An underwater photograph of a shipwreck, likely the RMS Titanic, resting on the seabed. The image is monochromatic blue, showing the rusted metal structure of the ship's hull and superstructure. The text is overlaid on this image.

THEY NEVER CAME BACK.....

Built on the Tyne

Never to return

Reborn in the Red Sea

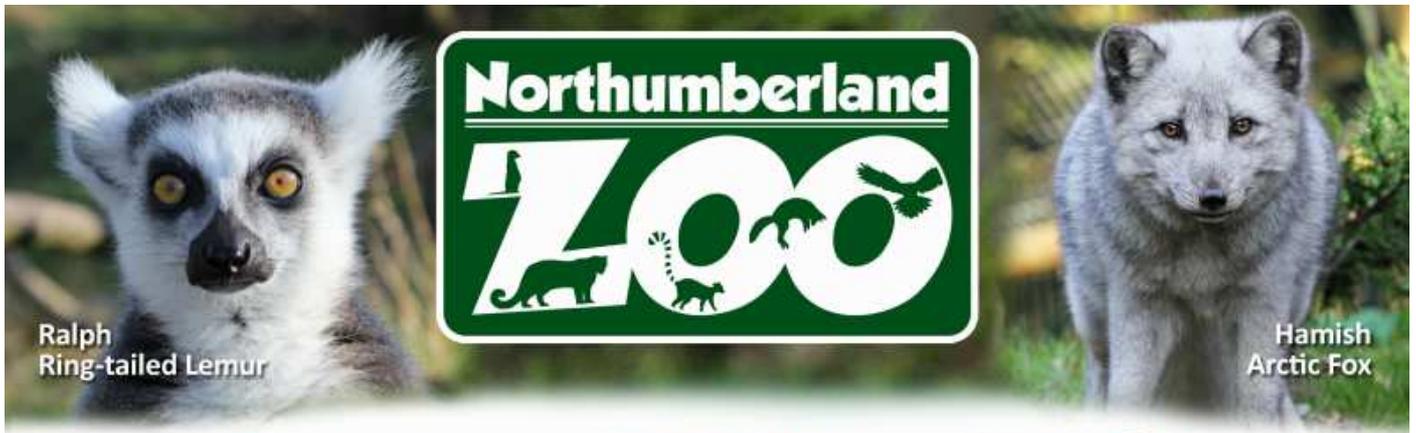
Peter Collings

INTERNATIONAL AWARD WINNING AUTHOR,
PHOTOGRAPHER & WRECK HUNTER

Celebrating 25 years of

THE RED SEA WRECK ACADEMY

Forward by John Womack



Ralph
Ring-tailed Lemur

Hamish
Arctic Fox

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THEY NEVER CAME BACK

by

PETER COLLINGS

CELIBRATING 25 YEARS OF
THE RED SEAWRECK
ACADEMY

FORWARD BY JOHN WOMACK

I am John Womack Snr, BSAC First Class Diver, Advanced Instructor & owner of Otter Drysuits in Yorkshire, having dived the Britannic, Prince of Wales, Repulse and the Victoria plus many more over the last 40 years I would not go anywhere in the Red Sea without one of Peter's guide books. I have been on numerous successful trips of Peter's including wreck searching in Truk Lagoon.

Peter's new book is awesome, there are so many wrecks and to give detailed descriptions of all the wrecks themselves is great, it makes you feel like you have dived them already. I remember doing a night dive on the Thistlegorm which was just fantastic it was pitch black with pin points of light from fellow divers lights. In the south, Peter, Tom and myself went looking for the wreck of the Maidan on Rocky Island, we followed the debris trail down to 65mtrs and there before us was the huge shadow of the wreck hanging over the abyss starting at 80 mtrs. We could only look down in wonder, but we had found what we were looking for after 10 years.

Peter's trips are a must and very much like his trips his books are a must read, Peter is a walking encyclopaedia on all things diving and ship wrecks. A lot of great ships were made in the North East and it comes as no surprise to me that this is where Peter came from too, we have been friends/fellow wreck divers a lot of years and hope to be sharing experiences and books for many more years to come.



John Womack

MD Otter Watersports

Yorkshire.March 2018

[Otter Drysuits, UK](#)

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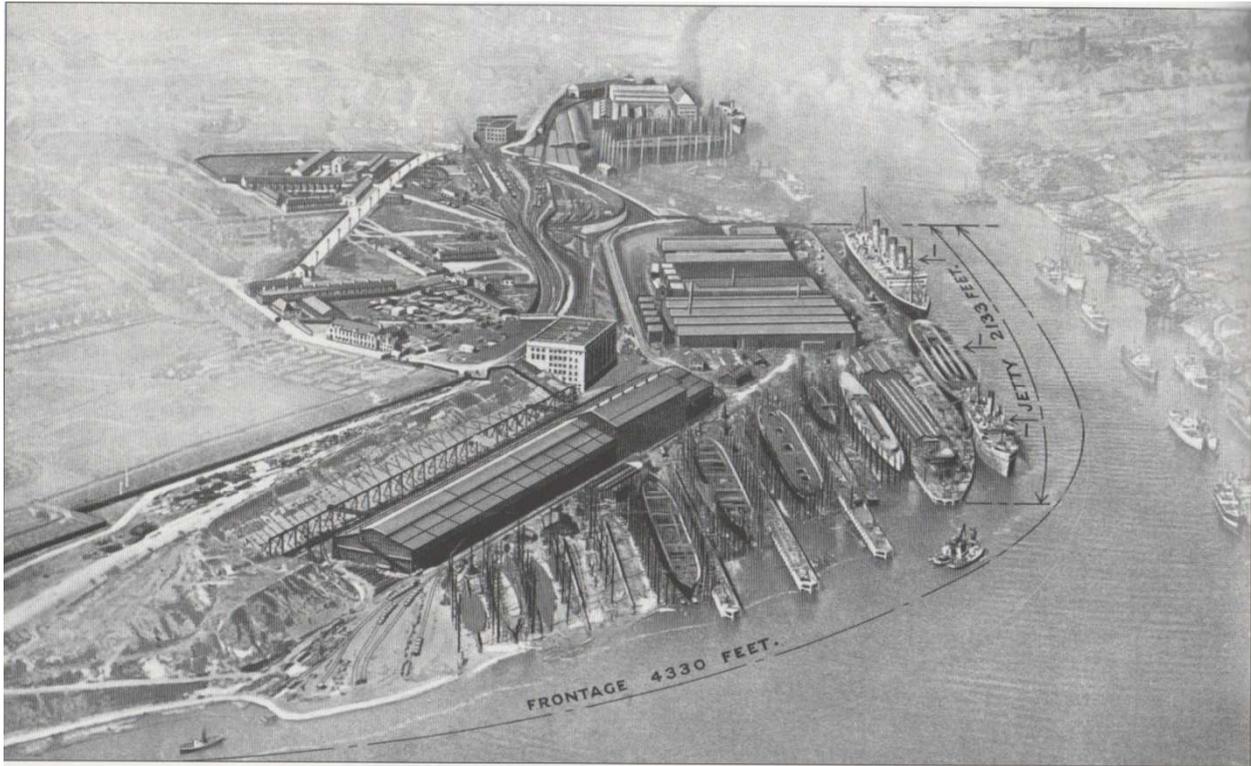
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The Egyptian Red Sea and her Gulfs, showing the approximate position of the wrecks.

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN.....THE COALEYTYNE.....



On February 21st 1814, the vessel Tyneside Steam Packet was launched at Gateshead.

This was to herald in a new era of shipping-steam power. In 1839 Thomas Marshall launched the first iron hulled vessel, The Star, from his yard at the Lawe Top, South Shields.

Between 1860 and 1890 Hawthorn Leslie produced over 40 cargo steamships at their Hebburn Yard. By the turn of the century the river banks were lined with shipyards, dry docks, graving berths and floating docks; perhaps the most famous of all being the Neptune Yard.

By 1903 Wigham Richardson had merged with Swan Hunter and shipyards extended as far up the River as Blaydon (Scotswood Shipbuilding) with other names rising to world renown-Palmers, Armstrong-Whitworth, Vickers-Armstrong, Readheads, and Hawthorn Leslie, to name but a few.

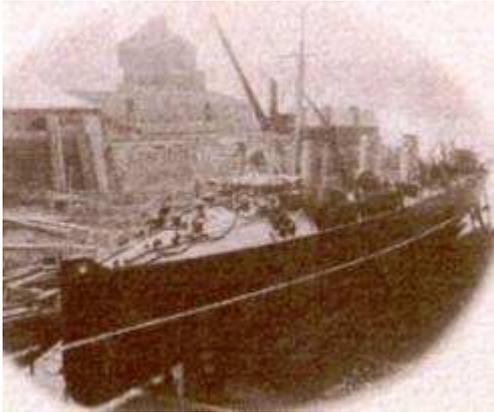
WW1 saw many naval vessels produced and for a few years after the war there was a great demand for shipping companies to replace their lost vessels.

The Tyne was also responsible for the building of warships for both sides of the Russian-Japo war.

During WW2 Readheads alone produced some 35 vessels.

A major pioneering development in marine engineering was the steam turbine, invented by Charles Algernon Parsons.

He patented the first steam turbine on Tyneside in 1884. Parsons, born in Ireland in 1854, was the youngest son of the Earl of Rosse and a keen inventor who worked as Junior Partner in the Tyneside engineering firm of Clarke Chapman. In 1894 Parsons Marine Turbine Company launched The Turbinia, a famous vessel powered by electric turbines.



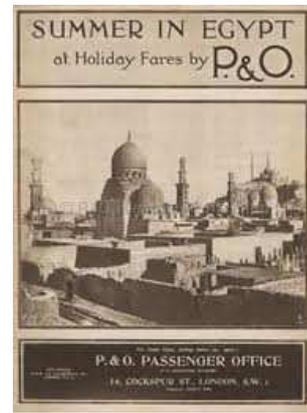
Turbinia was the first steam turbine-powered steamship. Built as an experimental vessel in 1894, and easily the fastest ship in the world at that time, Turbinia was demonstrated dramatically at the Spithead Navy Review in 1897 and set the standard for the next generation of steamships, the majority of which were turbine powered. The vessel can still be



Parsons Turbine engine.



The P&O passenger Liner Ranpura, launched at the Hebburn Yard in 1924. She served on the Tilbury-Bombay run.



"...We built them strong.... We built to last"



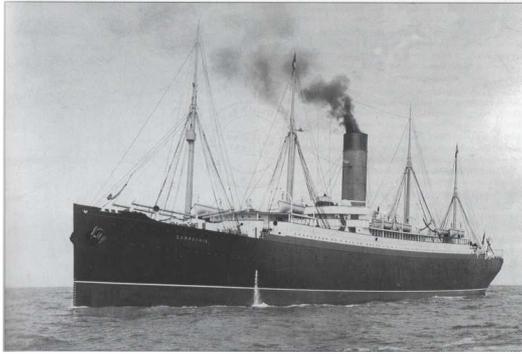
Tyne Ship builders became leaders in building Liners and these magnificent vessels sailed the world's oceans.

"It is possible to sail the world Royally on a great Tyne built Line"

Perhaps the most famous and magnificent of them all was the R.M.S.

MAURETANIA

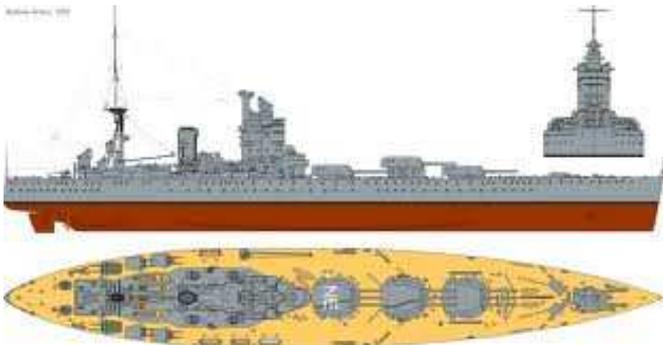
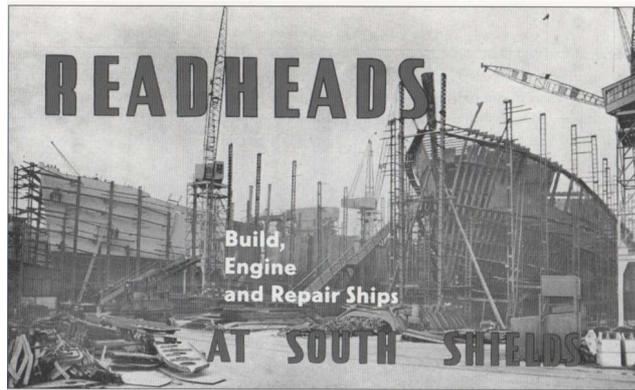
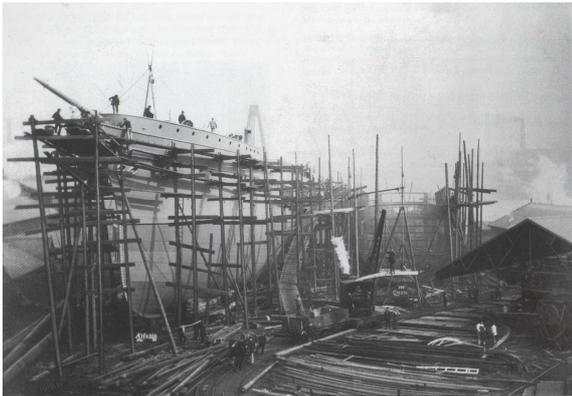




Another Tynes built vessel, the Cunarder SS. Carpathia, 13,56 Ton, was to become synonymous with the sinking of the RMS Titanic, rescuing over 700 people from the sinking. The Carpathia herself ended her career on the Ocean floor on July 17th 1918 after being struck by a torpedo



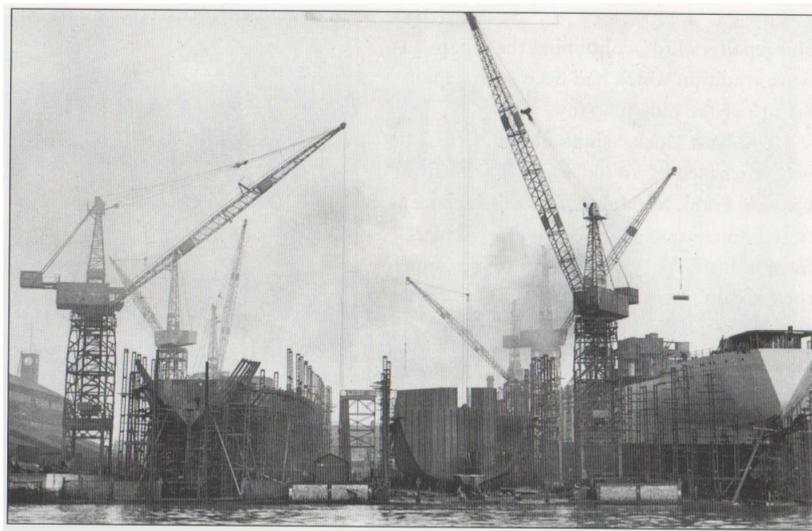
Another ill fate Tynes built vessel HMS Hampshire, the Elswick built cruiser took part in the Battle of Jutland only to be sunk by a mine off Scapa Flow on June 5th 1916. Lord Kitchener was amongst those lost.



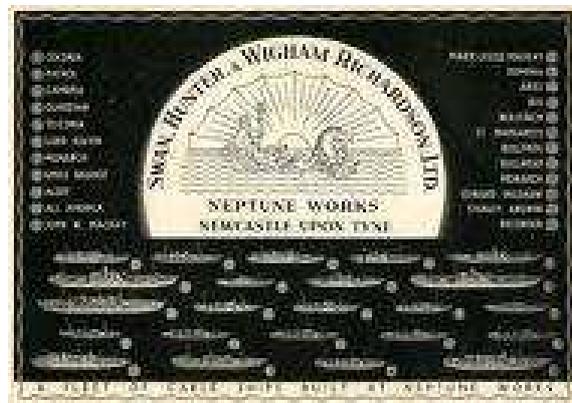
HMS Nelson, an example of the many warships built on the Tyne spanning two world wars. Completed in 1927 she was one of only 2 Revenge Class battleships ever built (the other being HMS Rodney). She was 660ft long, 33950 tons.

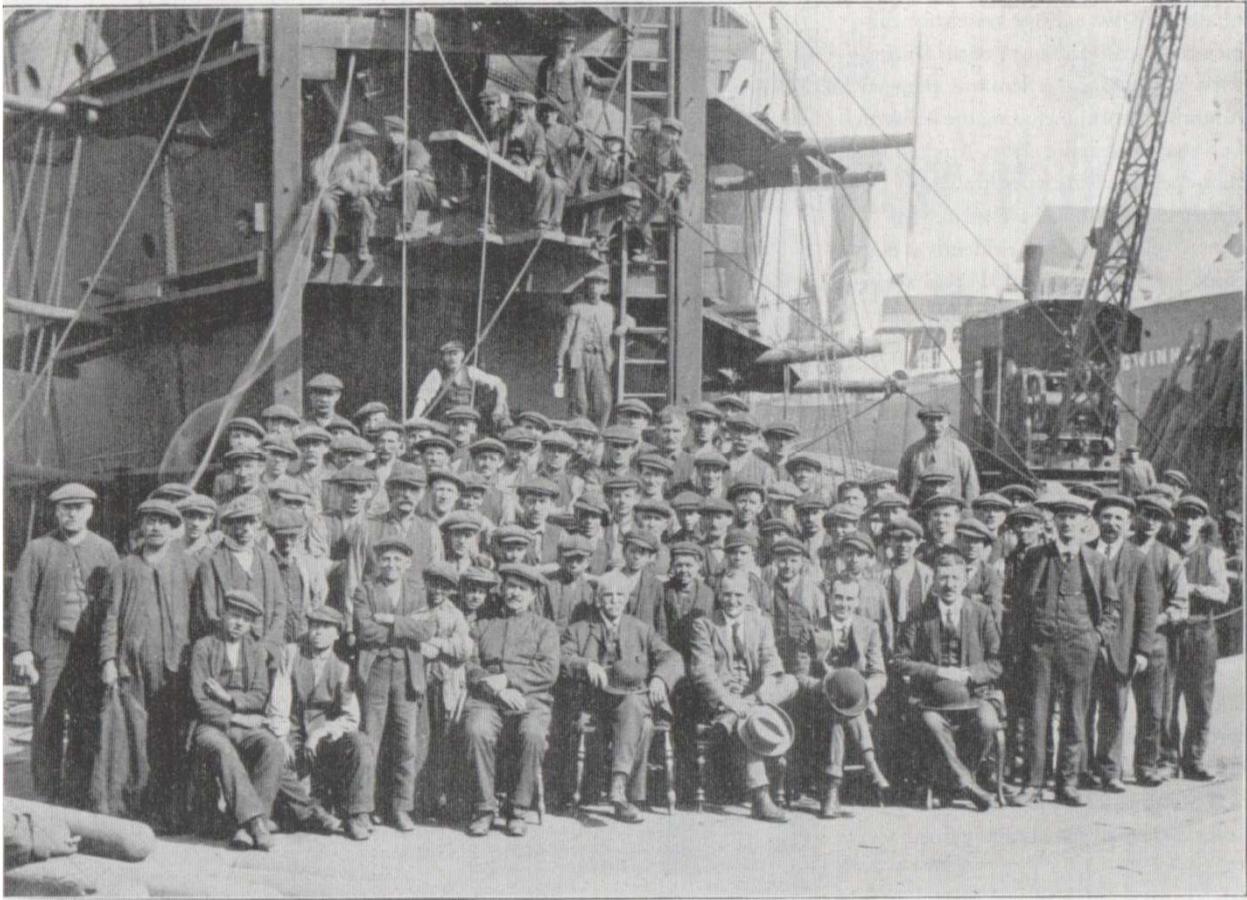


"Neptune was the last to go, I heard it on my radio.....and then they played the latest number one"



"....for this was a big river, I want you all to know...."





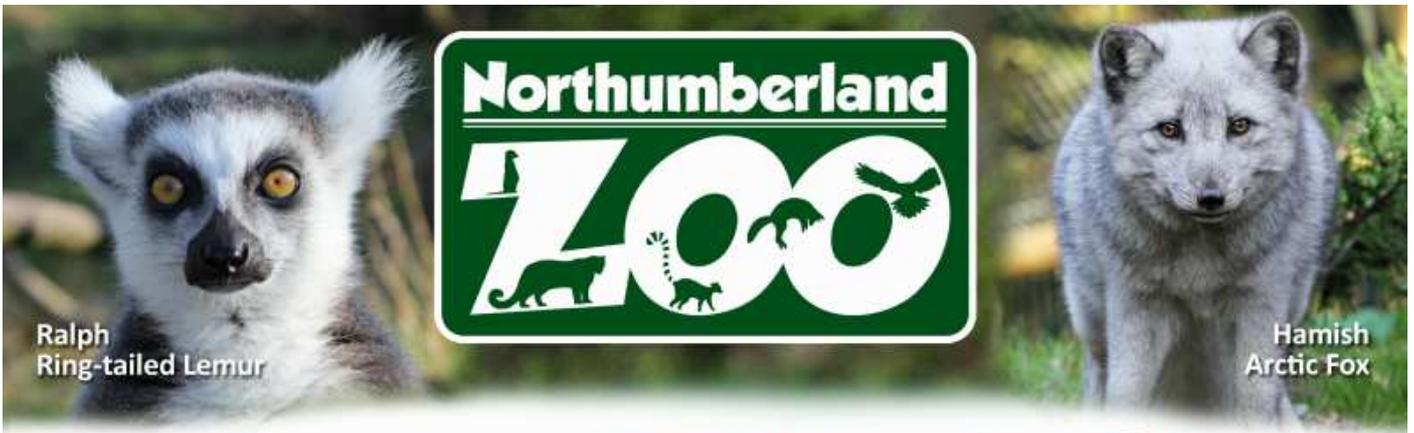
The people of the Tyneside area are often called "Geordies". Tynesiders may have been given this name, a local diminutive of the name "George", because their miners used George Stephenson's safety lamp, called a "Georgie lamp", to prevent firedamp explosions, rather than the Davy lamp used elsewhere.

