635-1688)

**Pirate name:**

Captain Morgan

**From:**

Llanrumney, Cardiff, Wales

**Manner of death:**

Died at home aged about 53, probably of an illness related to drinking.

**Claim to fame:**

A famous 17th century privateer. Morgan attacked many Spanish ships and destroyed the city of Panama in Central America. He later became Governor of Jamaica.

# Pirates of the Caribbean

The Caribbean Sea's position close to the newly conquered Americas made it a hotbed of piracy from the 1500s to the 1700s. The many islands and inlets of the Caribbean made it easy for pirates to hide and hard for the authorities to catch them.

Caribbean trade revolved around slavery and there are many tales of escaped slaves joining pirates. As many as eighty of Black Bart's crew were African, some from a ship he had captured.

# Pirate Fact File
## John Phillips (?-1724)

**Pirate name:**

Sea-artist

**From:**

Gwynedd, Wales

**Manner of death:**

Killed with an axe after he captured a ship off the coast of Nova Scotia in Canada. His severed head was pickled and hung from the ship's mast.

**Claim to fame:**

Phillips was a ship's carpenter. He was captured by pirates and soon became captain of a ship. He terrorised the seas around Newfoundland, in Canada, attacking fishing vessels.

# Crime and Punishment

The punishment for piracy was often death. Convicted pirates often met a particularly gruesome end. They were hanged using a short rope, strangling them rather than breaking their neck. The body was sometimes left to hang until at least three tides had washed over it. In the case of particularly notorious pirates, the body was then covered in tar and left in a metal cage, or gibbet, for up to two years until it rotted away.

# Pirate Fact File
## John Callis (Callys or Callice) (?-?)

**Pirate name:**

'The Most Dangerous pyrate in the Realm' described by the Queen's Privy Council

**From:**

Tintern, Monmouthshire, Wales

**Manner of death:**

Possibly hanged off the coast of Wales, but probably killed in combat in the Mediterranean after he joined the Barbary Corsairs.
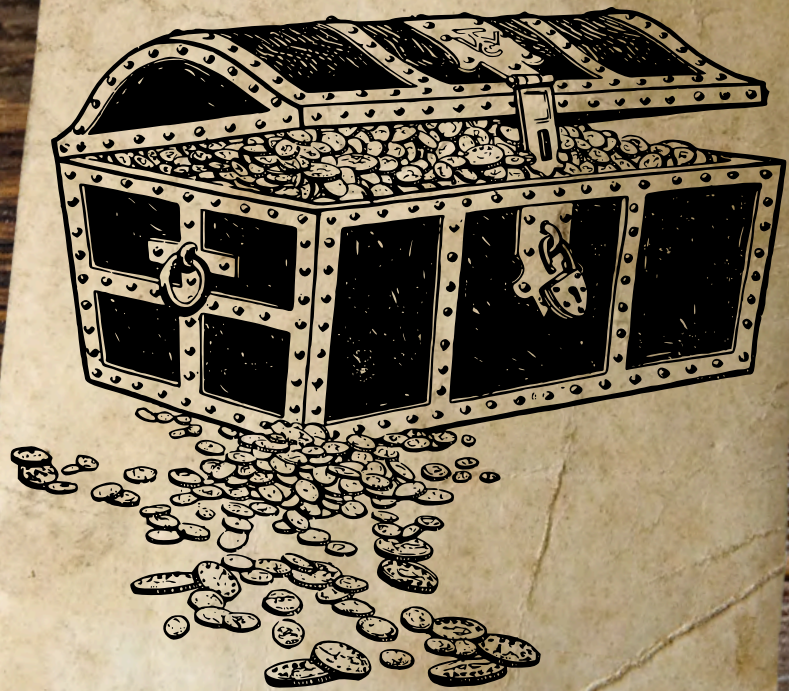
**Claim to fame:**

Callis was notorious for attacking shipping around the Bristol Channel and the coast of Wales.

# Activities

# Pirate Name

Avast me hearties, what's your Pirate name?

To find your pirate name, choose a word from each column, join them together and add your first name, or a nickname. For example: Salty Skull Sally.

| | |
|---|---|
| Captain | Beard |
| Night | Skull |
| Long | Hook |
| Black | Hawk |
| Salty | Hero |
| Cruel | Lady |
| Dangerous | Prince |
| Sea | Heart |
| Smelly | Doubloon |
| Petticoat | King |
| Scurvy | Queen |
| Hearty | Seadog |
| Peg-leg | Boot |
| Cut-throat | Widow |

# Ship's Biscuits



## Ingredients

- 1lb wholemeal flour, any plain flour will also do.
- ¼ oz salt
- Water

## Directions

- Preheat your oven to 215°C (190°C for a fan oven). Mix the salt and flour together and add the water slowly, mixing until you have created a very stiff dough.

- Leave the dough for half an hour.

- Roll the dough out fairly thickly (to about half an inch or just over a centimetre deep) and use a round cutter to cut them out.

- Use a fork to prick the biscuits all over the top side.

- Place on a greased baking tray and bake for about 30 minutes.

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**More resources can be found at...**

# museum.wales /learn/