



Exceptional weather events

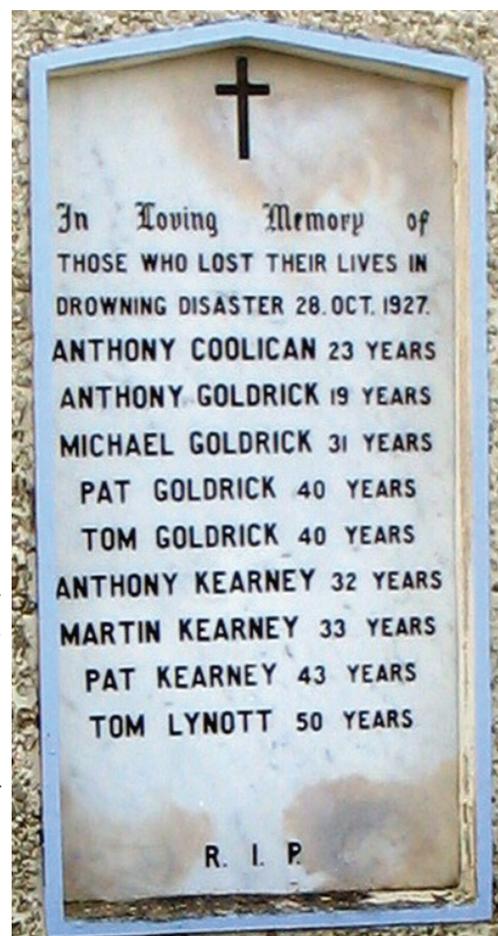
Type of event:
Storm

Date:
October 1927

Major storm off the west coast on October 28th 1927

Victims of a drowning tragedy were commemorated this month in Mayo, on the eightieth anniversary of a major storm that swept across the northern half of Ireland and Britain. On the evening of October 28th, 1927, a total of 45 lives were lost at sea along the western seaboard. At Lacken Bay, Co. Mayo, 9 fishermen were drowned when their boats were driven against the rocks by the storm. Nine boats set out that afternoon from Lacken Pier to fish for herring; they were 8-metre open boats and were within half a kilometre of the shore when the storm blew up suddenly. The crews of seven boats made it safely ashore, while the remaining two boats were blown towards the cliffs and all eight members of one crew were lost. Off the Mullet peninsula, 10 people from the Inishkea Islands were lost, many of them in their teens. The storm led directly to the abandonment of the islands. Galway county also suffered many losses. According to contemporary reports in the *Connaught Telegraph*, 9 people were lost off Inishbofin, while 26 fishermen were drowned in Cleggan Bay.

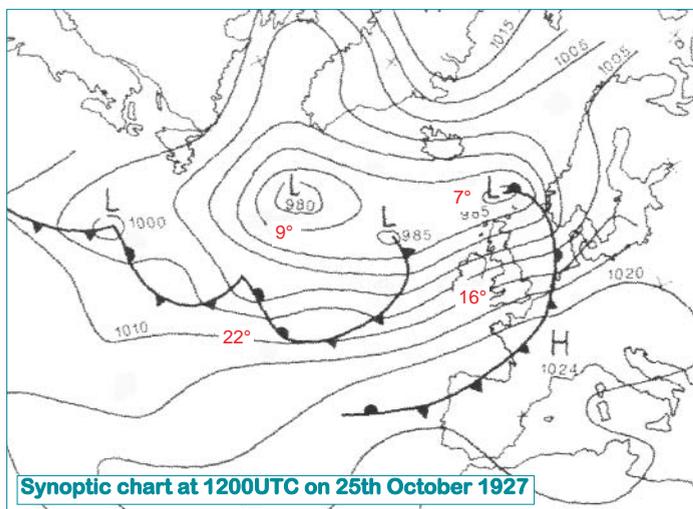
Strong southwesterly winds had blown for several days during late October 1927 as a succession of Atlantic depressions moved across and to the north of Ireland. The observing station at Blacksod Point, near Belmullet, reported continuous winds of between Beaufort force 6 and 8 between the 24th and 28th. Early on the 28th, strong southeasterly winds off the Mayo coast eased for a short while, before a strong northwesterly gale developed in the late afternoon. These winds were associated with a depression of 976hPa, which had deepened rapidly during the day as very cold Arctic air was drawn into the system. The charts below show the Atlantic weather patterns at the time, with the track of the major storm between the 27th and 30th shown below right—also shown in red are some observed temperatures from land and sea. A strong sea surge, the result of the long continuance of southwesterly winds across the Atlantic, contributed to the exceptionally treacherous sea conditions off the west of Ireland. Later on the 28th across the Irish Sea, coastal flooding along Cardigan Bay washed away houses and a railway line, while five people were drowned in the Lancashire town of Fleetwood, where the sea wall was demolished by the storm.



Right: A memorial to the victims of the Lacken disaster (image courtesy www.castlebar.ie)

Below: Atlantic charts showing the development of the storm

(taken from: Hubert Lamb, *Historic Storms of the North Sea, British Isles and Northwest Europe*, Cambridge 1991)



Synoptic chart at 1200UTC on 25th October 1927