An alternative explanation is that during the Jacobite risings they declared their allegiance to the Hanoverian kings of Great Britain George I and George II; whereas the rest of the county of Northumberland, to the north, was loyal to James Francis Edward Stuart.



"...the river will rise again....."

Quotations from the Jimmy Nail song BIG RIVER



Ralph
Ring-tailed Lemur

Hamish
Arctic Fox

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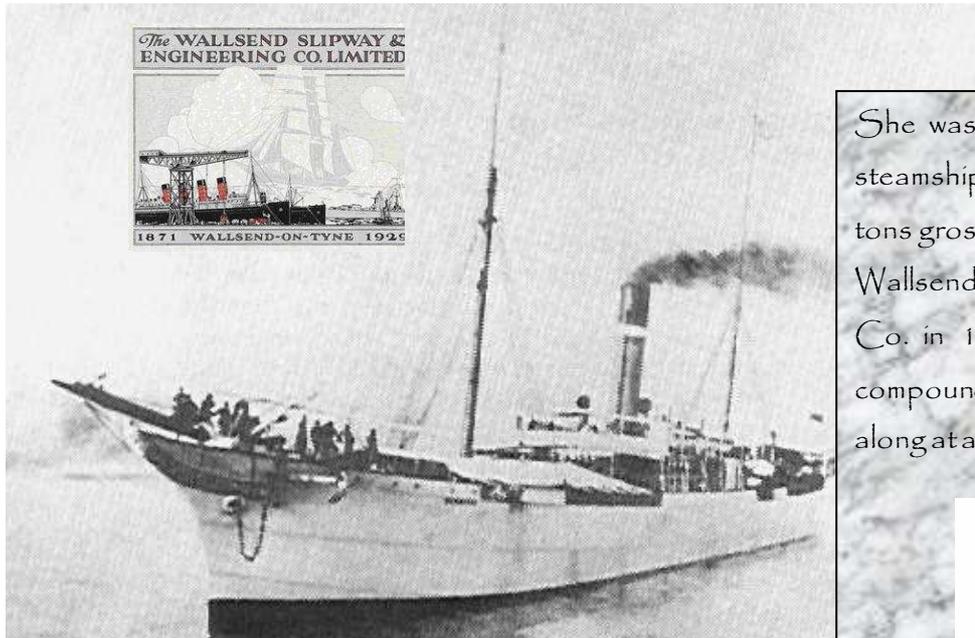
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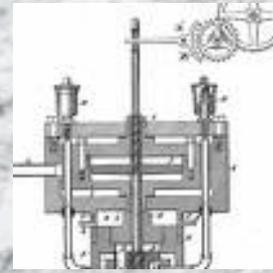
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FIRE AND WATER- THE S.S. CARINA VAL ST. LAMBERT WRECK



She was an iron screw brigantine steamship some 312 ft long and 1095 tons gross, built on the Tyne by the Wallsend Slipway and Engineering Co. in 1886. Fitted with a single compound engine could push her along at a steady 8 knots.



WRECK DETECTIVE

I am often asked how I find a new wreck. There are many answers including luck, but in this case it was a combination of intuition, guess work and ideal conditions. Conditions that would in fact be dangerous before the days of navigation aids, radar and radio

A flat calm sea, no surf, no surf to mark the whereabouts of a reef, no surf to crash onto a reef; a sound which would carry and be a warning in poor visibility. Poor visibility need not be fog or mist. The low lying sun can create many problems when looking out for reefs, especially if it is the 1890's! Land fall comes in the shape of the Sinai Mountains to port and the Egyptian Massif to starboard. No sign of any danger. Ahead lie the islands of Shadwan and Gobul, Sha'ab Ali and two smaller reefs of Shag Rock and Sha'ab Nab (pronounced Sha' Abna).

These factors were responsible for at least one wreck, so why not others? A close look at the chart for the Sinai clearly showed these reef patches had caused the demise of the Kingston, possibly because of the reasons mentioned above.

THE DISCOVERY

So we set off to retrace the route another victim might take. Aided by the mirror calm sea, still air and good sunlight, we travelled north from the wreck of the Kingston, following the reef contour of 8 mtrs at a snail's pace. My skipper was understandably nervous and unconvinced "no wreck here Mr Peter", shaking his head, and keeping a weary eye out for any change in the water ahead. Three of the crew sat on the bowsprit peering into the water. As the skipper uttered for the 5th time "no wreck here Mr...." one of the boys cried out "wreck Mr Peter"! My hunch had paid off. Below us scattered over a large area was the unmistakable form of a fairly large wreck!

THE CLUES

I had no idea what the identity of the ship was, hopefully diving her would give us some clues at least, if not answers.

Scattered over a large area the ship had been very well dispersed. In only 8 mtrs she would have quickly broken up and the superstructure (if indeed she had any) was nowhere to be seen.

She was a steam driven vessel, made of iron with a riveted hull, with several boilers, a typical engine for her day, driving a single prop via a shaft sitting proud of the sea bed still on its mountings. Huge con-rods and bearings were easy to recognise. Her steering mechanism standing high almost to the surface was a huge double cam attached directly to the rudder. I had seen this type of yolk on many early vessels, indeed the system of rods and chains still relied on this yolk assemble.

However on this wreck there were no rods and chains; presumably ropes were used directly from the ships wheel and had long since rotted away. The rounded hull formed an unnatural cave and glass fish as well as three white tip reef sharks had found haven here.

While browsing through some old diving magazines I came across an article about 3 white tip sharks called "3 in a bed", by non-other than Lawson Wood. Perhaps Lawson had stumbled across these remains too. The bow section lying on its port side is quite substantial and both anchors remain, albeit covered in coral and she has a distinctive bow sprit support, square in cross section, partly obscured by coral. Although the bowsprit mast itself has gone the supporting collar or ring is still intact and perfectly round.

Plates obscure rows of handrails and several parts of the wreck have obviously been moved during storms. Further down the slope is what might have been her funnel, although there is no evidence of a steam whistle.

In 1896 the *Compagnie Belge Maritime du Congo* was formed and the *Carina* added to the growing fleet, although she was soon out dated as a modern fleet developed (including the *S.S Leopoldville*)





Cargo is often a clue when identifying a wreck but for a ship of this size we could find very little. She could have of course been carrying perishable goods, been salvaged, or was she in ballast? Further dives would answer all those questions.

We did however find lots of pieces of glass ware (later identified as Belgium, Val St Lambert) and piles of 5" glass squares which had been fused together at the corners; suggesting enormous amounts of heat? Had she been on fire?



Val Saint Lambert is a Belgian crystal glassware manufacturer, founded in 1826. It is the official glassware supplier to H.M. King Albert II of Belgium. Founded by the chemist, M. Kemlin. Val Saint Lambert is well known for its Art Nouveau and Art Deco pieces.



Judging from the coral growths she had sank about the same time as the Kingston and much of the wreck is covered in a healthy coat of hard corals. There must be many more clues hidden beneath the coral.

FINAL VOYAGE

She left Antwerp via Suez bound for Calcutta with a general cargo of “perishable goods” and glass ware.

Heading south past Sha’ab Ali fire broke out; it is thought that the glass may have acted as a magnifier and ignited flammable materials such as wool or cotton products.

As the fire swept through the ship her master ran for shallow water and shelter and failed to see the long shallow reef running between Sha’ab Nab and Sha’ab Ali.

Her bottom torn out, she see-sawed on the reef filling quickly with water, the fire partially extinguished. As the wind increased she swung around until she faced south.

Her crew having a battle against both fire and water began to abandon ship as she capsized onto the seaward side of the reef.

With no hope of the vessel being saved she was abandoned and the crew, some of the injured and burned, were rescued by a passing ship heading for Suez.



DIVING THE GLASS WRECK

Strong currents often flow over the wreck and to that end it is essential that good boat cover is provided and safety sausages are carried. The site is often subject to large swells so calm weather is preferred. With a maximum depth of 14 mtrs, the wreck is ideal as a third dive.



Reef fishes including surgeons are very active on the wreck and it is great for photography when currents allow. The shoal of glassfish which shelter in the bow section are quite spectacular and several jacks can be observed picking off the silversides which hover just above the bow. A huge napoleon wrasse and several Nassau groupers are also residents.

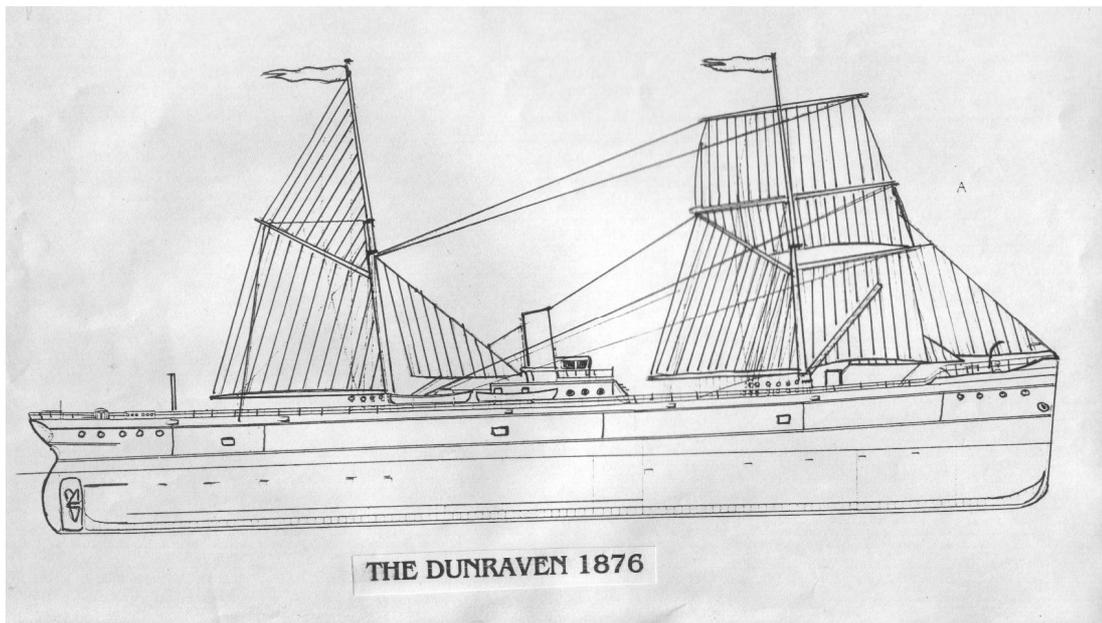
At about 300 ft long there is just enough time to swim from the stern to the bow and back, meandering over the wreck, her flattened condition testimony to the power of the sea.

On several occasions a local pod of dolphins have paid us a visit and have stayed around and played.

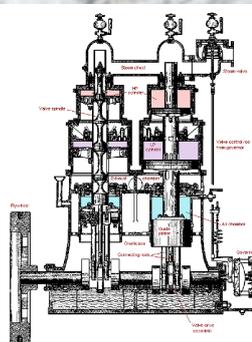


THICK AS A BRICK; IT MAY BE THE TITLE OF A JETHRO TULL ALBUM, BUT THE REPORTS THAT HER CARGO INCLUDED BRICKS IS FARFICAL. THEY ARE HER BALLAST STONES

THE FIRST OF MANY~S.S. DUNRAVEN



The SS Dunraven was built by C. Mitchell and C. Iron Ship Builders, launched in 1873. She was 270ft long, 28ft beam, iron hulled vessel of 1600 tons gross. She was driven by both sail and steam-a primitive 2 cylinder compound engine pushed her along at 8 knots. The ship was owned by W Milburn. And intended for the "spice run"-Britain to Bombay



The 2 cylinder engine fitted to the Dunraven was typically inefficient cylinder and it required two huge boilers to generate sufficient steam to drive the engine under load. Operating pressures were at first very low and sail still had to be used to extend the range of the vessel

In January 1876 she left Liverpool loaded with a cargo of steel and timber bound for Bombay where she was reloaded with spices, cotton and muslin for the return journey.

On 25 April the ship ran aground on Sha'ab Mahmoud, close to Beacon Rock. The crew worked frantically to dislodge her and 14 hours after striking the rock she slid off, unfortunately this motion upset her balance and she capsized.

The second report tells how she held fast on the reef for several days, caught fire, burned for 13 hours and capsized, sliding down the reef to where she lies today. After the incident the Board of Trade held an immediate enquiry and found Captain Care to have been at fault. The board declared him negligent and revoked his Captain's license, the Master's Certificate, for a year.

Discovered in 1979, by Howard Rosenstien, the Dunraven was to become a "World about us" special, and as she was salvaged, artefacts such as Hamilton bottles, mugs, plates and even jars of gooseberries and rhubarb were found.

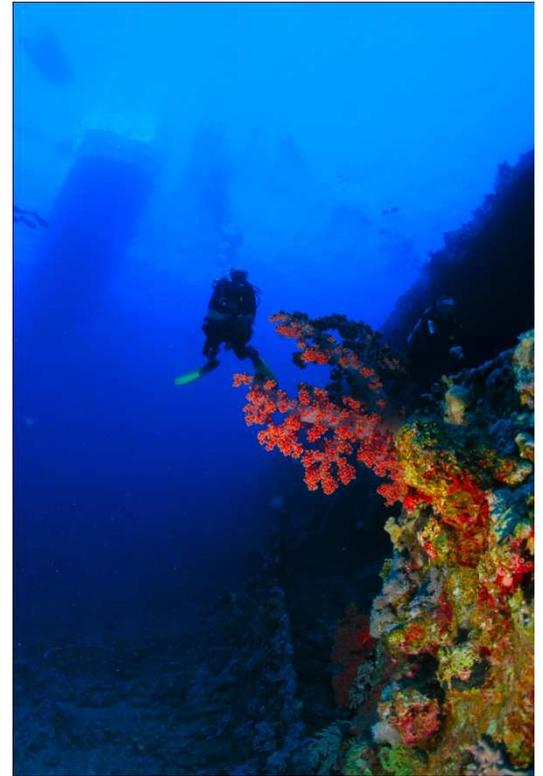


Howard Rosenstien with artefacts recovered from the wreck of the Dunraven in 1979. At first they thought the wreck might have been the Carnatic, until a bronze letter D turned up. There were also rumours that the vessel had been used by Lawrence of Arabia, but the Q ship HMS Dunraven was a different ship altogether. Howard now runs Fantasea Housings in Israel

This wreck is often dismissed as having little to offer, however those who take time to inspect her carefully will be rewarded with a glimpse into an example of a shipwreck from a nostalgic period in maritime history, and to the discerning eye and underwater photographer, she will always be a firm favourite.

The upturned hull is covered in soft corals and still stands proud of the seabed, reaching up to within 18 mtrs of the surface, although certain sections are now collapsing in.

It is possible to enter the wreck at the stern after viewing her distinctive and colourful prop and rudder, groupers and several batfish often hang out here.



Once inside, the huge cathedral like hull allows exploration forward toward a crack in the hull, which allows extra light to penetrate the interior.

Recently a large section of the hull has broken away and indeed the whole hull is in danger of collapse, her decay accelerated by the extra oxygen trapped in the higher reaches of the upturned hull by divers using nitrox.

A victim of her own popularity, large sections of the hull are now sliding down onto the seabed and her ballast stones litter the floor.



Soft corals adorn the hull



Reversing wheel



Intact hard corals



Crows nest



It is possible to swim through the boiler and engine room area, restricted to single file, where her workings are easily identified, fly wheel, gearings, drive shaft and big ends and two huge boilers. Forward of this, a large shoal of glass fish hover above.

Her masts and crows' nest lie on the seabed off her starboard side, making an ideal foreground subject for wide angled shots of the wreck.

The bow section complete with anchor chains is adomed in soft corals both inside and out and is very photogenic.

Batfish, scorpion fish and crocodile fish reside here.

The hull exterior is covered in hard corals and the wreck lies at a slight angle away from the reef, not at right angles as portrayed in some guides.

It is possible to dive the wreck in one go and it is best to start the tour as described below, ending up on the sloping reef behind, allowing for a slow curved profile back to the surface. Moderate currents often prevail over the wreck so good boat cover and safety sausages are advisable.



Long nosed hawkfish

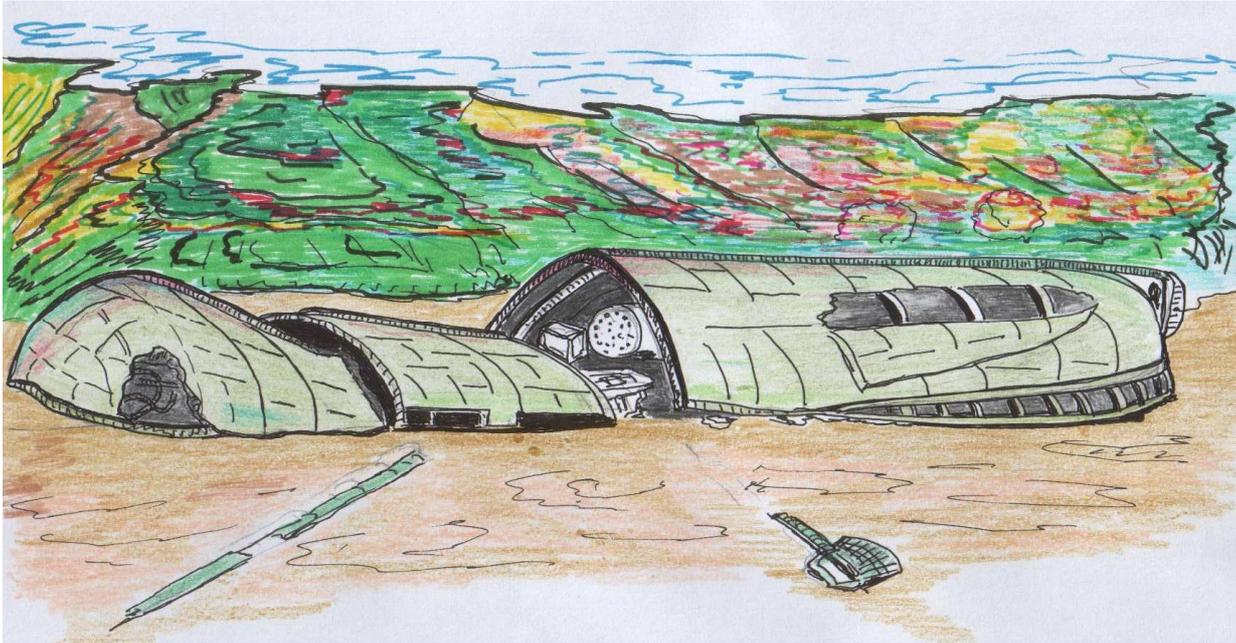
Speckled hawkfish

Crocodile fish

All things considered this is an easy dive to execute. Indeed it is one of the most sheltered wrecks in the area and was always the start of our wreck safaris running out of Sharm.

sandy flat seabed, a good nitrox mix (say EANX32) can safely be used-a shovel would be required to exceed the MOD.

The usual care should be taken with boating traffic overhead. Best to terminate the dive in the bay near the beacon if gas supplies allow!



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OPERATION KESHET AVARA (ARIEL BOW)

~EL QAHER



Built by Vickers Armstrong on the Tyne and launched in 1943, HMS Myngs (R06) saw action off the Norwegian coast. She was fitted with turbine engines and drum boilers capable of some 35 knots. They had a displacement of 1710 tons and were 360ft long, similar in many ways to the successful "C" Class. Her armament included;

4 x 114mm	guns	(4 x 1-DP)	
3 40mm	cannon,	20 40mm pom pom	and 8 torpedo tubes

The border town of Port Berenice, sheltered by the long curving nose of Ras Banas, must have seen some nautical comings and goings over the last 2000 years. The bones of many ships will no doubt lie deep in the sand.

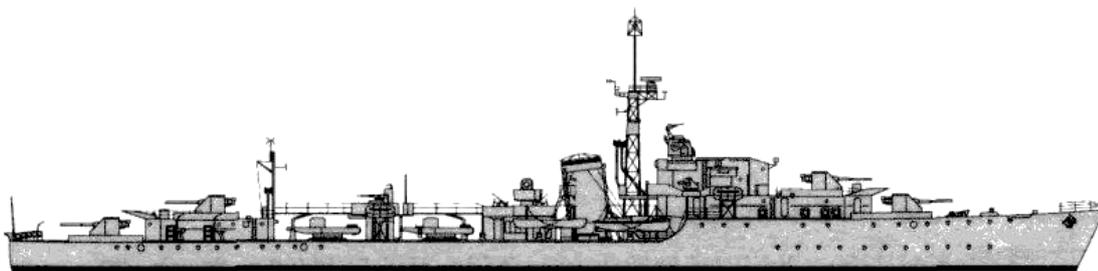
The scant remains of the stem of the Altas seem to diminish as the years go by.

