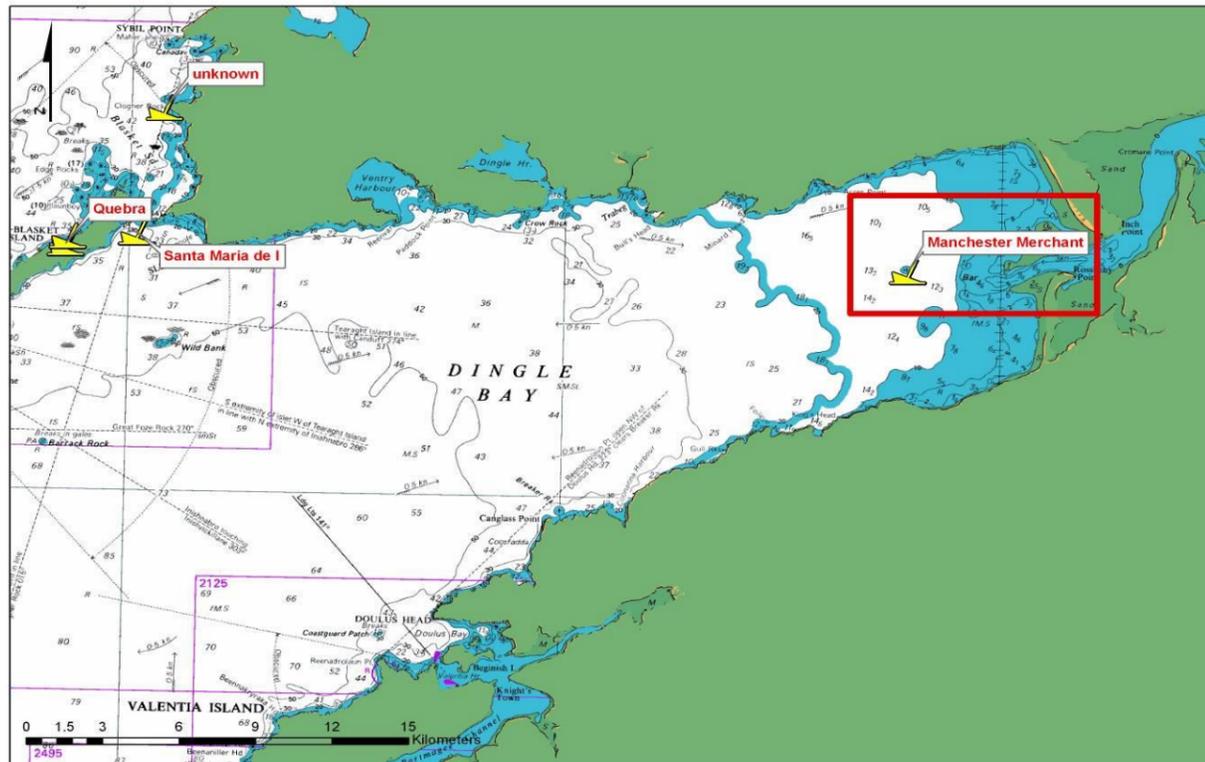
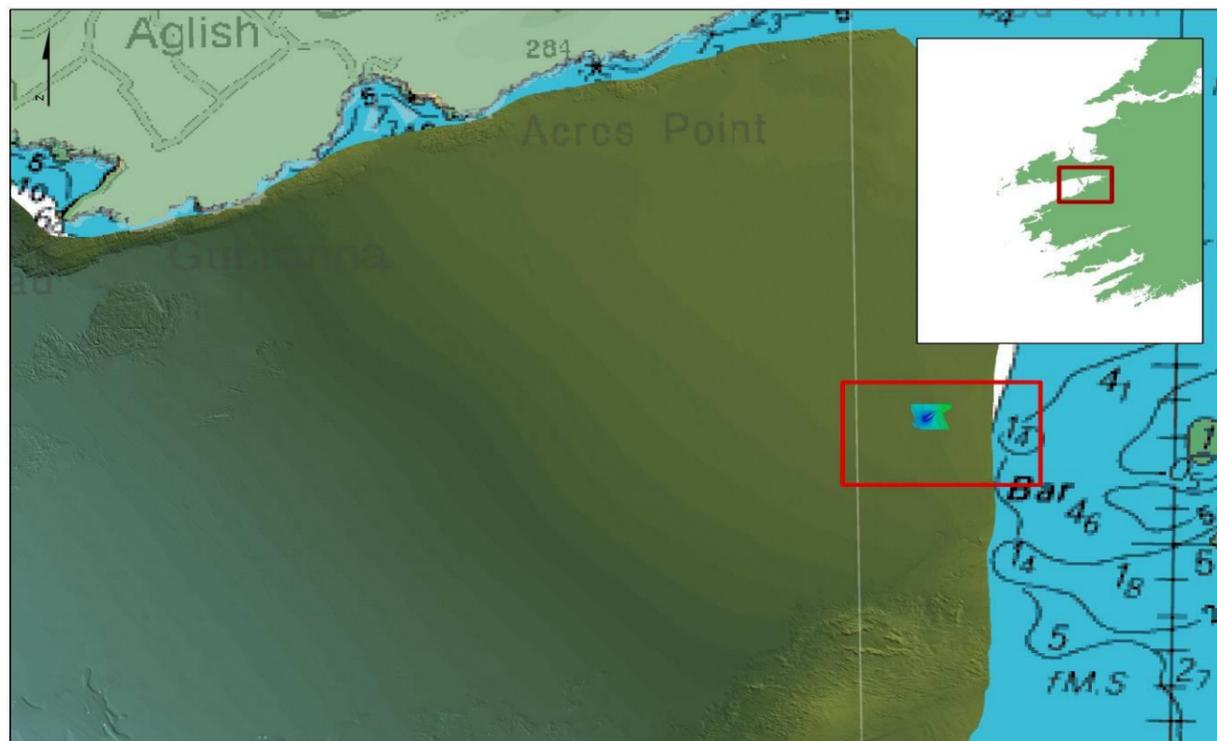