Several other wrecks lie here too, but diving them is very difficult and heavily restricted.

In 1955 the Royal Navy decommissioned several of its "Z" (Zambesi) class destroyers.

These were fast (35knot) vessels, sleek and manoeuvrable and designed primarily as sub chasers.

While many of the vessels were scrapped, four were sold on - Two to Egypt - HMS Myngs (to become the AlQaher), HMS Zenith (to become the AlFatha) and two to Israel, HMS Zealous and HMS Zodiac (to be renamed INS Eilat and Yaffa respectively).



Sold to Egypt in 1955 and renamed the El Qaher, serving in the Egyptian Navy she went through a major refit in 1969-70, with upgraded electronics (Russian) and had returned to her base at Port Berenice to continue her duties. This was the period of the “phony war” between the 6 day war and Yom Kippur wars.



Emblems, flag and Phantom of the Israeli Airforce during Operation Keshet Avira

In May 1970 twelve F4 Phantoms of 201 squadron based in Hattor and 69 Squadron (The Hammers) armed with MK117 bombs attacked the vessel in Operation Keshet Avira (Ariel bow) while it was at anchor.

Bristling with anti-aircraft guns and a new firing tracking system held off several attacks despite being hit by sidewinder missiles and countless rounds from the planes in wing cannons.

With a range of 800 miles the aircraft could sustain a prolonged attack over the target. With a still decimated air force the Israelis carried on the relentless attack unhindered from the air. Fires spread throughout the vessel and internal explosions raked the ship.

Eventually the 300 ft destroyer settled by the stem, her entire superstructure ablaze.

As she sank she swung round on her anchor and grounded on a coral shelf ripping her bow plates open; her draught only 3 mtrs. Thus leaving her fore section and superstructure above water.



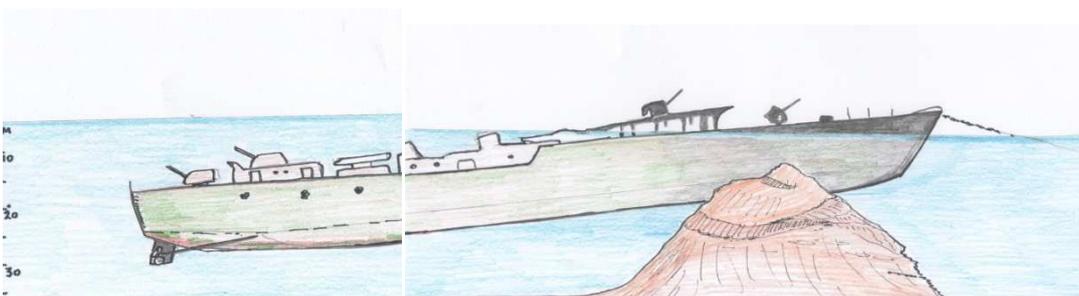
Gone down fighting-defiant to the end-the barrels of the Guns still point skyward

The attack was a direct result of the sinking of one of her original sister ships off Alexandria by the Egyptians.

(SEE EILAT BELOW)

The wreck sits perched on a large rock, her bow and fore guns sticking out of the water. It is possible to swim under her aft keel and view the twin props and rudders adorned with soft corals - maximum depth 27 metres.

Endless dives can be made swimming through her accommodation area, control rooms and view the twin torpedo tubes and stern guns, submerged, complete with shells in the breech, barrels pointed skyward... she went down fighting.



Firing ranging and solution command stations lie away from the wreck-blown off by a tremendous force.



Scattered all around the seabed are parts of the ship blown off during the attack. The sea bed off the wrecks port side suggests the missiles came in from the south—the radio room, firing solution tower and anti-aircraft guns are all blown off the ship and lie on the sandy plateau.

LEFT. The sleek lines of the destroyer can be seen in this shot of her knife edged bow which helped her cut through the water at 35 knots.



LEFT. A high voltage warning sign, still visible, indicates that this structure was her radio room and comms mast, perhaps the first target for the incoming fighter planes.





Many areas of the ships interior can be explored revealing a living museum of war. Caught off guard, all the water tight doors are open and everyday equipment litters the wreck-ear defenders radios, telephone handsets, side arms and many spent rounds.

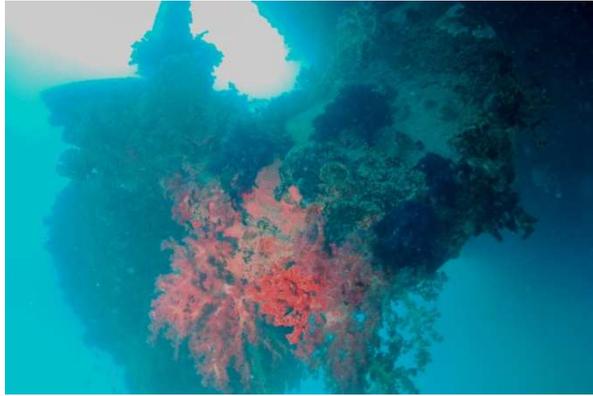
ABOVE: Narrow by definition of her sleek hull, the interior is well lit but demands great buoyancy skills- especially as the floor slopes upwards drawing the diver in to shallow water.

LEFT: Toilets, wash hand, basins and a shower block, all reminders of everyday life on board ship.

BELOW: Torpedo tubes-useless against an airborne attack, empty shell lockers tell their own story.

A diver hovers over one of the anti aircraft guns. Unused ordinance sits on top of gun assembly.





It is possible to swim under her keel-and witness the intrusion of the natural world. Suspended above the seabed her rudder and props are easy to explore.



Located far from the tourist routes, divers can enjoy exploring the armament of this WW2 destroyer from her main armament to her anti aircraft guns.



On deck there is much to investigate, makers plaques help identify the ship and everywhere the colonisation of the structure is evident.

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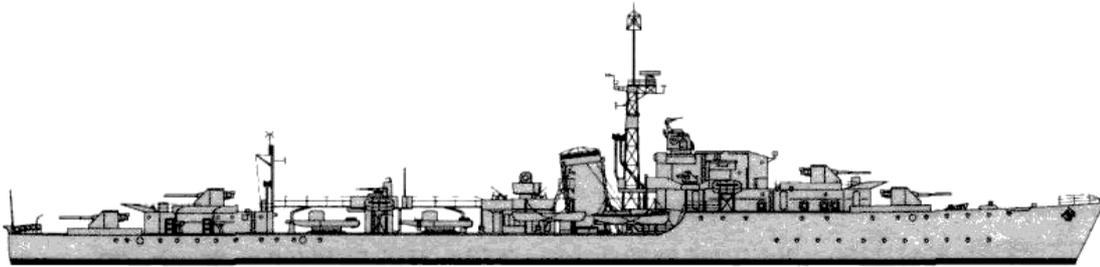
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TWINS AT WAR: THE ISRAELI WARSHIP EILAT



A Zambesi class destroyer built in 1943 at Vickers Armstrong, Newcastle on Tyne. She was 340 ft x 33 ft x 12ft, fitted with twin geared Parsons turbines giving them a speed of 35 knots.



The Israeli destroyer had been the Z Class HMS Zealous, built by Vickers Armstrong during 1943. She was one of many vessels of her type, a fast anti-submarine destroyer. Many of her sister ships had names beginning with Z, thus the classification; Zambesi, Zebra, Zest etc. made them fast and sleek; ideal for hunting and destroying submarines.

By 1955 these vessels were deemed obsolete and surplus to the Royal Navy's needs and were either scrapped or sold off. Two of these vessels HMS Zealous and HMS Zodiac were sold to Israel, and two, HMS Zenith and HMS Myngs (they must have run out of names beginning with Z) to Egypt.

On October 21st 1967 during the Six Day War the Eilat was 14 miles off Port Said when she was sunk with 4 "Styx" missiles from the Egyptian-Komar class missile carrying gunships. Forty-seven of her crew died with many of the 151 survivors injured.

She had been zigzagging in the bay off Romani, in and out of territorial waters, taunting Egyptian radar. A month earlier she had sunk two Egyptian gun boats. She was the first vessel to be sunk by missiles. The wreck has been located in 21 mtrs of water 14 miles north east of Port Said.

69 SQUADRON ISRAELI AIR FORCE.

69 Squadron of the Israeli Air Force (also known as The Hammers) was formed in 1948 and made its combat debut on July 15, 1948 when Israeli bombers struck targets in Cairo, Egypt. In its first ten years of operation, 69 Squadron was composed of former USAir Force B-17 Flying Fortress aircraft, beginning with three B-17s in 1948.

The B-17s were transferred to 103 Squadron in 1954 and were placed in storage for several months in 1956. In October 1956, 69 Squadron was reactivated for the Sinai Campaign but was disbanded at the end of that conflict.

Thirteen years later, in 1969, 69 Squadron was reformed as the second Israeli Air Force F-4E Phantom squadron. Commanded by Avihu Ben-Nun. It was quickly pressed into service in the ongoing War of Attrition. Between late 1969 and the ceasefire of August 1970, 69 and 201 Squadrons lost nine aircraft altogether, although Israel received eight additional F-4E Phantoms in July 1970.

Alongside regular F-4Es, 69 Squadron also employed the reconnaissance variant of the Phantom, the RF-4E. During the Yom Kippur war of 1973, the squadron lost several aircraft. 69 Squadron was disbanded in the mid 1990s

Al Fatha, is currently a billet and training ship of the Egyptian Navy in Alexandria harbour.



INS Eilat

From October 1945 until August 1946 Zealous served in the 4th Destroyer Flotilla as part of the Home Fleet. From 1947 until 1950 she was held in reserve at Devonport. Between 1950 and 1951 she underwent a refit at Cardiff. Between 1953 and 1954 she was held in reserve at Penarth.

She was sold to Israel in 1955 and commissioned into the Israeli Navy as INS Eilat (after the Israeli southern coastal city of Eilat, replacing the earlier INS Eilat) in July 1956. On the morning of 31 October, in the midst of the Suez Crisis, Egyptian destroyer Ibrahim al-Awal, former Hunt-class HMS Mendip, shelled Haifa harbor. A counter-attack by the French destroyer Kersaint and Israeli Yaffo and Eilat forced the Egyptian destroyer to steam back towards Port Said. It was then also attacked by a pair of IDF/AF Ouragans and a Dakota. The crew of the badly damaged vessel finally capitulated, and the ship was towed by the Israelis to Haifa, later becoming the Haifa in the Israeli Navy.

Eilat was on patrol during the night of 11–12 July 1967, when she and two Israeli torpedo boats came across two Egyptian torpedo boats off the Rumani coast. They immediately engaged the vessels and sank both.

Eilat was sunk on 21 October 1967 in international waters off Port Said in the Sinai by three Styx missiles launched by Egyptian missile boats. An Egyptian Komar-class missile boat positioned within the harbour at Port Said fired two

missiles at the Israeli destroyer. Eilat's radar did not reveal any suspicious activity or movements because the missile boat was still inside the port when the missiles were fired. Despite evasive action being ordered by the captain when the missiles were detected, the first missile hit the ship just above the waterline at 17:32 hours. Two minutes later, the second missile struck causing additional casualties. While Eilat began to list heavily, the crew tended to the wounded and engaged in rescue and repair operations while waiting for additional ships of the Israeli Navy to come to her rescue. But around an hour later, another Egyptian Komar-class missile boat from Port Said harbour fired two more Styx missiles at Eilat. The third missile hit Eilat amidships, causing more damage and further fires, while the fourth went astray and crashed in the water nearby. Eilat sank about two minutes later. Out of a crew of 199, 47 were killed and more than a hundred were wounded.

Aftermath of the sinking

The sinking just months after its defeat in the Six Day War caused brief jubilation in the Arab World and crowds gathered to cheer the two missile boats upon their return to Port Said. In Israel, angry crowds surrounded Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin and newspaper editorials demanded vengeance. Sixty-seven hours after the attack Israel retaliated by shelling Port Suez with heavy mortars. Two of the site's three oil refineries were destroyed with the smallest one left standing. The refineries produced all of Egypt's cooking and heating gas, and 80% of its oil. Other areas of the city were hit. Israel ignored or pleaded "technical difficulties" to UN requests for a ceasefire. The Soviet Union sent seven warships on a "courtesy call" to Egyptian ports to dissuade Israel from further attacks.^[8]



A set of torpedo tubes removed from Eilat before her sinking are preserved at the Clandestine Immigration and Naval Museum, Haifa, and a Monument to the Fallen of INS Eilat was established just outside the Museum, the work of sculptor Igael Tumarkin

Monument to the Fallen of INS Eilat, Haifa. Sculptor: Igael Tumarkin (Credit: Dr Avishai Teicher)



The sinking of Eilat by surface-to-surface missiles inaugurated a new era in the development of naval weapons and the formulation of naval strategy throughout the world. Though not highly publicized at the time, the sinking had a considerable impact on the Israeli Navy. Israel started to develop plans for German influenced ship designs better suited to missile combat, principally small and efficient boats armed with missiles, able to patrol Israeli shores and undertake offshore operations at high speed, while at the same time able to evade enemy tracking and missiles. The resulting focus on new, more agile, missile-armed boats would reap major benefits for the Israeli navy some six years later during the Yom Kippur War.

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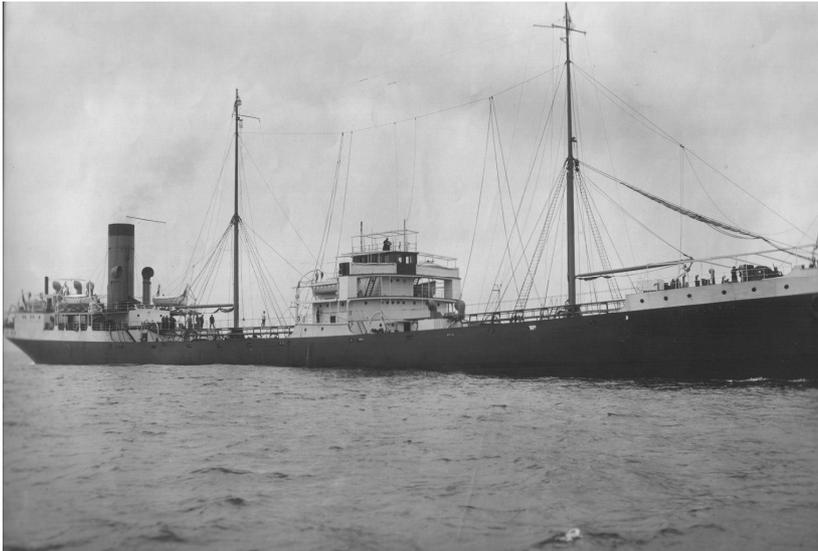
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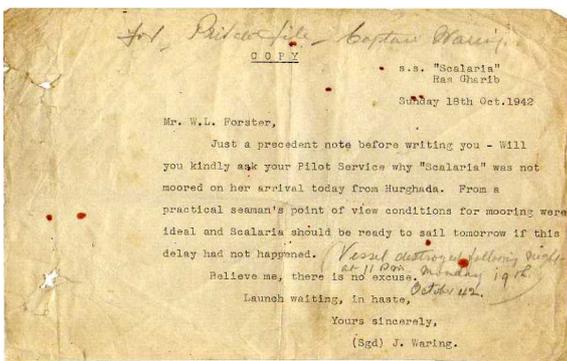
THE SHIP

Built in 1922 for the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Co at Swan Hunters, Newcastle, this 5683 ton steam tanker was 411 ft long, 55 FT beam and 30 FT draught, capable of 10 knots and fitted with triple expansion engines built by the Wallsend Slipway engineering co. She was requisitioned in the Admiralty services and armed with 1 4", 1 12pnr 2 twin Lewis 4 Hotchkiss and one Breda. She had a crew of 52 including 4 navy gunners.

Captain J. Waring "We sailed from Hurghada at 06:30 on 18th October 1942, arriving off Ras Gharib at 1530 the same day, to load with crude and then proceed to anchorage "B". I hoisted a signal to be moored without delay, conditions then being favourable. At 1615 I was informed that the vessel could not be moored until the following morning".

THE FINAL VOYAGE

Next morning the Scalaria docked and started to load 7000 tons of crude oil. At 1750 Waring received an instruction to house his balloon and not fire on any aircraft as there was to be a practise flight with lights burning between 2000 and 2200hrs.



Unheeded warning;

The Captain's concerns for his ship are clear in this message to his superiors-expressing his concerns at the unnecessary delay in loading his ship. Within hours of sending the vessel was attacked and sunk by German aircraft.

THE SINKING

CAPTAIN J WARING *"At 2215 I made the rounds of the ship, saw the gunners at their posts. At 2230 I retired to my room, being awakened at 2230 by an attacking Heinkel 111 approaching from the land, roughly westward. The aircraft circled at approximately 100 ft, then dropped a torpedo which struck the ship on the starboard side abaft of the bridge in no. 3 tank. There was a terrific explosion which caused the ship to shudder violently and carried away the stern moorings, causing the ship to swing round from north to south. All the woodwork in my room collapsed and the iron frame twisted, jamming the two doors. By sheer force I burst one door open and on reaching the deck saw the whole of the after starboard side of the deck was ablaze, with burning oil pouring from the ships side and drifting aft."*



"At this point the Heinkel lined up for another attack, this time releasing a bomb. Some of the men were trapped aft and ran up onto the poop others on the fo'c'sle slid down ropes over the bow."

Waring *"I was about to shout to these men when a bomb struck the foredeck with a terrific explosion. I was badly burned and injured by this bomb and saw it was no use trying to get the men to come amidships as the whole foredeck was now blazing furiously".*

"I could not get to the ships papers as my cabin was completely wrecked and flames were coming up the accommodation ladde".

Aided by the Chief Officer, and although badly wounded, Waring lowered the midships life boat. The bo'sun and chief steward made it into the boat as Waring and the Chief Officer slid down the falls. With only the Chief Officer and the bo'sun uninjured they were unable to progress forward to rescue other crew members in the water due to the weight of the boat and strong currents.



WARING:

"As we drifted I called out to the men on the poop to jump or throw us a rope but they were too slow. By the stern buoy we could see more men calling out and we picked up six more crewmen. Even with this extra manpower we were unable to row against the wind, sea and current. I was thankful to see a launch approach from the foreshore which picked up all remaining survivors"

2ND OFFICER ARMATAGE:

*"I was 2nd officer on the tanker *Scala*ria about 11pm I was thrown out of my bunk by a terrific explosion. Altogether we were hit by 4 bombs. The ship was like an inferno. I noticed the 3^d officer unconscious. I picked him up and made my way forward. We joined others on the foc's'le and lowered the anchor cables, went over the side and hung onto them with the ship blazing above our heads"*

"It was instinct I suppose, as I reached the open air there was a second explosion. All together we were hit by 4 bombs-and we were heavily loaded with crude oil.

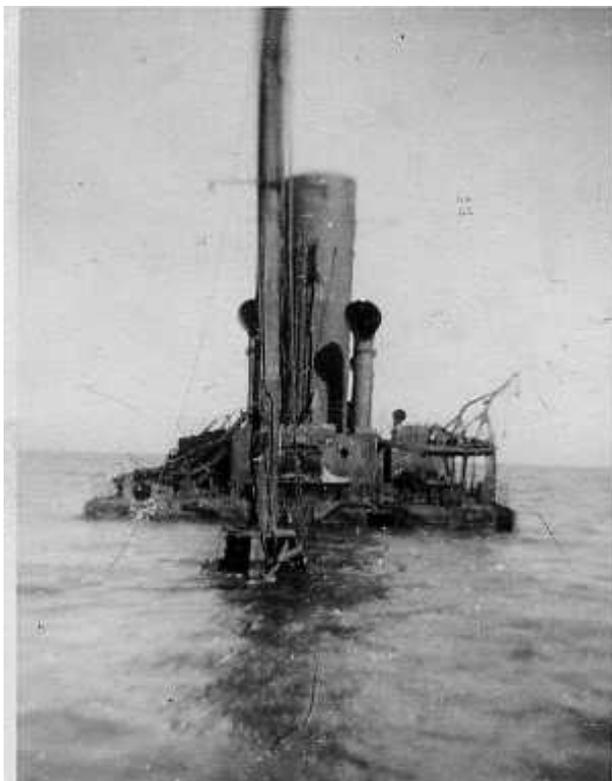
The ship was like an inferno. Making my way along the deck, I noticed the third mate unconscious. I picked him up and made my way f'ward.

I wasn't really walking through flame the flames were following us all the time.

Many of the crew had gone forward. There was no question of being able to stay on the ship So we lowered the anchor cables and hung on them in the water as the ship blazed above our heads"

For his bravery Armatage was awarded the MBE and the Lloyds Medal

As the ship blazed she settled on an even keel her gutted centre island, accommodation and engine house totally gutted.



The morning after-Captain Waring inspects his lost ship.

THE DISCOVERY

Armed with this detailed information and hydrographic reports, three expeditions were carried out to locate the wreck. By the third trip we had located several other wrecks (Aboudy, Attiki, Bakr, Birchwood, Elliot, Gemini, Laura Security).

These findings have allowed us to eliminate several suspects.

Scalaria was by far a bigger ship and by the third trip we had a pretty good idea where she was. 411ft and 5600 tons of ship on a sandy bottom a big clear target.

Members of Brighton SAC joined me in the search and we found her a mile north of our "guesstimation".

Even before we dived her I knew this was the Scalaria-there was her bow facing south just as J Waring had stated.