## WRECK IMAGERY



Above the location of the SS *Manchester Merchant* in Dingle Bay and below an image of the SS *Manchester Merchant* from the shaded relief acquired during the INFOMAR survey CV09\_02, Dingle Bay.



## LOCATION

**Location** 4.5km WNW of Rosbehy Point, Dingle Bay

**Coordinates** -10° 01' 58.8" W  
52° 05' 43.2" N

**Depth of Water** 11.3 m

## VESSEL INFORMATION

**Vessel type** British cargo steamship

**Flag** British

**Vessel Dimensions** 157 m (l),  
18 m (b), 5.3 m (d)

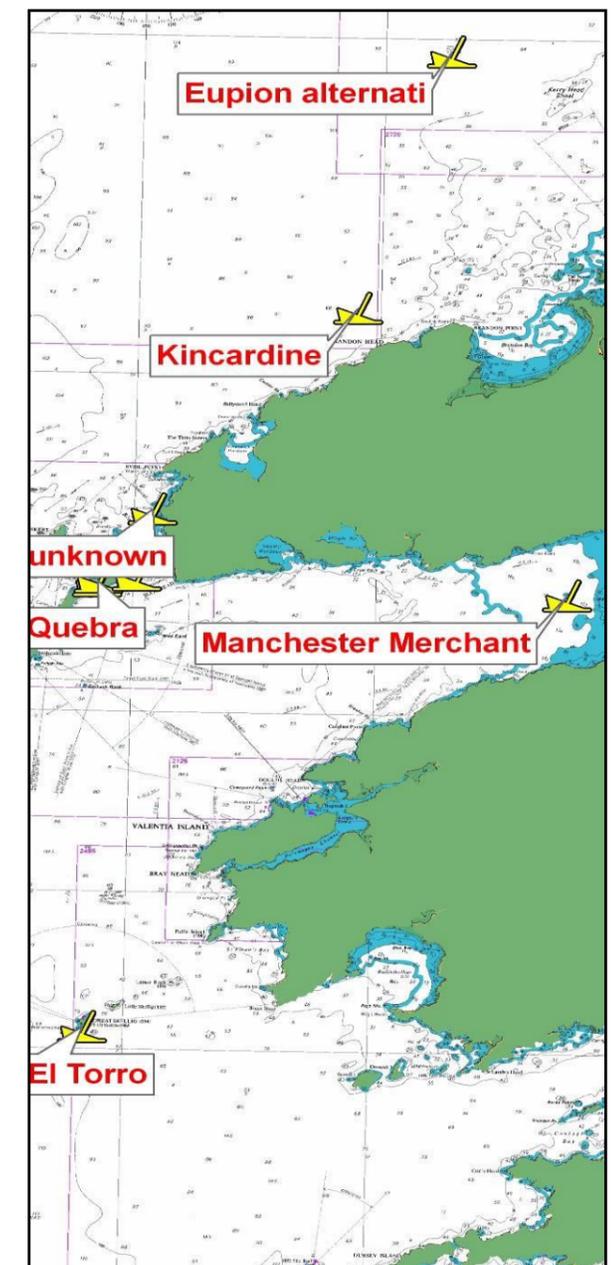
**Date of building** 1900

## VESSEL HISTORY

The SS *Manchester Merchant* was built in 1900 by Palmer's Shipbuilding and Iron Co. Ltd., Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. The vessel had three boilers, a triple expansion engine of 642 NHP and was built with a single shaft. It had a single funnel, four masts and measured 452 x 52 x 28 feet. Although originally built for newly formed Manchester Liners, it was requisitioned by the British Government immediately after being built to transport troops, supplies, ammunition and horses to South Africa during the Boer War. At the time of loss the SS *Manchester Merchant* was still owned by Manchester Liners.