The bow and fo'c'sle were found upright broken off from the main section. Iron framework and ladders helped define the section of ship. From here back to the centre island was a dispersed area of huge proportions with her valve-ing and pipe work twisted, distorted and mangled amongst sectional framing and bulkheads over an area of 200ft x 50ft. Portholes, deck fittings and winches lay scattered in a chaotic scrapyard of metal. Her bow is sitting



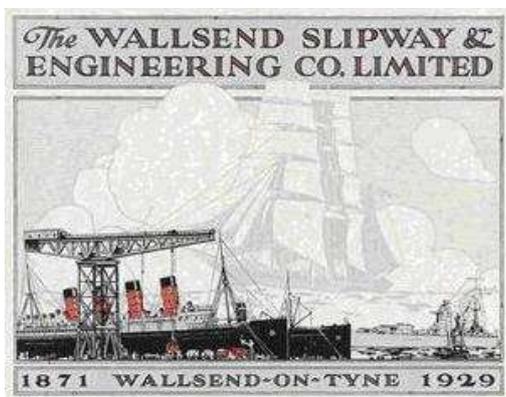
upright on the sea bed, pointing south, bearing testimony to the Captains account of the ship swinging round on her mooring. At anchor ships would normally be facing north into the prevailing wind.



Where the centre island had been, the wreckage stood almost to the surface with more large sections of her holds standing upright. More evidence of the massive explosions in the form of huge sections of steel holed outwards forming overhangs for fish and encrusting species. The stern, like the bow is upright reaching to within a few feet of the surface, her propeller long since salvaged, but leaving no doubt as to the size of the vessel.



Three huge boilers mark the aft section of the vessel. With the engine house gone, the triple expansion engine lies bare, big ends, con rods and a huge reversing wheel are easily located and recognised.



PROOF OF ID. It was amongst the plates, gratings and pipes which had been the engine room that we found absolute proof that would keep any sceptics quiet. The engine manufacturer's plate lay upside down amongst the debris covered in concretion and half buried. Exhumed, and cleaned it was to read "Wallsend Slipway and Engineering Co Ltd Newcastle On Tyne 1921" "Engines No 843"



Tools of a trade: spanners still hang in the aft workshop, a poignant reminder of shipboard life

POSTSCRIPT

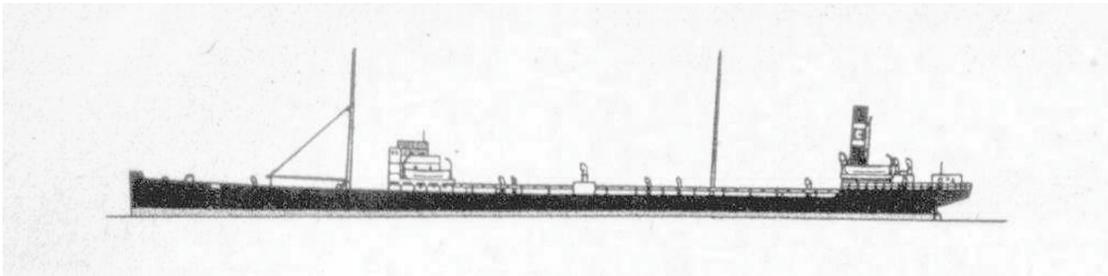
At a Board of Trade enquiry on the 12th October 1943 Captain J Waring further stated:

"On finding the ship would be delayed overnight I pointed out the danger of this delay which was in my opinion quite unnecessary and in my opinion resulted in the loss of my ship as we would have sailed in safe conditions to anchorage B by 1000 on the 19th Oct".

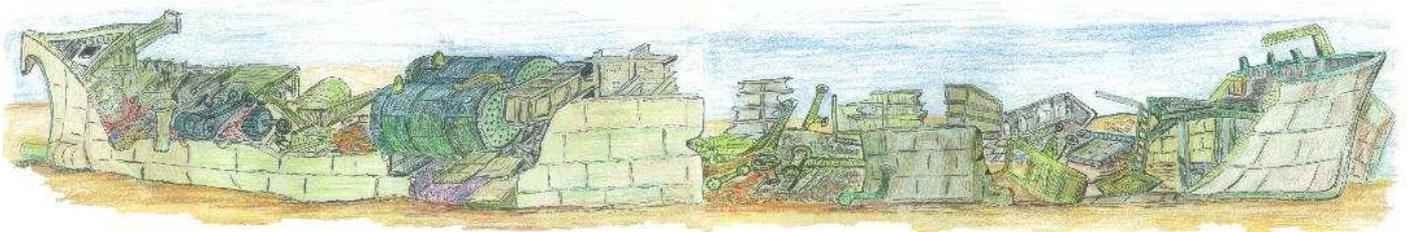
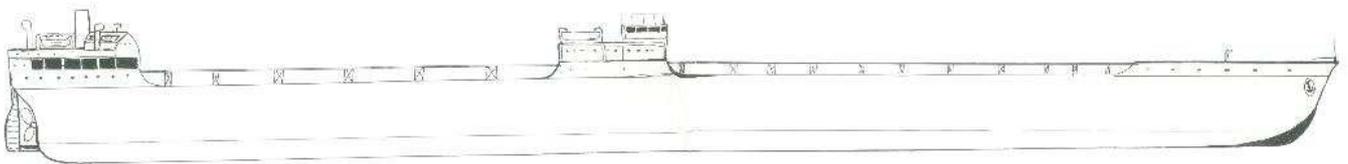
"All of my crew behaved well throughout, and carried out their duties without fear or panic".

"I would especially mention 2nd officer Armatage for his very gallant action in assisting the badly wounded 3rd officer through the flames to the fo'c'sle head.

He was undoubtedly responsible for getting this officer safely away from the burning vessel, but I regret to say the 3rd officer later died in hospital"



A sketch of the Scalaria from an identification logbook belonging to the Captain of a German submarine, hunting for the ship.

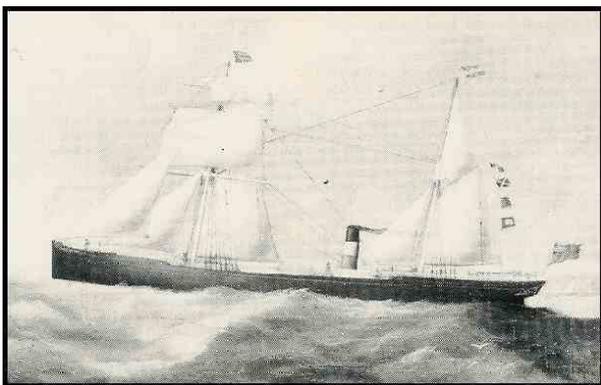
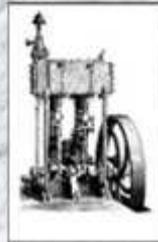
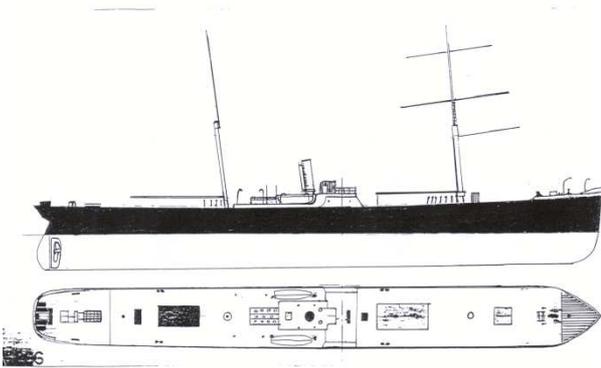


THE ULYSSES



THE VESSEL:

The Ulysses was built at the Leslie yard on the Tyne for the Ocean Steamship Company. She joined other vessels on the fleet with Greek Mythology theme; amongst them Achilles, Ajax, Hector, Priam, Menelaus, and Sarpedon. She was launched in 1871, and described as an "iron hulled single screw steamship" and was 310 ft long with a 30 ft beam, a draught of 20 ft and grossed 1900 tons. Like the Camatic, Dunraven and Kingston she was rigged for sail, with a single 2 stroke, 2 cylinder steam engine capable of producing 225 HP driving a single iron propeller.



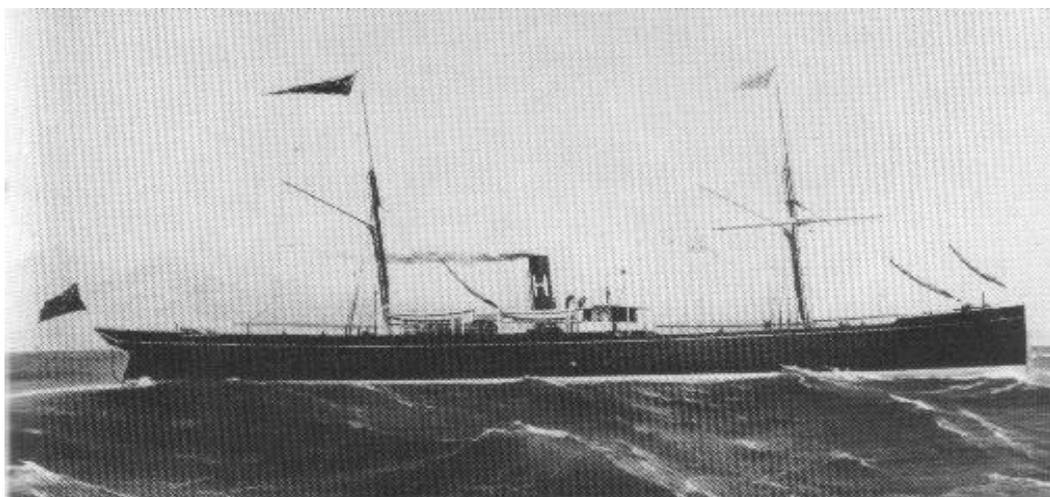
The Board of Enquiry records show that she left London docks in August 1887 bound for Penang via the Suez Canal. The Captain was unfamiliar with these waters. Two days out of Suez found the

Ulysses clear of Sha'ab Ali. The calm seas and light air meant that many of the uncharted reefs were invisible; no line of white surf; no sound of waves breaking over a reef.

In the early hours of the 16th, the Ulysses struck Gobal Seghir. At first it seemed that the damage was slight and the pumps could easily handle the small amounts of water being taken on. Regarding the incident as nothing more than an unfortunate grounding, the captain decided to wait and seek help from any passing ship. Just before daybreak the lights of the British Steamship "Kerbela" came by and raised the alarm on reaching Suez. Stuck fast on the reef the captain refused to jettison any cargo, convinced the vessel would eventually be pulled free. For four days the vessel grounded on the coral, slowly the coral ground its way through the iron hull. By the 18th, the sea had got up and the stern was down, her stern rails and steering gear awash. The following day, escorted by HMS Falcon, two barges with salvors arrived from Suez. Crews from all vessels now worked in the hot sun to unload the cargo, but soon the pumps failed.

As the wind got stronger the barges moved inside bluff point for fear of being swept onto the same reef by the mounting swell. That meant the cargo had to be man handled over reef, lagoon, sand spit, more coral, then out to the barges. Despite these gallant efforts which lasted nearly two weeks, the ship began to slip back off the reef with her bowsprit slowly reaching for the sky. She was abandoned and left to her fate.

By the 5th September the stern was on the seabed, 27 mtrs below and the ship broke her back, her fore section on top of the reef was relentlessly pounded by the waves and has now become totally disposed over the shallows.



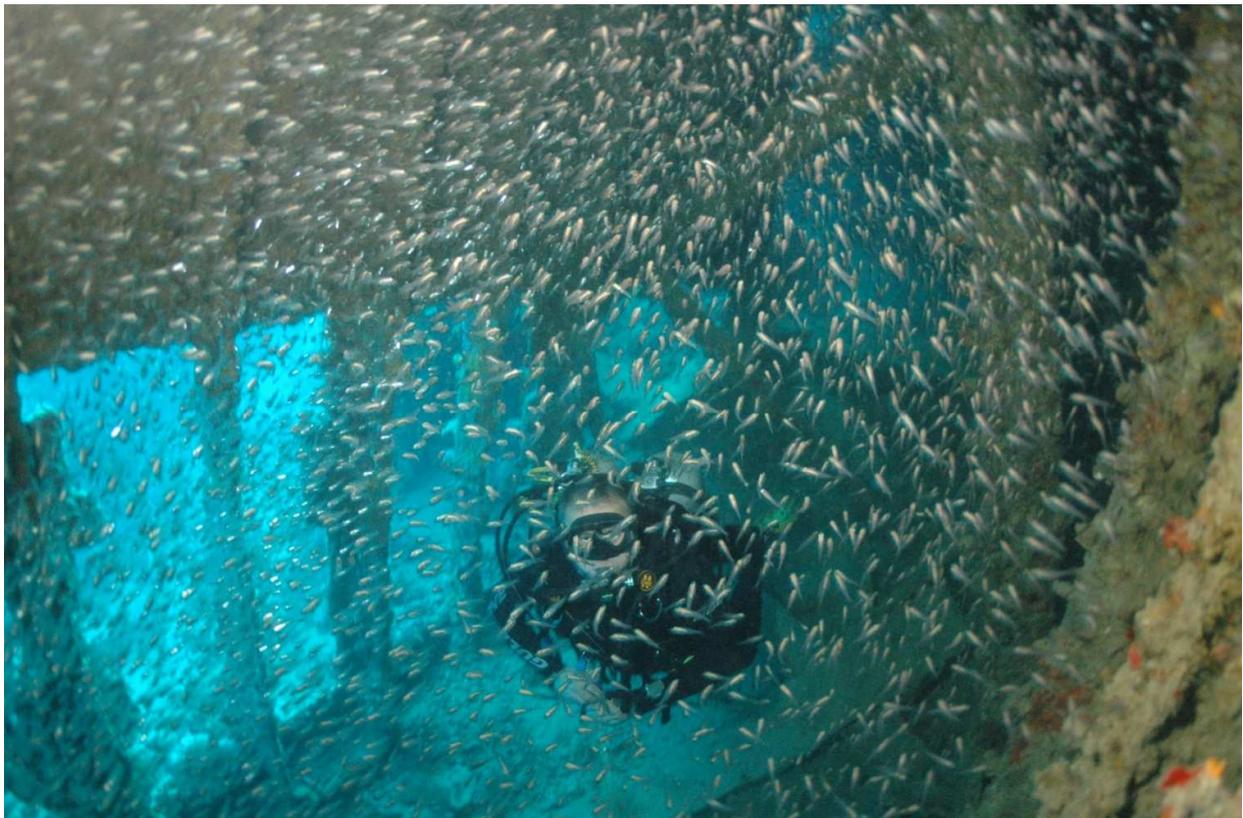
Ulysses sister ship Hector, built at the same time and bearing the first letter of her name on the funnel, a fleet signature.

IDENTIFYING THE WRECK

For many years the wreck's identity remained obscure. Known only as "the cargo boat at Gobul Segeira".

Gradually the list of “suspects” was reduced as contenders such as the Kingston, Carina and indeed the Carnatic were identified. The first two by myself and the latter by Lawson Wood. (The Dunraven was identified back in the mid-seventies, of similar style she could easily have been a contender).

In the late eighties I obtained a set of books affectionately known as Dodas: The Dictionary of Disasters at Sea during the age of Steam. Therein was a record of the Ulysses “aground at Gobul”. It took several more visits to the wreck before she finally confirmed her identity to us. The steamship companies name on a piece of crockery, confirmed along with close inspection of the drive system and power unit as well as the remains of the cargo. Dodas also told us where she was built in the North East of England, where more evidence of her identity was to come to light.



Her beautiful rounded stem lies in 29 mtrs, embedded in sand, with her hull open to the sea lying on her port side. Her prop and rudder, still intact and are covered in a luxuriant gown of soft corals and the hull

and keel form a cave in which huge groupers lurk and are covered in corals sponges, hydroids and anemones.

The hull itself forms a current point and is a great place to observe trevallies and jacks marauding. The hull also forms a v-shaped area with the reef and here resident crocodile fish can be observed along with superb fan corals with resident long nosed hawkfish. Some of the cargo lies scattered around the seabed, covered in lush soft corals. Midship and aft sections are totally accessible, as all the planking has long since been devoured by marine worms. In this respect she is not unlike the Camatic, with iron cross braces for each deck forming a criss cross pattern; stunning when viewed from inside and some of her general cargo remains inside. There are also branches of the delicate black coral growing here so care is needed when entering the hull. Forward the bow and fore sections are mangled up with the remains of the older wreck.

Inside the hull the huge fly wheel and engine can be observed. Dead eyes, bollards, winches and railings, even a bath and the steering assembly can still be seen. Back in the bow section the almost obligatory glass fish hang in clouds with lionfish ever vigilant. Scorpion fish too are in abundance and the entire wreck is a delight for the photographer. Strong currents can be experienced flowing over the wreck so good site knowledge is essential. The shallows are teeming with fish including tangs, surgeons and triggers which dart in and out of the scattered remains in only 2 mtrs.

STUNNING MARINE LIFE

The wreck is a haven of life; turtles, several types of moray eels, surgeon fish, scorpion fish, anthias fusiliers, sweepers and glass fish, each with their own patch. The inevitable but fierce clown fish, plus for the sharp eyed diver, frogfish and ornate ghost pipefish.

A host of nudibranchs, plurobranchs and flatworms, while jacks, trevallies and tuna patrol the surrounding waters, especially off the stem. Add to all of this a covering of lush corals, both hard and soft, you have a paradise for bug hunters and photographers alike. Perhaps the reason for this is that the wreck itself lies on one of the very best reefs in the Sinai area, that and the brisk current which sweeps past the wreck.



RED SEA PIRANAHS

Huge shoals of sergeant majors patrol the wreck, and in the past few years we have noted a strange phenomenon. Observed from the surface these fish shoal and go about their business like any other reef fish, but as we approach the wreck wearing scuba they take on the persona of.....Piranahs and appear to devour sections of the wreck! They gather in huge swarms.... clouds..... gangs..... is there a collective for frenzied sergeant majors?

At first we thought they may be stimulated into a feeding frenzy and were eating either egg masses or algae. The most recent suggestion is that we are scaring away another species which is guarding its eggs and the majors are simply using the opportunity to have a feast. Whatever the reason behind this behaviour, it provides superb video and still's footage at close up range, as close as you want mate these fish ain't movin.



VISITORS BY DAY

Several years ago we always buzzed by 3 dolphins whenever we dived the Ulysses. They gave us a "oh just divers" look and bugged off! Then one day they brought along a calf. The behaviour was quite amazing. The "guardians" brought the calf right up to us and seemed to be teaching the youngster about these fumbling "inadequates" from above. We all felt like we were behind bars in a zoo. The gestures and noises from the adults left us in no doubt this was baby biology lesson!

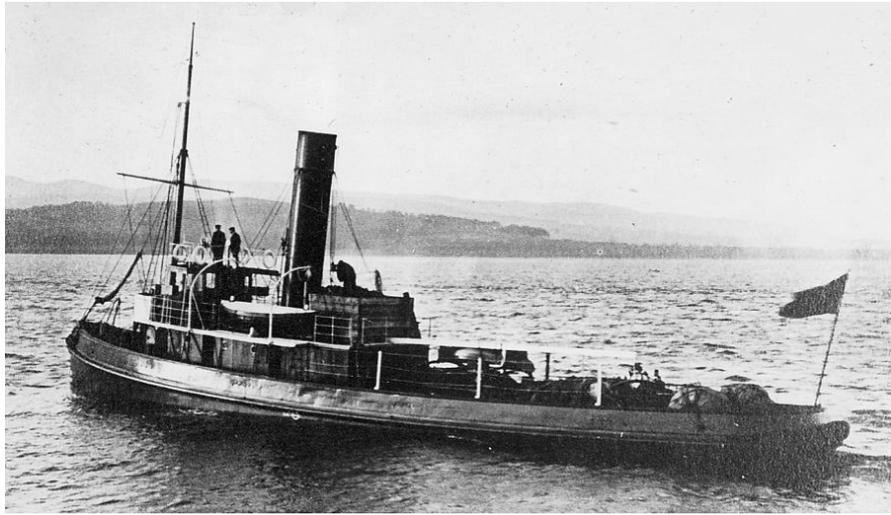
Since then on almost every occasion we have had 20 minute encounters with a pod of 30 plus playful bottle nosed dolphins. The *Ulysses* is now dubbed the dolphin wreck.



The Island of Gobul along with Tawilla, Quisum and Cadour forms a huge natural anchorage with only a narrow channel to the north and coral patches to the south. It is relatively shallow (50 mtrs) and has very little tidal flow. An ideal anchorage for large ships.

The lack of tidal flow means the area is sandy and silty so reduced visibility and coral growth prevails. Soft corals are absent and the encrusting life very different to the spectacular reefs on the Eastern side of Gobul.

Indeed much of the life on the next wreck begs a visit from marine biologist. Here they will find a truly unique eco system and a spectacular wreck. Diving conditions are therefore often more favourable here when it is rough elsewhere. This wreck is far from the tourist routes and is rarely dived and therefore does not suffer from local pilfering.



THE LOSS OF THE S.S. BELMORE

The "Belmore," Official Number 115720, was a steel screw steam yacht used for towing purposes, formerly named the "Flying Scout," built at South Shields in the year 1902 by Messrs. J. P. Rennoldson & Sons, South Shields, and was of the following dimensions: "Length 106 feet, breadth 22 feet, and depth in hold 9.3 feet, and was 168.29 gross, and 3.04 registered tonnage. She was fitted with compound direct acting inverted cylinders of 98 n.h.p., her estimated speed being 12 knots, and was owned by Mr. James Fenwick, of Sydney, New South Wales,

The "Belmore" was on the voyage to Malta in good and seaworthy condition as regards hull and equipments. She was surveyed and passed by the Board of Trade surveyor at Greenock before leaving that port, which she left on the 30th of May, 1908, bound for Sydney, New South Wales, with a crew of 12 hands all told (and no passengers), under the command of Mr. Charles Murchie, who held a certificate of competency as master, No. 09867.

"On the voyage to Port Said she appeared very tender, causing her to ship water which saturated the coal stowed in bags and bulk on the after deck. She arrived at Port Said on the 16th of June last, and after coaling, according to the evidence, the vessel was much deeper than when leaving Malta. Her Plimsoll mark was submerged and the water up to the top of the belting, but there is no evidence given as to how this extra immersion was caused.

The "Belmore" left Port Said at or about 5.30 a.m. of the 17th June last, and proceeded through the

canal into the Gulf of Suez, with fine weather. About 10 p.m. the wind was about two points on the port quarter, and increasing with a rising sea. At midnight the watch commenced to put coal off the deck into the stokehold. This was continued until after 2 a.m. of the 18th, when Ras Gharib light was sighted. Shortly after sighting the light, the second mate, Mr. Robertson, who was in charge and steering the vessel, called Gray, one of the watch, to relieve him. He then went down below as directed, to let the master know that he had sighted Ras Gharib light and how it bore, and while he and the master were examining the chart, a sea came in over the port quarter, giving her a list to port, and as the vessel did not recover, thinking something was wrong, he made for the deck, followed by the master, and finding her on her beam ends and going further over, he and the master got over the rail on to the side of the vessel, and finally reached the keel as she turned bottom up, giving no time to provide themselves with life-saving appliances. The majority of the crew went down with the ship. The captain was last seen standing on her bottom near the keel. The rest, five in number, succeeded in swimming to the coal box, which floated away from the vessel as she sank. They held on to the box for about 1 1/2 hours, when it broke up and each secured a plank, by which means four of them eventually reached the shore in safety at some distance from the lighthouse. The fifth was caught by a shark while efforts were being made to save him by those on the beach. The mutilated body was afterwards recovered and buried. “

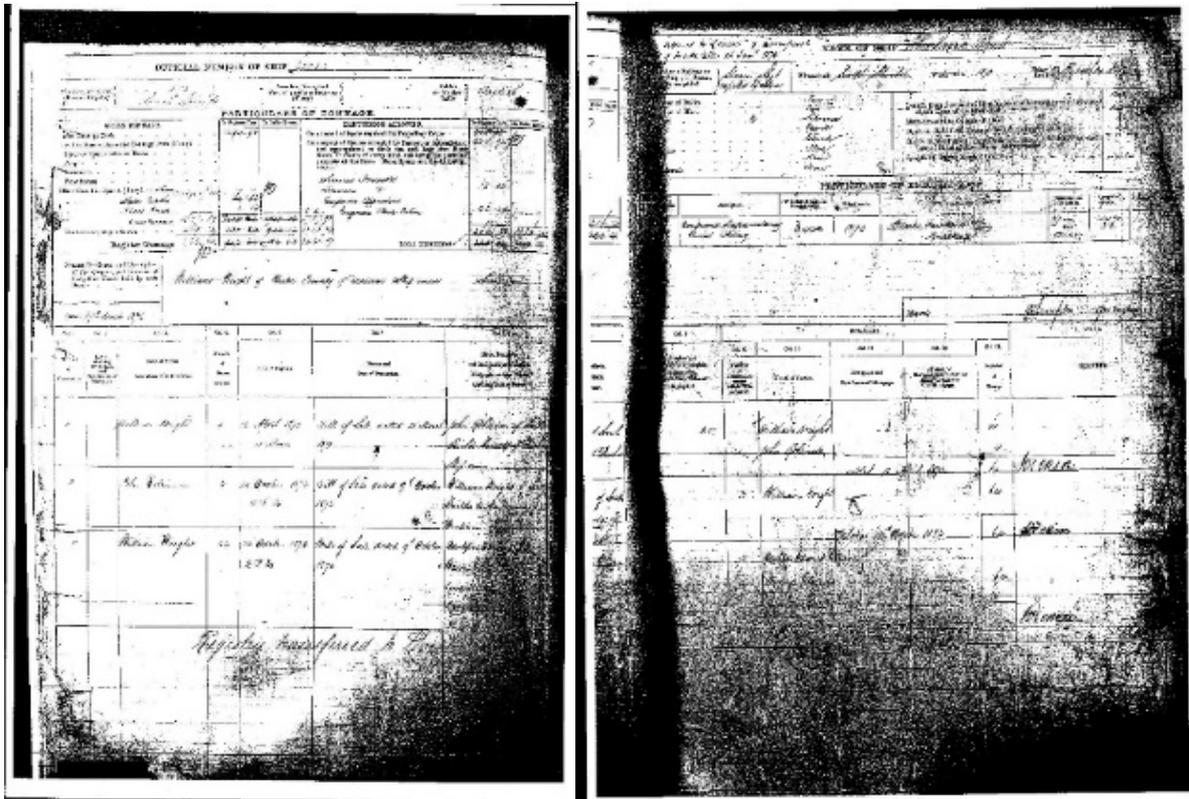
To date the wreck has not been located.

WRECK OF THE S.S ZEALOT



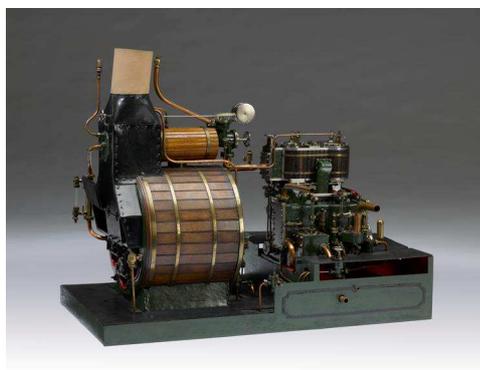
During the BSAC expeditions of the early 90's we came across wreckage in 40 mtrs on the north east side of Daedalus. Initial research suggested this could be the wreck of a Dutch East Indiamen, the *Dacca*. Exploring down to the limits of sport diving only revealed long lengths of iron piping. We were certain a wreck existed but never got the chance to dive any deeper. Then in September 2004 I received an SMS from the staff on board *M.Y. HURRICANE*. A German diver had found some crockery with the words "Helme Park South Shields".

When the SMS came in I was on my way to the local archives, and within an hour Carolyn Durkin had produced a bill of sale for the vessel from Readheads to the owner William Wright, and then a bill of sale to the second owners John Glynn and Sons of Liverpool. From this documentation, the entire story of the wreck was in my possession-before Markus Lohr, who found the plate had disembarked Hurricane!



From the name lifted from the piece of crockery, Carolyn Durkin was able to produce the actual bill of sale when the ship was handed over to her owners.

The Zealot began life as the HELME PARK, a 1328 ton 243 ft long “spar decked double skinned iron hull screw steamship”, built in 1873 by John Readhead and Co at the Pilot street works in South Shields, ship # 91. She was fitted with a 2 cylinder compound inverted direct acting. 120hp steam engine, which could deliver 12 knots. William Wright had commissioned the ship to modernise his renowned fleet of sailing vessels. Her master was H. Braham. Wright sold her a year later to J



THE FINAL VOYAGE

The final voyage began on 26th September, 1887 bound for Bombay. The *Zealot* was captained by J A Best and was carrying cargo worth £24,700 described as general, 790 cotton bales, 91 cases, and 100 tons of iron” She had a crew of 53, mainly Lascars and two passengers on board.

The journey down through the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal took until the 12th October, and after successfully navigating the straits of Gobul she sailed south towards the Brothers (her best sighting of landfall) before altering to a course which would take her close to Daedalus for another sighting, and then south intending to pass to the east of Zabagad on her journey southward..



As they closed towards Daedalus the light appeared dead ahead and not abeam, the inexperienced first mate Jonathan Russel reacted too slowly in taking action and the vessel struck a coral ridge ripping out her bottom and she quickly began to fill with water. The crew and passengers were put into the boats and the captain ran the bow onto the reef enabling the remaining crew to jump ashore. The vessel then settled and sank into deep water, rolling onto her side spilling out cargoes she tumbled down the reef. The Iron pipes, originally thought to have been rubbish from the building of the lighthouse are the first clue of what lies below in very deep water.

The crew and passengers were taken aboard a passing ship bound for Suez.

At the board of trade enquiry the cause of loss was attributed to the first mates lack of navigation skills, but apportioned some of the blame wards the master. Captain Best's ticket was suspended for six months.

The wreck starts at 82 mtrs sloping down to 119 mtrs on the west side of the island. From an initial dive, she appears to be intact from amidships aft. However Grant Seacranke later found the bow section and describes it as "CARNATIC LIKE BUT FLATTENED". Judging from the reports the wreck is spread over a large area. As the *Dacca* sank in the same area , it is possible that both vessels lie together- both would be very similar vessels and sank only 10 years apart.

Sadly a group of Italian divers found the wreck early in 2005 and pillaged many artefacts from the wreck, claiming they were looking for evidence to her identification. Vital clues may now never come to light and the Location of the *Dacca* never revealed. But who knows- the *Zealot* surprised us all!

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New for 2020!

Peter Collings Wreck Notes

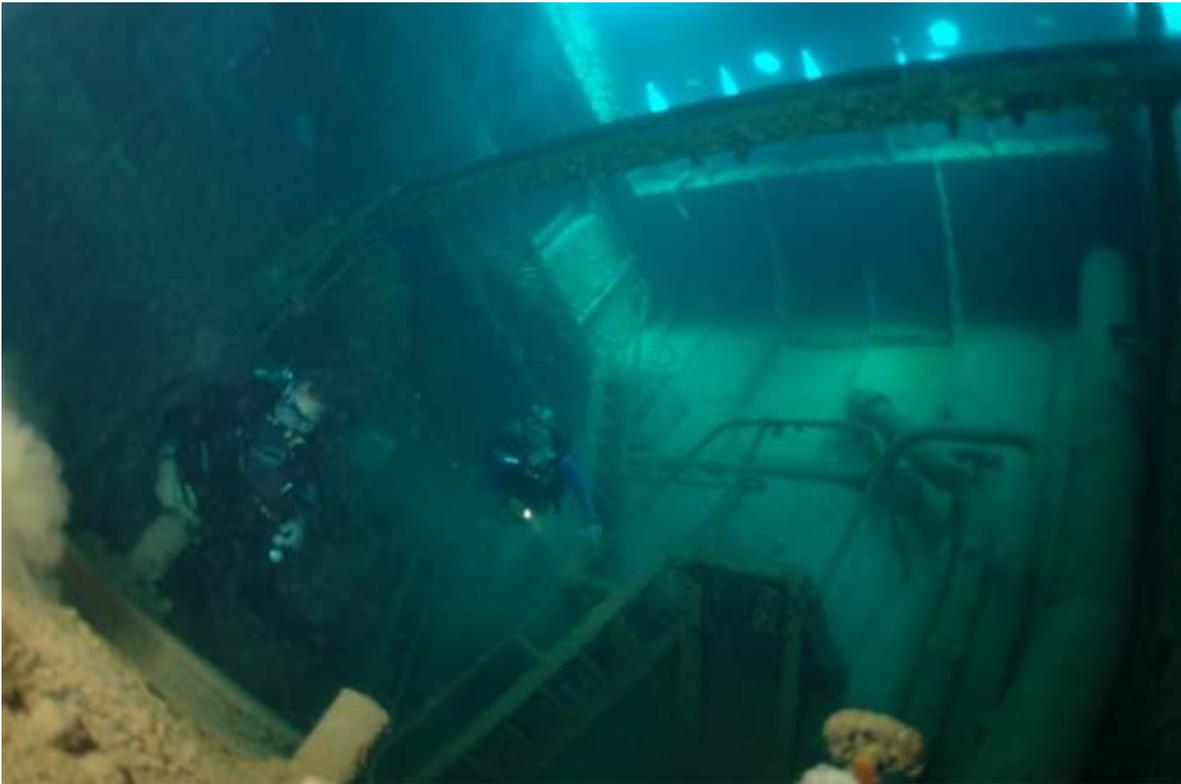
Take Peter's years of experience with you on your next trip
Special wreck set pages for your log book.
Or take them underwater on your next dive, with our wet note versions!



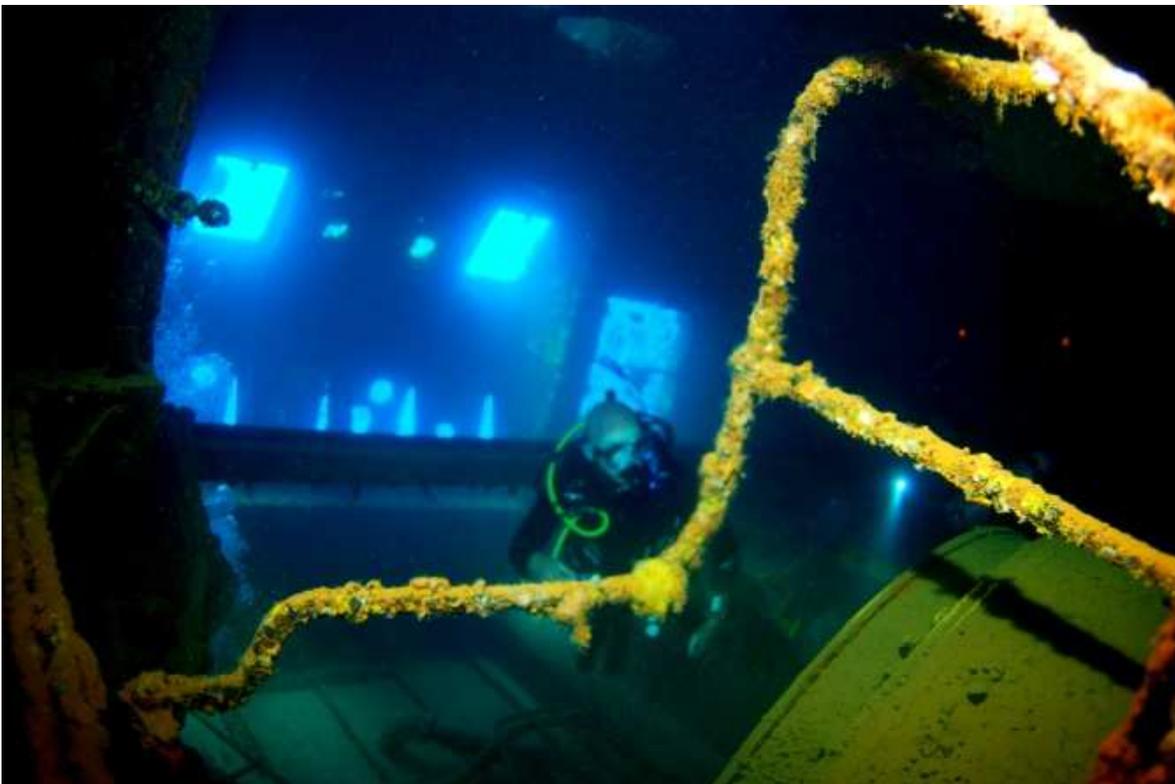
www.diveblogs.com

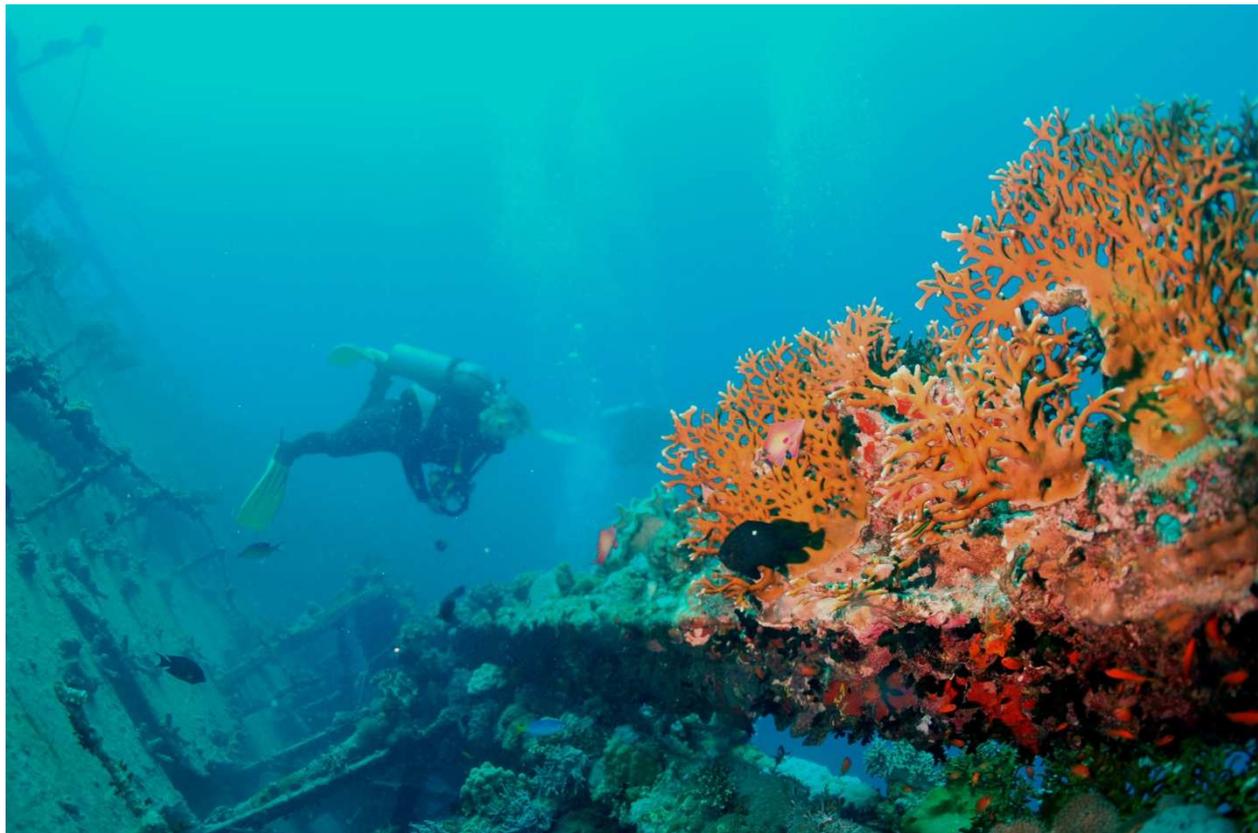
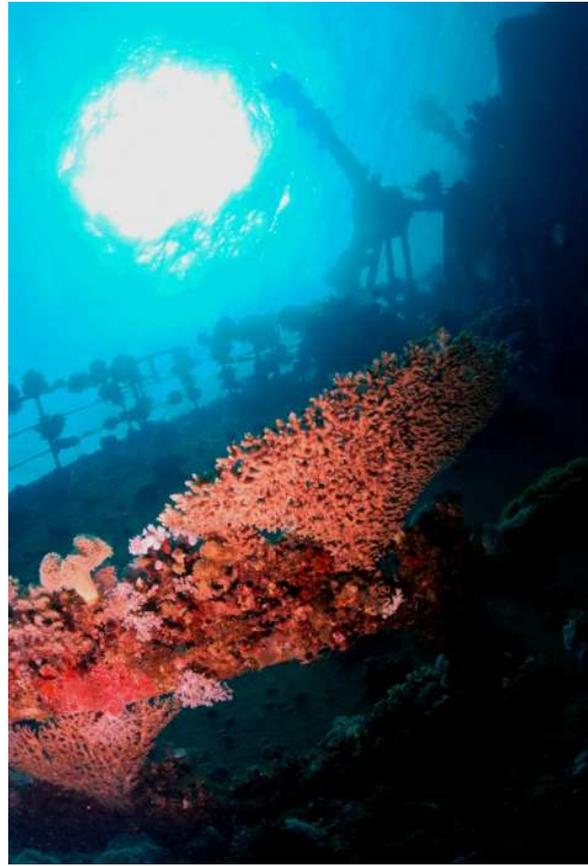
- Recreational, Instructor, and Technical Dive Logs
- Custom Dive Logs
- Log Book Stamps
- Gear ScubaTags
- Compact Lightweight Binders
- Custom Dive Slates
- Dive Maps
- Archiving
- Fish Identification
- Certification Card Holders

PICTURE GALLERY



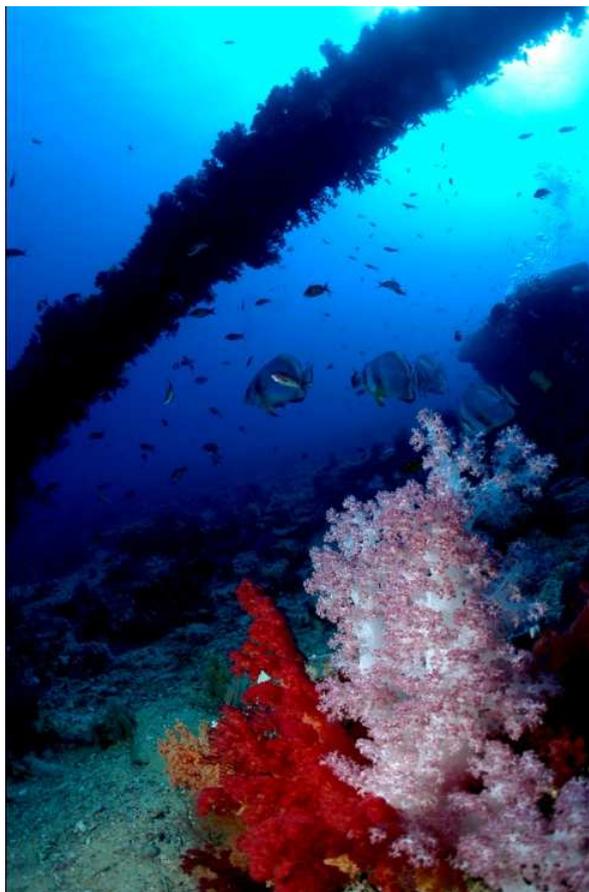
Deep inside the heart of a steam ship - her engine room. The vast interior of the engine room of the S.S. Turbo can be easily explored by divers with the correct training and equipment.