## SS MANCHESTER MERCHANT



## DETAILS OF SINKING

It was during its first voyage after returning from the Boer War that the *SS Manchester Merchant* caught fire approximately 400km off the SW coast of Ireland. The *SS Manchester Merchant* was en route from New Orleans to Manchester with a cargo of 13,000 bales of cotton for the cotton industry in the Lancashire mills. The vessel, commanded by W. P. Couch, was carrying 100 barrels of turpentine, soap, pitch pine, grain and was manned by a crew of 56. On the 12<sup>th</sup> January 1903, it is thought that the cotton cargo spontaneously ignited, with the vessel subsequently catching fire as it neared the SW Irish coast. The vessel sought refuge in Dingle Bay and dropped anchor near the entrance to Castlemaine Harbour. As the fire intensified the fore part of the vessel was totally ablaze forcing the crew to throw the turpentine overboard. With efforts to fight the fire failing, most of the crew took to the lifeboats leaving the master and a handful of crew to scuttle ship in shallow water on the 15<sup>th</sup> January. There was no loss of life but some of the crew suffered from smoke inhalation. Despite salvage attempts, the vessel was declared a total loss at the end of February. The captain gave the ship's bell to the locals as a token of gratitude. In 1938 the bell was in Annascaul church.

## DIVE INFORMATION

The wreck is orientated NE-SW, bow to NE. The wreck lies largely intact with little or no debris.

Wrecks over 100 years old and archaeological objects found underwater are protected under the National Monuments (Amendment) Acts 1987 and 1994. Significant wrecks less than 100 years old can be designated by Underwater Heritage Order (UHO) on account of their historical, archaeological or artistic importance

As the *SS Manchester Merchant* is over 100 years old, it is protected and a license is required to dive the site which can be obtained from:

<https://www.archaeology.ie/licences/dive-survey-licence>

## ABOUT INFOMAR

Covering some 125,000 square kilometres of underwater territory, INFOMAR (the **IN**tegrated Mapping **FO**r the Sustainable Development of Ireland's **MAR**ine Resource) project will produce integrated mapping products covering the physical, chemical and biological features of the seabed. INFOMAR will initially focus on 26 priority bays and three priority areas around the coast delivering: hydrographic maps, illustrating everything from sandbars to underwater canyons and cliffs; seabed classification maps showing the type of sediment on the seabed. INFOMAR provides key baseline data to support coastal and inshore development. Making this information available to the world aims to stimulate research and development of Ireland's 220 million acres under the sea. The data will be of interest to fisheries managers, aquaculture operators, coastal zone managers and engineers, offshore engineering interests, licensing authorities and those carrying out environmental impact assessments. Indeed this unique dataset is of interest in its own right because of the sheer volume of data collected