Outside the wrecks it's a different story. The strong African sun, clear waters and shallow depths allow for a luxuriant growth of both soft and hard corals. These in turn, coupled with the structure of the vessel, acts as a haven for a multitude of fish.





LIVING REEF

The term was never more apt than in the case of the *SS Ulysses*. Now absorbed into the reef, with over one hundred years of coral growth on her remains, she has become one of the most beautiful “artificial reefs” in Egyptian waters.

While the vast interior of her hull is a haven to glassfish, all of the species found on a coral reef are evident on her structure. Spars and davits, girders and ribs are covered in encrusting species, which in turn allow others to colonise.

Tiny nudibranchs live within the bryozonans while schools of batfish play in and out of her ribs.

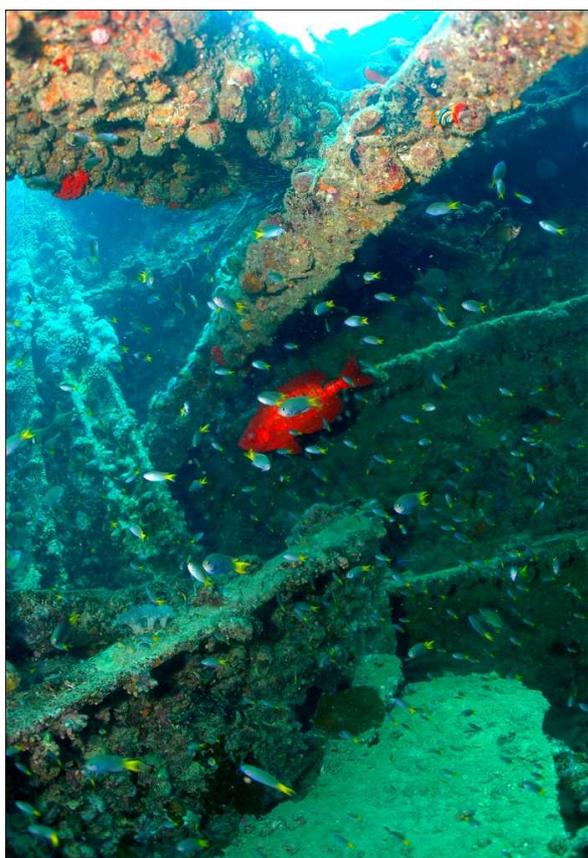
The sweeping currents also bring in predators such as jacks, tuna and trevally.

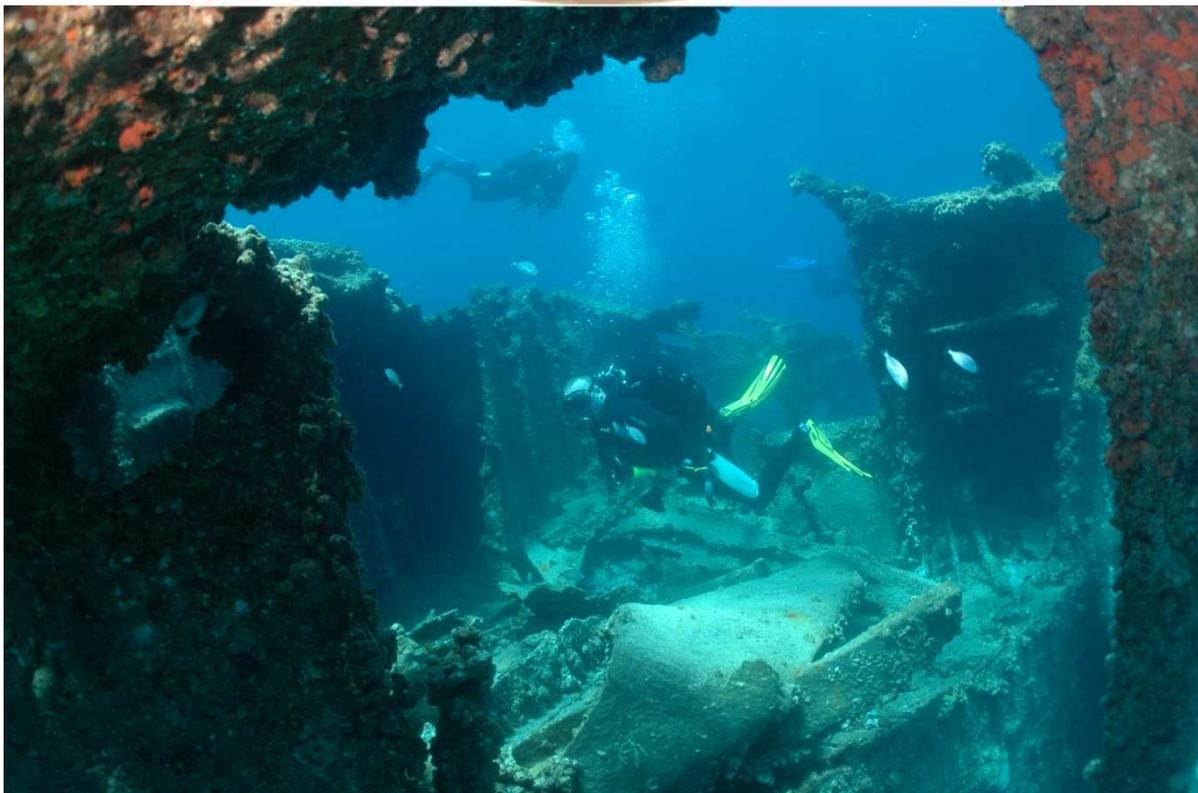
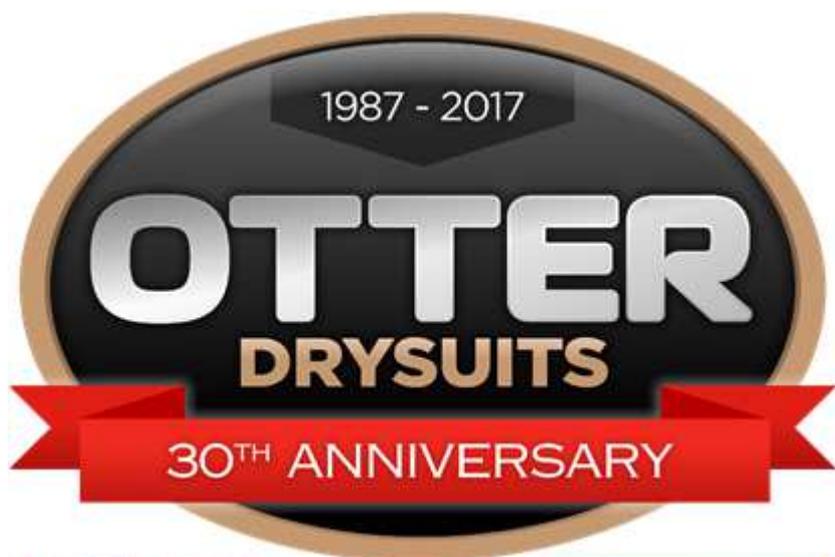


*Above: a diver swims through the interior of the *Ulysses*, with all the wooden decks long gone, only the iron framework remains.*



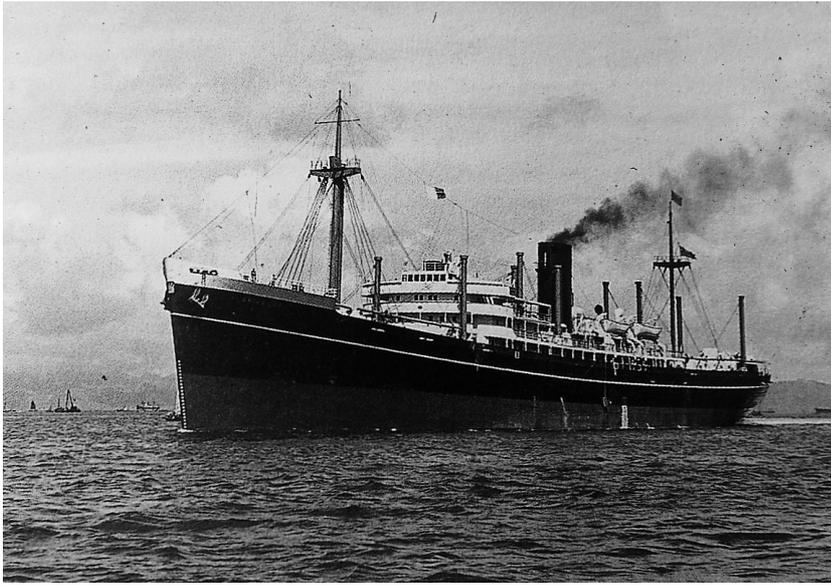
Divers hover over the stern of the El Qaher, framed by her stern rails covered in red sponge.



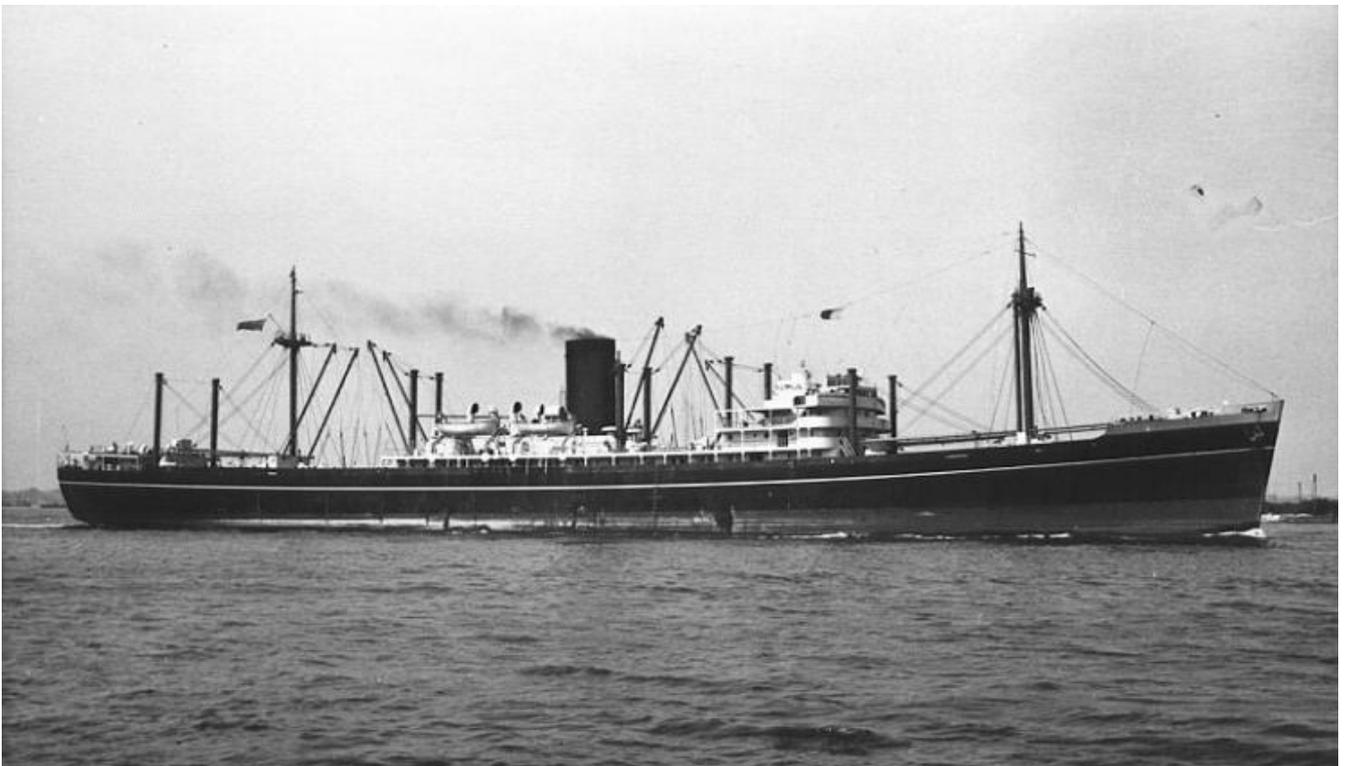


The Scalaria, one of the largest diveable wrecks in the Red Sea, has been well dispersed by explosions, salvage and the power of the sea. Divers are dwarfed by her huge remains, in only 12 mtrs of water.

AN AGONY OF COLLISION~ THE P&O SHILLONG



Built at Vickers Armstrong, Walker yard #104 Mar 1949, for the P&O Line, The Shillong was 8934 tons gross, 4816 net and 522 ft long. She was fitted with three geared steam turbine engines built at Barrow in Furness which could deliver 13000shp through a single prop. She had a speed of 17 knots. Classified as a general cargo liner she could carry 12 passengers and had a crew of 87.



THE FINAL VOYAGE

In October 1957 the P.&O. Shillong steamed down Southampton Water, bound for Ushant, under the command of Captain Spurling, she carried 6 passengers, 26 British officers and 61 crew.

Passing the Queen Mary and the American aircraft carrier Forrestal she journeyed through the Bay of Biscay, past Portugal, Spain and through the Straits of Gibraltar to her first port of call, Almería, in fine clear weather.

Here she loaded grapes for the East and then headed north and east to Genoa to discharge and take on more cargo, finally south to Port Saïd and the entrance to the Suez Canal.

Jan Goddard heard the siren as he went into the chart-room to collect the 'stations' book to note down the helm and engine orders for later inclusion in the log-book.

The Captain heard it too, and came racing up the ladder. Almost at the same time the oncoming ship altered her helm to port. She had decided to try and cross the bows of the Shillong.

The Shillong's Second officer moved to the single engine-room telegraph in the wheelhouse and rang it over twice, "Emergency Full Astern"!

Too late.

The two vessels raced towards a collision point with their helms turned in opposite directions.

Jan Goddard, standing on the helmsman's starboard side could now make out the huge wide beamed tanker approaching amidships. He grabbed onto the telegraph as the ship lurched over to port.

The oncoming vessel having struck only some 20 ft away—demolishing the #2 motor boat.

As the Tanker swung under the momentum of the Shillong, she slid astern leaving a huge gash in her port side. The sea poured the Shillong's engine room, and the port-side deep cargo oil-tank was filling rapidly with the sea, pulling the ship down.

The other empty cargo oil-tank on the starboard side, , was acting as a buoyancy chamber.

The Shillong spun round and heeled over on her port side.

The water was now up to her boat-deck number 3 hold had flooded. The gravity davits had been designed to work against an adverse list of 15 degrees but with the Shillong's list at 30 degrees they were rendered useless and the starboard lifeboats unusable.

On the port side the forward boat was smashed, and the aft boat's davit had been bent by the collision.

Every effort was made to use inflatables and as the engine room flooded the vessel righted itself and the starboard lifeboats were utilized.

The crew and passengers abandoned ship as she settled low in the water, Captain Spurling being the last to leave.

Shortly after, a tanker, the Skoland, came close by, slowing and lowering her own boats, taking the survivors on board.

Ironically, this was the north bound vessel which had prevented the Shillong from taking evasive action.

Meanwhile the Shillong had settled and just after midnight she went down stern first.

Three lives were lost.

“The behaviour of the entire crew was magnificent, European and Asian alike . . . It was an honour to be associated with the men of the Shillong”. (Robert Miller)



Postscript March 2021-to date, despite years of searching, the wreck remains undiscovered-the only “unfinished business” of the RSWA.

All authorities tell us “she’s there”-a big target-we’ve found wrecks 1/3 her size with ease.

A casual remark and some new data has rekindled our hope that we may find her later this year-watch this space.....

PART TWO THE RIVER WEAR

“WHERE SHIPS WERE BORN”



“On 7 December 1988 it was announced that the last shipyards on the Wear - North East Shipbuilders Ltd at Pallion and Southwick - were to close

“

It all started back in 1346, when Thomas Menvill had a shipbuilding yard in Hendon.

Throughout its history Sunderland has had over 400 registered shipyards. By 1814 there were 3 yards which produced some 31 wooden vessels. By 1840 the number had increased to 76 yards. Between 1846 and 1854 1/3 off all ships built in Britain were built on the Wear. By 1868 iron built ships took over from wood.

During the 1st world war there were 16 yards. Between the wars the number dropped to 8 with an additional yard opening during WW2.

MISTAKEN IDENTITY~THE SS TURBO

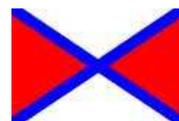


SS Turbo, typical centre island tanker of the early 1900's

THE SHIP: Built at Sunderland in 1912 by J.D.Laing for the Anglo Saxon Petroleum Co. the 4900 ton, 374 ft "contemporary plated, fitted for carrying liquid fuel in bulk, machinery aft". The records also show her engine specification, built by Dickinsons at the Deptford Yard as "3 cylinder triple expansion engine", with cylinder dimensions of 26",44",72" and out-fittings by R. Craggs of Hartlepool. She was a typical Centre Island vessel with sealed holds for and aft of the Island. Her engine room was situated aft. Surviving the 1st world war she continued her trade until 1940 when she was put under Admiralty service. Her weather deck, above the steering quadrant was adapted into a gun deck. She was armed with a 4" gun and 4 Hotchiss. She carried out numerous missions between Port Said, Haifa, Piraeus, Aden and Istanbul



The ships engine plate, which was to help disprove our earlier identification of the wreck. In all 3 different plates of this type were recovered. The other two bore the names of her builder and her outfitters - JD Laing and RC Craggs.



THE ATTACK

On August 20th 1941 she was attacked by German aircraft while en route from Haifa to Alexandria with a cargo of 7500 tons of Admiralty fuel. The crew including three naval and seven military gunners numbers 52. The ship had left Haifa just before dark on the 19th August 1942.

Captain J.B. Jones:

"Weather on the afternoon of the 20th was fine with light air and we steamed at 7 1/2 knots steering a westerly course, zigzagging on no.10. At 1745 A.T.S, 35 miles from Damietta, we sighted two twin engine bombers heading towards us from the west out of the sun, which was then 2 points off our port bow. They were light blue, 50 ft above the water and flying one behind the other". When they were in range we commenced firing with the Hotchiss, two of which were fixed on the bridge, one forward and one on the fo'c'sle head. We could not bring the 4" to bear at this stage. The first plane, when about 3/4 mile off the starboard bow, dropped a torpedo which I saw approaching and I swung the ship hard a'starboard. The vessel answered the helm and the torpedo ran harmlessly along the starboard side.

Meanwhile the second aircraft made a wider circle round the starboard side until he was 3/4 mile on our starboard quarter, when he released his torpedo. The ship was still swinging to starboard. I saw the white wake and a second later it struck the vessel halfway between the bow and stern on the starboard side. There was a terrific explosion, a cloud of black smoke and a column of water was thrown at least 95ft, but there was no flame. There was a strong smell of cordite"

"We could now bring the 4" to bear and were able to get off one round as the plane flew off. We continued to fire the Hotchiss guns using all our ammunition except for 25 rounds. The planes continued to circle at a distance of 2 miles then flew off. 10 minutes later two of our own fighter appeared. The planes were Italian S79 type Bombers adapted to carry Torpedoes"



SAVAOIA MARCHETTI S79 TORPEDO BOMBER

"The ship rocked so badly after the explosion that I thought the ship was going to break in two, so I stopped the engines. The pump room and nos 3, 4 and 5 holds were flooded, the deck was buckled on the starboard side between 3 and 4 tanks and there was a large hole in the ships side some 40ft fore and aft. There were cracks in the starboard side running from the main shear strake down to the bilge keel".

The Turbo had survived the attack, at slow speed they continued the voyage and the captain found that by increasing her speed to 6 knots she stopped rocking. They safely arrived at Port Said on the 21st August. Here part of her cargo was discharged and she continued through the Canal to discharge her remaining cargo.

Her armament was removed and she left Suez on April 1st 1942 for Karachi in tow of the Gladys Moller (sister-ship of the Rosalie Moller) destined to be used as a fuel storage hulk.

On the 4th April as they neared Ras Banas (reported position puts them approximately 15 miles north) the ship broke in two, presumably from the damage sustained in the bombing, and

“cast adrift because of heavy weather. forepart sunk as it was a danger to navigation. Afterpart is presumed to have foundered”. **Lloyds war losses.**

“While proceeding towards Aden, as a hulk, SS Turbo broke her back in a heavy sea, Gladys Moller stood by, stern could not be boarded during the night of the 5th all contact with the stern was lost and the bow section sunk by gunfire on the night of the 5th by an unknown vessel under instruction from the Admiralty at Port Sudan” BT381/1919

Credit for the discovery of this wreck goes to the Skipper of Lady M. They called it the half wreck because it consisted of a stern and superstructure and one very large hold. At first we thought this was the Hadia, which had been described as a tanker in some records, but entering her engine room revealed a large single triple expansion steam engine, not a diesel as in the Hadia.

Inside the engine room a plate with R.C. Craggs embossed and a works number would if fact prove to be something of a red herring in her identification, but without this knowledge to hand we set about looking for the missing section of the ship; the other half in fact. We were to search in vain...the bow lies in deep water somewhere to the north.



LEFT: The stern lies over on its port side in 27 mtrs of water close to the shore at Sataya El Bara, north of Ras Banas, in Southern Egypt.

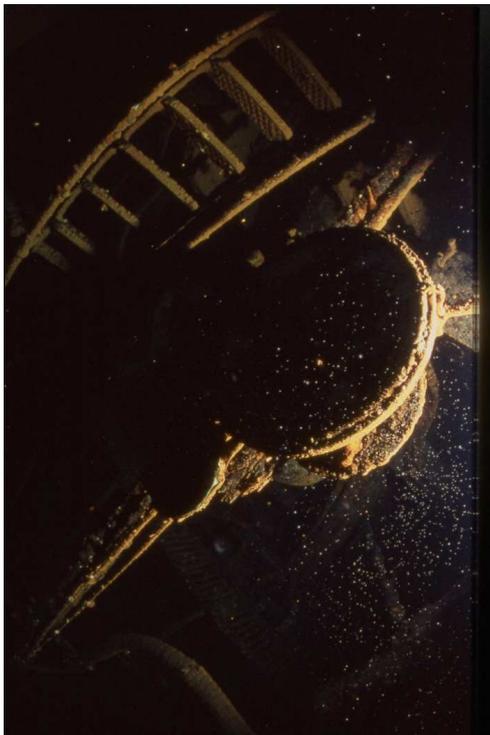
RIGHT; Pressure chamber of her triple expansion steam engine, which lies in situ totally intact. The large engine housing allows for easy



The hull now lies on a sandy bed in 28 mtrs very close to the reef face on its port side. The starboard side is in about 18 mtrs, while the port side almost touches the sand. The stern faces northwest. The break in the hull is from the rear of the centre island which sank with the fore section. The raised walkway runs aft to the engine room, accommodation island and the cross members are covered in corals and home to multitude of fish. The helm direction indicator is intact and stands proud on her aft deck and although her rudder was removed the prop can still be seen partially buried in the sand.

The engine room is huge, easy to explore and totally intact. It is possible to explore three floors down into the heart of the ship. Gauges, valves piping, dials notices, (one reads "water 1/3 above combustion when show in glass in all engines"), gratings and handrails are all intact.

There are many storerooms off to the sides with tools and other equipment, much of which is concreted into place. A workshop complete with lathe, even oilcans and watering cans! The engine room is very atmospheric with good light filtering through the skylights, although the angle at which she lies can be somewhat dis-orientating. Her repeater telegraph still hangs waiting for the next command.



Forward of the engine room is her boiler room and the funnel casing, again all her fittings, gauges and valves are in situ.

The stern area under the weather deck is an area of great interest with more store rooms, wheel barrows, spare ventilation cowls and some great swim-throughs.

A raised walkway supporting the vessels piping is home to a multitude of life forms from sponges to lionfish and the cross bracings make a great swim-through and photo backdrop. The deck is an intricate latticework of pipes valves and fittings, used to transfer the bulk liquid fuel to her tanks in a delicate balancing act. Lifeboat davits, handrails and stairwells provide alternative backdrops for photography.

Fascinating marine life including vast numbers of the pixie hawkfish, a rare sighting anywhere else but here the major dominus of the wreck.

Although the visibility is less than stunning, the encrusting, macro and fish life and general intactness are a great incentive to dive her more than nonce. Sadly the aft mast which used to reach up close to the surface has been snapped in two.

PARTICULARS OF MACHINERY.

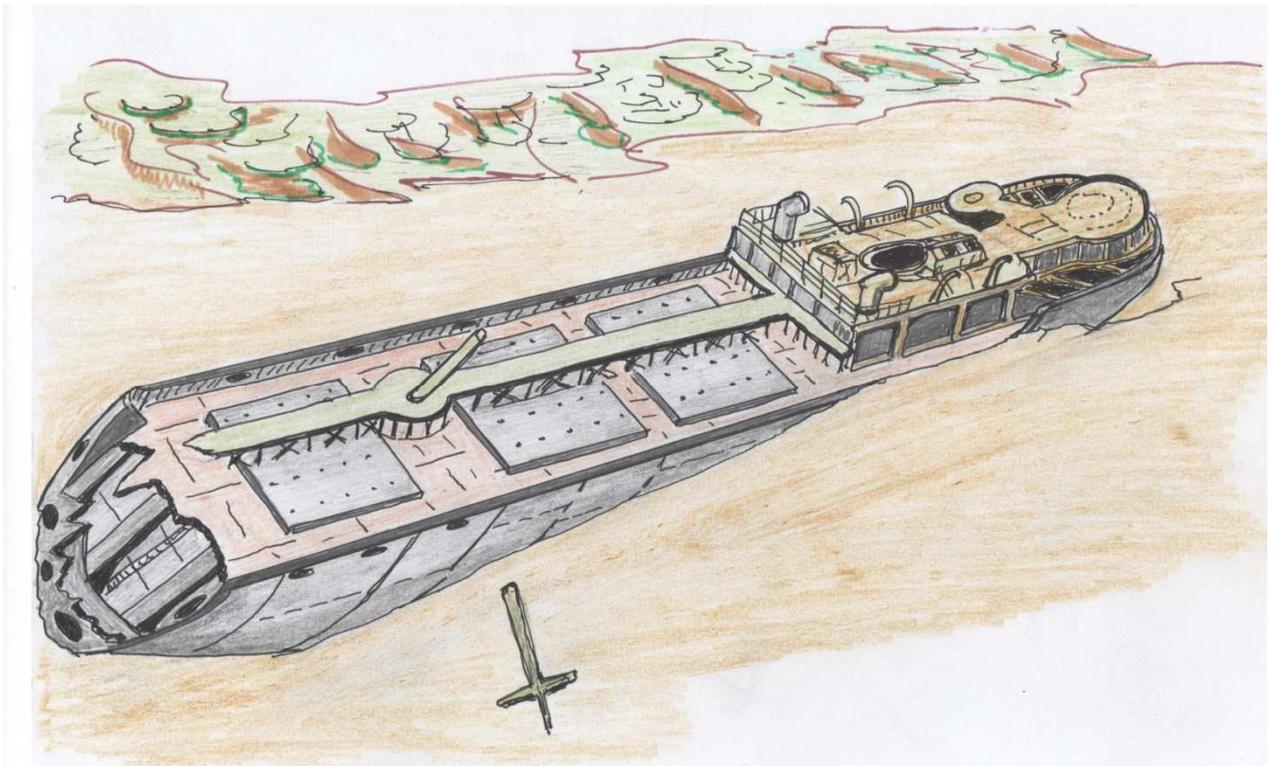
No. 55. *Sub 4 835* Dreadford Vessel,
Sunderland.

Masters *J. Robinson & Co. Ltd. Engineers.* Date *Aug 11/12.*

Bollers.	
Number and description of	<i>3. Horizontal</i>
Name of Draught	<i>Horizontal</i>
Working Pressure	<i>180 lbs.</i>
Hoop	<i>18 1/2</i>
Length	<i>11 - 6</i>
Total Heat Area	<i>2000 sq. ft.</i>
Total Heating Surface	<i>7892 sq. ft.</i>
Number and Diameter of Pipes	<i>3 1/2</i>
Engines.	
Number and description of	<i>1st. Horizontal</i>
Diameter of Cylinders	<i>24 - 24 - 12</i>
Stroke	<i>48</i>
Output (Horsepower)	<i>3000 H.P.</i>
Indicated Horsepower (without working in air)	<i>2100</i>
Consuming number of revolution	<i>66</i>
Revolutions per minute	<i>465</i>
Propellers.	
Number and description of	<i>One Aft</i>
Number	<i>17-6</i>
Span (pitch)	<i>16-6</i>
Number	<i>28 ft</i>
Number of Blades	<i>4</i>
Diameter of Hub	<i>3-0</i>
Weight of Engines and Bollers.	
Steam, Vertical, Horizontal, Auxiliary Engines, etc.	<i>165-2-1-0</i>
Water in Engines	<i>2-2-2-0</i>
Boilers, including Manways, Flywheels, etc.	<i>192-5-0-0</i>
Ways in Bollers	<i>82-4-0-0</i>
Outboard Shaft Gear	<i>27-0-0-0</i>
Shafting weight	<i>Nil</i>
Extra weight put on hull in Engines	<i>468-11-1-6</i>
Extra weight put on hull in Bollers	<i>10-12-0-0</i>
Shafting and other	<i>477-3-1-6</i>

SUNDERLAND

Thanks to archives in her town of completion, we were able to prove her identity further more-this is the materials costings sheet from the builders, courtesy of Tyne Wear Archives



MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Over a 3 year period we not only searched for the other half of the wreck but for an identity. The first clue was a plaque with "RC CRAGGS" stamped on it - and indeed a yard number. Only one vessel built by Craggs and indeed a tanker which was recorded as sinking in the Red Sea was the Atlas (her name at the time of sinking).

Further research into the Atlas listed her as a British built, 4000ton, 345 ft long steam tanker, under Greek registration at the time of her sinking. Built in 1909 by R C Craggs, Smiths Dock, Middlesborough, was torpedoed on Sept 6th 1940. by the Italian submarine Guglielmotti off the Yemen. So how could her stern section be 400 miles north? The answer lay in part with another tanker, the Inverlane.

She had been mined off Sunderland, where her stern still lies, but her bow section was repaired and towed over 400 miles of the North Sea to end up in Scapa Flow. I knew the man responsible for that amazing feat! - Jim Develyn.

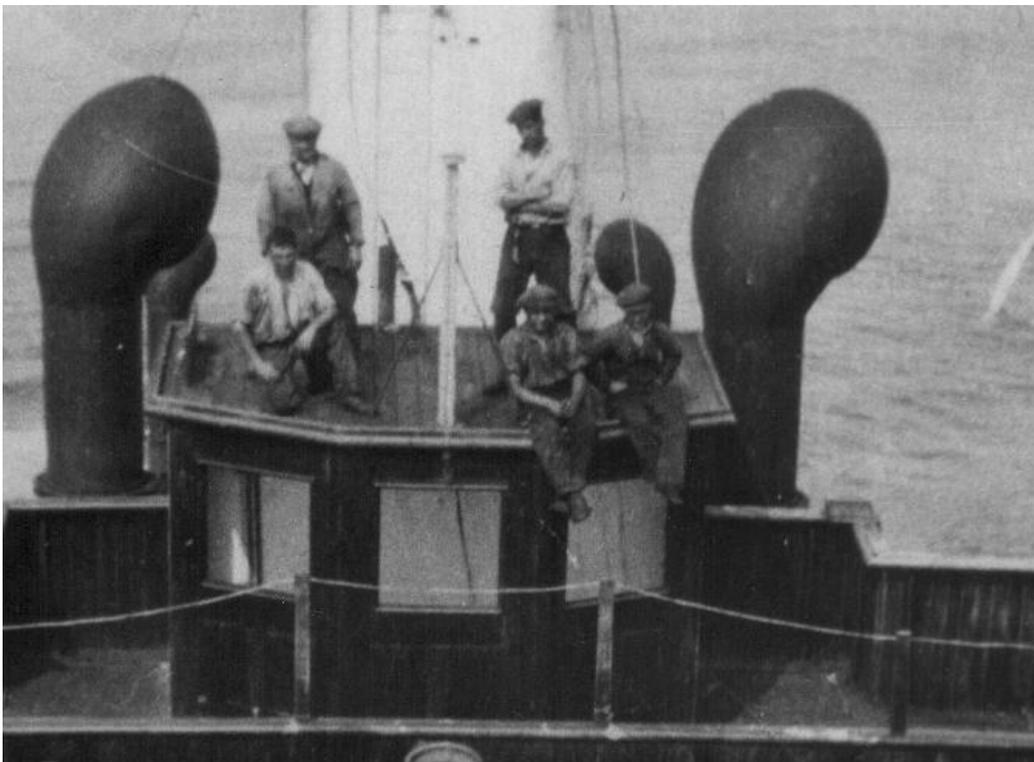
I had interviewed Jim many years earlier as he lived locally and had also been involved in salvaging many north east England wrecks, during and after WW2.

When I went back to question Jim about the Atlas his first comment was "I wondered when someone would get round to that one".

Jim recalled how the ensuing explosion broke the ship's back and as she settled by the bow she broke in two. With war materials at a premium a daring salvage attempt was made and Jim was the man for the job.

The stern section made watertight and the long journey north to Alexandria began using the two tugs which Jim described as "liberated rusting tubs" were christened Hercules and Goliath". (Hercules was eventually to find her back in North Eastern waters where she ended up sinking off the Tyne) and it would seem they were borrowed or as Jim put it "requisitioned for the greater good of the war effort".

Where they came from Jim would never elaborate, but I suspect that tale would make a great story!



Amongst Jim's papers was this mono of the salvage team preparing the stern of the Atlas for the long journey north. "Saving half a ship was better than none. We had done the Inverlane in the North Sea; this should have been easy"

Jim went on to recall that the project went well until in Jim's words "they reached Ras Banas". At this point the prevailing winds whipped up the sea from the north and the ungainly hull was caught abeam of the waves, the towage was broken and the stern section foundered and sank after drifting for several hours.

Jim's account plus the ships plate we had found seemed to confirm the wrecks identity. Indeed we were so sure of the facts we went to press with the belief we had identified the "Half Wreck". Then, while exploring the "Half Wreck" we found another manufacturers plate this one was inscribed "John

Dickinson Ltd, Sunderland" 1912 and inscribed with a yard number - conflicting evidence indeed. After Jim's death I was given an insight into more details of the salvage. Jim's diary stated that the foundering took place "as they neared Ras Banas".

His notes and diaries were to be a great help in filling in some of the missing questions about the Atlas. After many years of searching, tracing lost records and the invaluable help of the Tyne/Wear Archives and the Guildhall Library, the "Half Wreck" has now been positively identified. But what of the Atlas?

WRECK OF THE S.S ATLAS (STERN SECTION)

THE VESSEL:

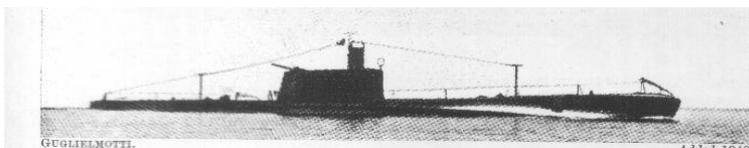
The Atlas began life as the Conrad Mohr, built in 1909 on the River Tees at Middlesborough by R.C Craggs and Sons. She was 345 ft long, with a 48ft beam and 28ft draught. Described as a 4000ton steam tanker, fitted for bulk liquid fuel Her triple expansion engine was built by North East Marine Engineering Company and records show her cylinders as 25",41" & 67.",325nhp. In 1935 she was renamed the Irini, then finally the Atlas, owned by the Soc. Anov. Hellenique Maritime Transpetrol.

FINAL VOYAGE

Sailing under the Greek flag the Atlas had left Abadan bound for Suez with a cargo of fuel oil.

Lloyds War Losses Sept 6TH 1940 page 122.

"Atlas torpedoed by Italian submarine Guglielmotti, 14 miles north of Jebel Tier. Crew landed at Aden"



The Italian submarine Guglielmotti, which torpedoed the Atlas. She was a Brin class diesel electric boat, built in 1938. She was 1247 tons, 2228ft long, had a maximum diving depth of 60 fathoms and carried a 3.9inch gun+13mmA.A. She had 8-21 inch tubes

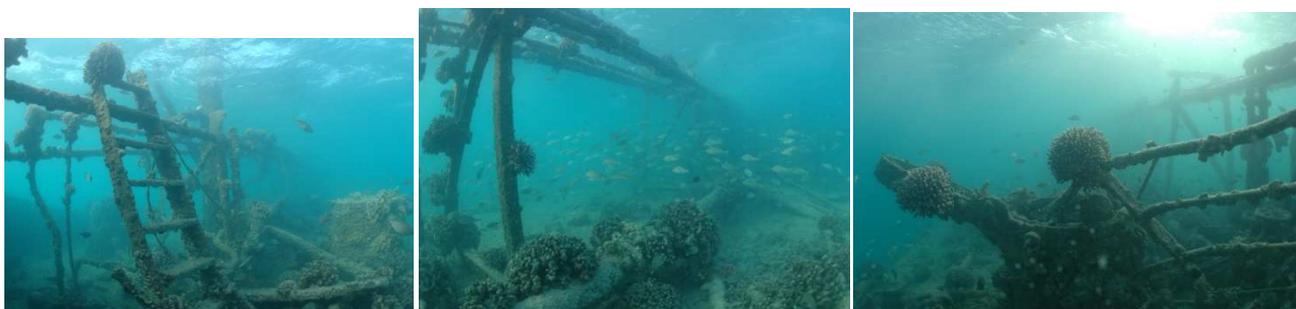
Having eliminated the Atlas as the "half wreck" at Sataya El Bara, we set about locating the Atlas herself. Referring back to Jim's diaries, his notes stated that the hulk was cast adrift as it began to founder as they neared Ras Banas described as a "sandy headland surrounded by coral reefs". "Our attempt to

make Port Berenice to make repairs failed and the hulk was cast adrift until it grounded in a sandy bay, her engine house still above water”.

There is a further reference in Jim’s diaries that the superstructure was subsequently removed to the waterline and “the hull left totally flooded and deemed lost as more pressing matters were at hand”.

A rough sketch in Jim’s diary showed us the rough area in which the hull has sank- in 12mtrs of water in a sandy bay within the restricted area of the Port Berenice.

Initial brief dives (unauthorised), have shown the hull complete with central walkway, pipes running the length of the hull to the break, valves and other deck fittings still in place. The superstructure has gone and what was not salvaged seems to have fallen into the engine room. There is evidence of debris buried in the sand and the visibility seems very reduced, due mainly to the lack of coral and presence of sand.



The shallow sections of the walkway with its vertical supports and cross beams are covered in sponges and sea squirts as opposed to corals, again presumably due the amount of sand and are home to a vast number of shoaling fish and many rays were seen on the surrounding seabed.

Like many of the other wrecks close to shore along the coast there would appear to be a certain amount of salvage, probably unofficial going on. On our last snorkel large sections of wreckage was being loaded onto an ancient looking truck.

A combination of the initial evidence had led to the mis-identification of the “Half Wreck” not only Jim Devlyn’s verbal report but the plate from R.C Craggs. Another tanker belonging to the Anglo Petroleum Company was also wrecked in the Red Sea, far to the north at Ras Gharib in the Gulf of Suez. This too had out fittings by R.C.Craggs of Hartlepool. The similarity between the two vessels didn’t help either. The Turbo was a mere 29ft longer and had an addition tonnage of 900 tons-built 3 years and 30 miles apart considering we only had half a wreck to deal with it is easy to see how we were deceived!

I intend to return at least once to the wreck – to place a memorial to a very remarkable man –Jim Devlyn, salvage diver extraordinaire! Once again fate has shown truth is often stranger than fiction –two tankers built 30 miles and 3 years apart end up only a few miles apart within 2 years of each other, and then only their stern sections!

S.S. KINGSTON

WRECK OF THE S.S. KINGSTON (aka Sara H)

Built on the River Wear, in the Oswald yard at Sunderland for the Commercial S.S. Co. in 1871. She was built and grossed 1449 tons and was described as a brigantine rigged iron hull screw steamship. Like the *Arctic* and *Ulysses* she was a hybrid-rigged for sail and powered by steam. Due to the pressure of boilers and un-efficient engines, sail was essential to extend the working hours of this type. Not until high pressure boilers and triple expansion engines came along did the way to steam power.



THE FINAL VOYAGE

The Kingston left Cardiff on the 28th January 1881 bound for Aden with a crew of 25. She had onboard a cargo of 1210 tons of coal, plus 530 tons in her bunkers. On the 16th Feb, at 8.15 in the morning she passed through Suez. By 6pm she was abreast Ras Gharib, and by 10.50pm (2250) she was nearing the Ashrafi lighthouse. The weather was fine but cloudy, and the sea smooth. The Kingston was making full speed, and the Master, Thomas Richard Cousins altered course southward, to counteract the force of the tide termed "pulling". At 1145 he ordered the second mate to go and set the fore topsail. The lookout was called from his post to assist in hauling the sheet home. As the two men went aft to trim the yards the ship struck at 1150 pm. An anchor was put out astern and for the next two hours she was put full astern, but held fast. The order was given to jettison her cargo. The steamship F.W.WARD came alongside, declining to assist in pulling the Kingston off, but offering passage for her crew.



By the 18th she had jettisoned some 70 tons of coal and another steamship the COLUMBIAN came alongside, offering her services which were accepted and a hawser attached aft. The Kingston held fast and the COLUMBIAN left. The Kingston began to make water and that evening and by the 19th the master had ordered the crew to abandon ship. The mate and 16 of the crew gaining safe passage on the ALMORA. The rest of the crew, including the master, chief engineer, second mate and 5 crewmen remained on board until the fires went out about 6pm on the 20th. They made it safely to Gobul island until the 24th, when running out of water they put out and were taken aboard the STRATHMORE and landed at Suez. The Kingston went to pieces where she struck.



The PRACTICAL JOKE

In the early nineties this wreck was labelled “unknown”, then a guide book appeared quoting it as the SARAH. I could find no evidence to support this, but as it was written in a book the diving world labelled the wreck SARAH. At a dive show in 1996 my display still showed the wreck as unknown. A young lady approached, smiled and said “well at least you weren’t fooled by Davids practical joke”. My reply was there was no such vessel as the SARAH, she replied “that’s right-I AM SARAH”. She went on to explain that the author had very little knowledge about what he was writing

and had picked the captains brains-DAVID HALAL, Sara’s husband!