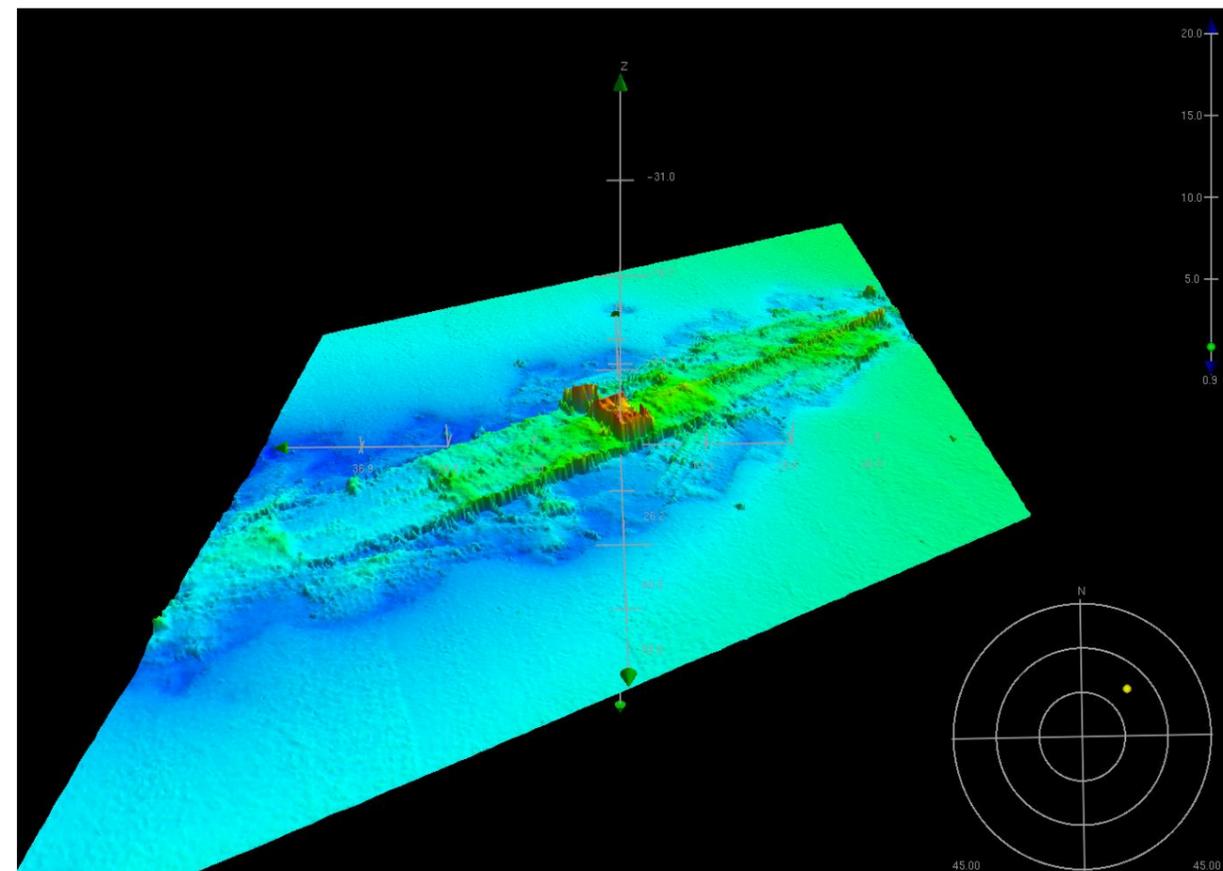
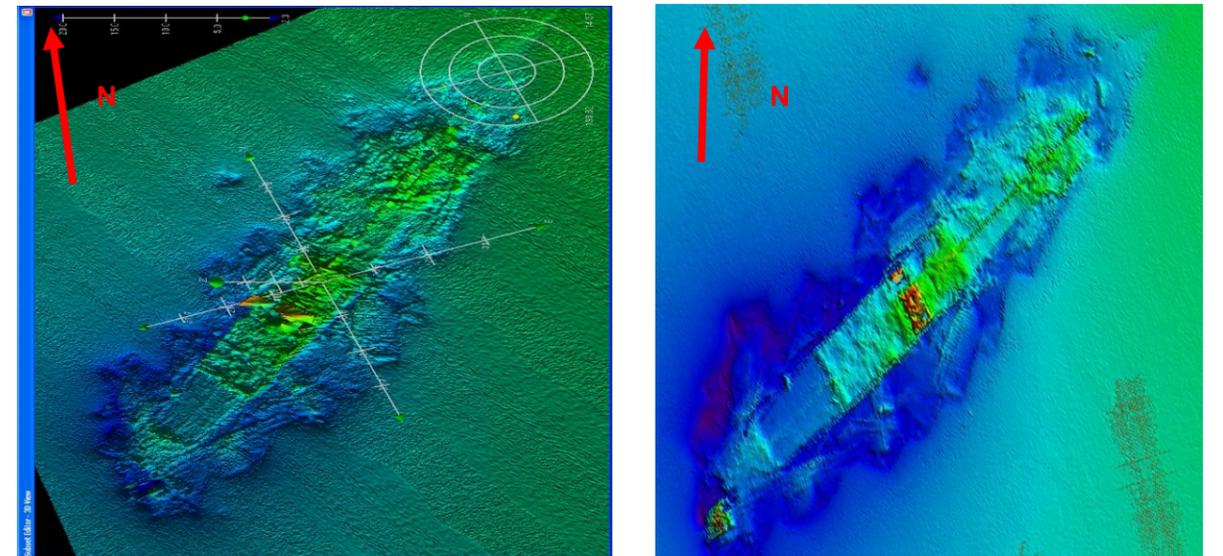
## FURTHER READING/REFERENCES

[www.infomar.ie](http://www.infomar.ie)

[www.irishwrecksonline.net](http://www.irishwrecksonline.net)

<https://www.archaeology.ie/underwater-archaeology>

## WRECK IMAGERY



Above: 3D and plan view of the *SS Manchester Merchant* using Caris Hips & Sips processing software.