David had no idea what this wreck was called and looked at his wife and was inspired! Little did he know how long this joke would last.

IDENTIFYING THE WRECK

Spurred on by Sara’s story I returned to the wreck and took photos of her unusual engine/boiler configuration, and took them to the resident expert at the Trinity Museum on Newcastle’s quayside. He instantly identified the engine-explaining that it was a hybrid and only 10 had been made –“here on the TYNE”. He then went on to produce a yard list- 10 names of ships the engines were fitted into. Through a process of elimination and a listing in DODAS I identified the wreck as the S.S. KINGSTON. It took years for all those “experts” out there to accept I was right.....

Bitter pill for some to swallow!

THE WRECK TODAY

All that remains of the vessel today is a hull- and at first glance the wreck looks worthy of only a quick swim over, an



afterthought after diving the nearby Thistle gorm. However those properly briefed will find a wreck full of colour, life and interest. It is easy to see how she came to grief –head on into the reef, indeed her fore section merges with the reef rudderpost resting in 14 mtrs of water upright. The been a backdrop for many a photograph. All of her dissolved, leaving her uprights and cross bracings explore. Her boilers and condensers sit just below

engine lies over to the starboard side of the ship.



itself, with her rudder and prop have wood has long since open- and easy to the surface and her

Decent down to 16 mtrs off the stern, taking in the towering hull above.

The crows nest lies in 14 mtrs –a great photo prop. Turn back towards the hull, passed the fan corals and through the rudderpost-watch out for many nudibranchs and invertabrates on the hull. Turn right. You should now be swimming with the hull on your right-up to 8 mtrs where there is a break in the hull-look left for shoals of fish. Swim in through



the break in the hull-you are now in the heart of the ship above are cross beams a winch and a spare prop. Meander carefully through the uprights-glassy hatchets full what was once the engine room . Map of Africa Angels sweep by in curiosity. As the stem approaches look for the steering helm. Glide over the starboard side along the gunwhales watching out for attacking surgeon fish! The engine lies spilled out below., boilers to the left. Several uprights come into view-almost temple like. At 6 mtrs swim away from the wreck along the reef, now on your left

more shoaling fish lie ahead.



The surrounding reef is perhaps one of the very best in the area-huge shoals of yellow striped goatfish, sweetlips, antheas and fusiliers hang over some beautiful hard and soft corals-Tuna turtles and dolphins are regular visitors. Care is needed with resident surgeon fish they are very brave, aggressive and territorial-especially around the stem.



TERRITORIAL SURGEON FISH



CURIOUS ANGEL FISH

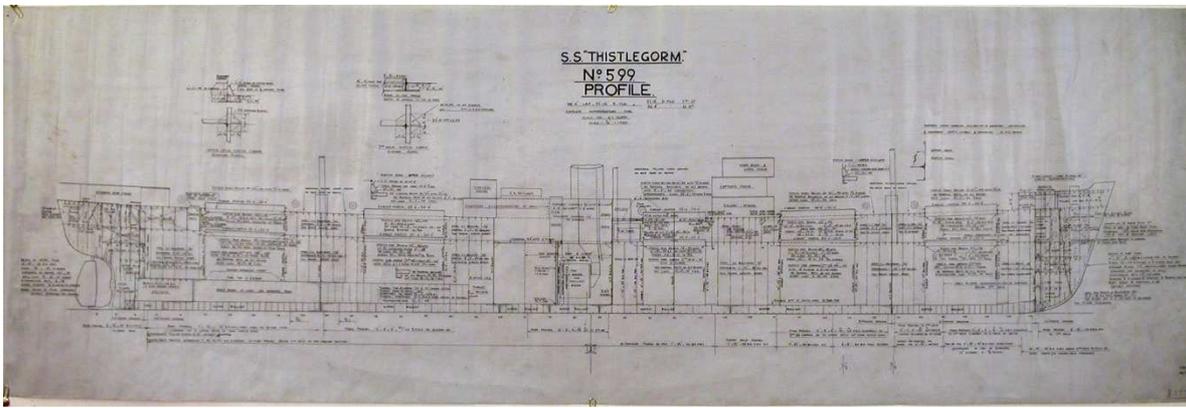
S.S. THISTLEGORM

The Thistlegorm story starts at the Yards of J.L. Thompson and sons at Sunderland. It was here that the 4898 ton 415ft cargo ship was built in 1940. She was driven by a triple expansion steam engine, built by North East Marine Engineering, which could deliver some 1850 hp driving her along at 10 knots.

Her construction was that of a typical 5 hold freighter, with raised fo'c'sle and aft weather deck. With her bridge and officers accommodation and engine house central the holds were two forward and two aft, with the third hold situated aft of the bridge structure, forward of the Engine house. 'tween decks ran around the holds-huge shelves for cargo to be placed on using derricks sited between the holds on deck. The coal shoot for her bunker was situated in front of the engine room skylight. Aft of the skylight, above the engineer's quarters was the wireless house, with the radio room behind the ward room. The main superstructure had 3 levels SALOON, CAPTAINSHOUSE, CHART ROOM WHEELHOUSE, with the pantry and cold store directly below. The aft structure is classed as the STEERING GEAR HOUSE, above which was the weather/gun deck.

The plans clearly show the holds to within 4 ft of the keel, her double skin accommodating ballast tanks and this space would be maximised by craning in cargo under and up to the 'tween decks, then planks of wood (or bailey bridges in times of war) would cover over creating second floor for more cargo to be carried (typical with vehicles and unusual shaped items). The plans show deck hatch covers at both deck level and 'tween deck level. Cargo hatches were fitted both at deck level and at 'tween deck level.

As with most centre island cargo ships or tramp's as they were affectionately known the twin boilers were positioned forward of her engine and the fuel (coal) forward of the boilers. The engine room was separated from the aft holds and coal bunker by water tight doors. The engineer's quarters were positioned flanking the engine room. The wireless house was mounted above this accommodation block, behind the engine room skylight. The raised forecastle (fo'c'sle) housed the chain locker, carpenters store (port) and the lamp and cable centre (starboard). Anchor winches were fixed centrally on top of the fo'c'sle. Steam winches serviced the cargo holds. There were three main decks upper and no. 2 with 'twens fore and aft, the aft holds being slightly shallower due to the propeller shaft access tunnel. An escape shaft runs from the tunnel exits forward of the steering gear house. Fore and after peak ballast tanks were fitted.



The profile plans of the S.S. THISTLEGORM. A great deal of information of the ships construction has been obtained from this highly detailed document. It clearly shows cargo hatches both at deck level and at 'tween deck level, and the depth of the holds in the fore section to within 3 ft of her keel



APRIL 9TH, 1940 at a cost of £115,000, the Thistlegorm is successfully launched. Captain George Whitfield is to commission her, before handing her over to Captain William Ellis, three months before her loss. This highly detailed original image was taken by L.PARRY, a local professional photographer

SPECIFICATIONS

YARD #; 599

BUILT; MANOR QUAY WORKS, NORTH SANDS. SUNDERLAND

LAUNCHED; APRIL 9TH 1940

CLASSIFICATION; All Loyds, British Steamship

DIMENSIONS; 415ft x 58ft x 24ft TONNAGE; 4890 tons

ENGINES; Triple expansion steam by North East Marine Engineers



Very few images of the Thistlegorm afloat have been located. This is one of a set of six taken by L Parry at her launch. Here tugs are positioning her alongside Manor Quay North Sands, Sunderland, to be fitted out. The main structure of the ship

is complete but as yet she has not received her boilers or engine and is sitting very high in the water.

By September of the next year she had completed her trials and had undertaken three voyages under the command of Captain George Whinfield. On the 1st July 1940 she left Methil for Southend in convoy FS209, arriving on the 2nd and on the 5th returned to Methil in convoy FN24. Next day, in convoy OA179 she departed for Panama in ballast. The 16th August found her departing Halifax for Liverpool in Convoy HX66 with a cargo of iron rails and aircraft parts, arriving Liverpool 31st August.

On November 5th 1940 she departed Methil for Oban in convoy EN19/1 in ballast leaving Liverpool 2 days later in convoy OB242. The 10TH February 1941 found her heading back to Liverpool from Freemantle, with a cargo of cereal in convoy MSK65, arriving Liverpool on the 4th March. During this voyage Captain Whinfield organised the first and only gun practice, deeming the guns safer if not used! By the end of that month she was heading for Georgetown in Convoy OB303 in Ballast. Having loaded with a cargo of sugar, she joined convoy BHX128 out of Bermuda for Halifax, joining convoy HX128 on the 20th and after discharging her cargo at Liverpool in early June, she departed for the Clyde

She was laid up at the "Tail o' the Bank" on the Clyde for almost two months with boiler trouble, eventually arriving at berth QD14 on June 25th. 1941. The ship's command was then handed over to Captain William Ellis. The ship's superintendent's M. Wawns and Sons sent Dominic Wawn and Walter Beattie to Greenock to organise a Port Relief team. The purpose of this team was to allow the ships' crew a break between the voyages. Thus began the loading for that final voyage.

HER CAPTAIN

William Ellis OBE was born in December 1891. In 1907 he went to sea for the first time as a cook/seaman, at the age of 15 working on schooners. By August 1911 he had worked his way up to able bodied seaman, having sailed on many long voyages. His first position as an officer was on board the S.S. Manchester Engineer as a third mate, progressing to second mate on the S.S. Potiac in 1914. Due to a tragedy on board the *SS Cheviot Range* a year later, while off Newfoundland, he was promoted to Chief Officer.

During World War One he was employed by the Albyn Line, and saw action off Alexandria, when his berth, the *S.S. Thistleban*, on a return voyage from Karachi to Hull, with a cargo of linseed, peas and rape seed, was torpedoed 4 miles north of number 4 beacon, Alexandria, by a German submarine on the 23rd December 1916. He then studied and attained his Masters Certificate and in 1917 took his first command for Furness, Withy & Co on board the *S.S. Waterland*.

In 1924, he re-joined the Albyn Line as second officer on the *S.S. Thistleben*, Progressing in chief officer 3 years later. In 1928 he took charge of the *S.S. Thistleford*. In July 1941 he was transferred to the *S.S. Thistlegom*. This was to be his only voyage on the ship. In 1942 he was awarded an O.B.E. He stayed with the Albyn Line until he retired in December 1947. He died in June 1955 at the age of 63.

THE CARGO

The loading for that fatal final voyage began weeks before the *Thistlegom* set sail at berth QD14. The cargo was a varied one and a ship of her size could carry a tremendous amount of much need supplies. Although the Captain oversaw her loading, the port relief team were responsible for the task. There was a great deal of organising required to ensure the cargo was not only loaded in a logical order but that no space was wasted. Every vehicle was itself loaded with cargo. From eyewitness accounts and indeed the records of W. Wawns it would seem that many of the crated aircraft parts were loaded into the well decks of numbers one and two holds including wing sections fuselages and engine covers. These are the deeper sections and with a uniform shape the crates containing fuselages and wings could be tightly packed into these lower areas. Balley bridges were often used to create false floors and it was onto these that many of the trucks were placed, themselves full of crates of medical supplies, which included morphine, camphorated oil, Lysolats antiseptic tablets, salt tablets and water purifying

Wannes load list-the document that took years to track down, was to reveal many new and interesting aspects of the cargo, and loading. In a very faded condition we were, with the use of photoshop, able to enhance the hand writing to reveal much more vital information.

Much of the older material had been hand written and the ink's had faded, but there, amongst some wartime accounts were several sets of cargo listings for 1941 including that of the Thistlegorm. Although very faint, and probably incomplete we were able enhance several of the pages thanks to photoshop. They revealed some thitherto unknown facts about the Thistlegorm's cargo, just as I had hoped. My persistence had paid off. We could now confirm the type of aircraft she was carrying and indeed where they were loaded.

While the list is incomplete it gives us a fascinating insight into what was loaded and where. While we cannot confirm final numbers we can certainly calculate minimum amounts. For instance 14 Universal Carriers were loaded, three have been accounted for on the wreck, a further 8 have been located elsewhere, now underwater too, but from a different war, and proof indeed of salvage work.

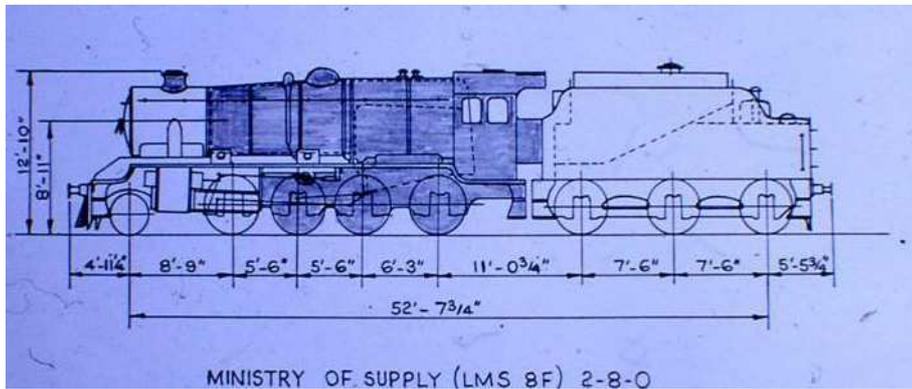
THE LOCOMOTIVES STANIER 8F 2-8-0 LOCOMOTIVE



The Stanier 8F steam locomotive was perhaps the work horse of the rail network in the 30's and 40's and indeed over 200 of the 852 made, were exported to the Middle East and used extensively throughout the Quena Line. Of the 52 built in 1941 for the war effort in the Middle East a total of 10 were lost on the way.

As the Allies pushed the Axis forces further west, the rail network which was vital to the supply lines, reached to within 15 miles of Tobruk. The network is still running today. These engines were to prove themselves during the conflict and indeed many were given a coat of armour-concrete slabs 4 inches thick. Designed by Sir William Stanier, her 2-8-0 numbering refers to her wheel/axel layout; one front bogie and 4 drive axels. Two such locomotives were loaded onto the Thistlegorm, flanking her number 4 hold. Thanks to highly detailed records of this locomotive, the two locos on the seabed are works numbers 370 and 371, built at Springburn, Glasgow. With every other loco accounted for, there is little doubt that the rumour of a third engine is simply one of the many myths surrounding the wrecks in the Red Sea. It is testimony to the tremendous force of the explosion that 70 tons of locomotive could be propelled through the air and end up where they are today, some 30mtrs off the port and starboard sides of the wreck. In both cases only the smoke box and the first two pairs of wheels remain in place. As the boilers were only attached on sliding bolts to allow for expansion they separated from the main chassis and lie flattened off the stern of the wreck. Wheels and axels lie scattered around the seabed, and indeed make a good photo

prop in their own right. The coal tenders and water tank cars made up the locomotive, the water tank cars extending the engines range by providing an extra supply of water for desert operations. They were loaded and remain flanking number 2 and number 1 hold respectively.



Profile of the Stanier 2-8-0 Locomotive with its tender attached, showing the overall dimensions. The unshaded area shows the section of both engines which still remain. The tenders are on the deck of the Thistlegorm, and the smoke box and first two axels sit upright on the

seabed. The boiler sections are almost unrecognisable and the drive wheels are scattered around the perimeter of the wreck. The control cabs have never been located, and are thought to have been salvaged due to their high brass content. Rumours of a third loco being sighted by a dive guide tying onto the wreck have been dispelled; he saw the third water railcar off the stern. However that didn't stop a group of Russian divers looking for the phantom loco. As quoted above we have the loco yard numbers, and as all other 8F's have been accounted for the debate is closed, rumour dispelled.

THE MOTORBIKES

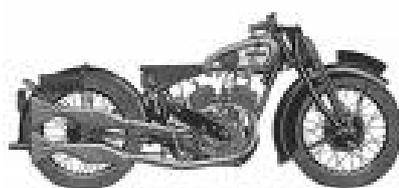
BSA M20 MOTORBIKE

A staggering 126,000 of these motorbikes were produced during WW2 and were used by despatch riders. Like the other motorbikes in the holds they were assigned to Field Marshall Auchinleck, whom was in charge of the British troops fighting the desert fox, Rommel. The motorbikes loaded neatly into the back of the trucks have suffered greatly from pillage; gone are the tool kits, handle bars and even the



badges

MATCHLESS G3L MOTORBIKE



Matchless G3L motorbike

The Matchless G3L was a two-seater single cylinder motorbike, with a 4-speed foot change gearbox. Designed for desert use, it was later to become a domestic vehicle in the form of the G3 Clubman.

NORTON 16H MOTORBIKE

Norton

The Norton 16 h was very similar to the BSA motorbikes, and was again specially designed for despatch riders in the desert campaign. So successful was the design that 100,000 were manufactured during World War 2 alone.



successful
World

THE TRUCKS

ALBION AM463



6 of these refuelling vehicles can be found in number 1 hold. The unusual valving arrangement at the rear fed fuel through delivery pipes which protruded in front of the cab. From here rubber hoses fed the fuel to the aircraft. The rubber of the hoses has now perished leaving only the springformers.

ALBION BY 3 / BY 5

8 of these variants are to be found in number 1 hold on the upper deck

BEDFORD MW

Built on a 15cwt chassis, with a 6 cylinder Bedford engine, delivering 72hp, they had a top speed of 65km/h and a range of 380 km. 66,000 of these versatile lightweight trucks were produced by Vauxhall during the Second World War. In its most common form it had a universal wooden tray and canvas cover, but many variants from radio cars to gun tractors were developed. Although listed in Wamns list a recent survey carried out by underwater photographer Alex Mustard failed to identify or finds any of these. The detail of his study would suggest that the vehicles listed may have been in the upper holds along with the Universal carriers, and salvaged shortly after the sinking. Our research team is still looking for any reports of the salvage work carried out.

BEDFORD OY C

With almost double the payload of the MW, the Bedford OY 3 ton truck was the mainstay of the British Army, with some 72,000 produced during the war. Again the chassis construction leads to a variety of versions and uses. Situated at the rear of number 2 hold on the 'tween deck, just forward of the bunker, are five of these variants fitted with water tanks. From the information gathered on this manufacturers plate, the purpose of these trucks has been identified. Each carried



a type SW2 water filter and pumping system made by The Patterson Engineering Company of London in 1941. Watertankers, supplying drinking water.



CROSSLEY Q

FWD or Four Wheel Drive, had an 11 foot wheelbase and used a conventional suspension, the drive train of the 2 axle IGL and the proven 30/70 engine. The name these, the Quad or "Q" type, is not strictly correct as specification title used by the War Office and so could vehicles from several manufacturers of differing designs. of these vehicles located in the forward section of hold on the second level.



often used for "Q" was the be applied to There are 8 Number 2

LEYLAND RETRIEVER



The Leyland Retriever was a 6 x 4 truck produced by [Leyland Motors](#) for the British Army between 1939 to 1945. It had a 6 litre, 4 cylinder overhead camshaft petrol engine. [General Montgomery](#) used one as his caravan during WWII. Two of these can still be found on the wreck, with a further two half buried, these have pylons sticking upright and are possibly bridging vehicles.

MORRIS COMMERCIAL CS 8



Easily recognisable by its distinctive bonnet, these trucks were fitted with Ford 8 cylinder engines and were widely used by British forces. Its versatile design and reliability found it in use in many theatres of war including North Africa. 4 are still found on the wreck two each side of the upper deck in hold number 1 close to the ships sides.

MORRIS CS 11

12 of these can be found on the tween deck in hold number 1 on both the port and starboard sides.

FORD WOT 1

The largest of the vehicles in the wreck, this double axel truck was used for heavy payloads and was over 20ft long. Fitted with 8 cylinder Ford engines, delivering 85hp. An example can be found in the starboard fore section, the rear wheels perched on the edge of the 'tween deck. The chassis would appear to be fitted with a pulley system, perhaps some kind of tilting system. Only a small number of these vehicles were produced for the army.

FORD WOT 3

Larger than the WOT 2, this truck was fitted with a ford V8 engine 85hp, with some 18,000 seeing military service in WW1. 12 of these can be found in two rows facing forward in hold number 2, facing forward, loaded with motor bikes in the wooden trays.

LEE ENFIELD RIFLE MK IV



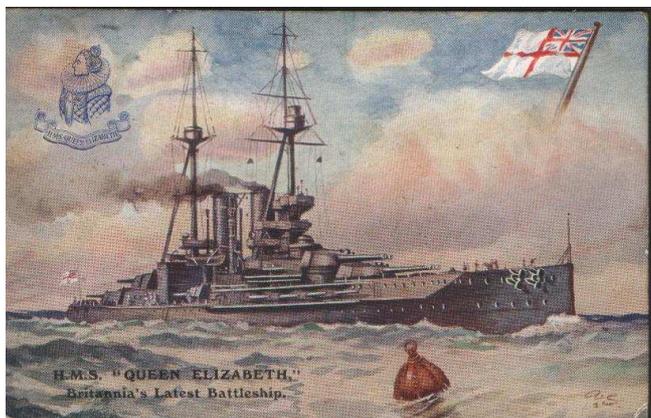
The Lee Enfield IV was the result of over 30 years of refinement in bolt-action rifle performance. This rifle's genesis was the Lee Model 1895 rifle, developed by James Lee. The Model 1895 fired a high-velocity 6-millimeter (0.236-inch) round; however, its straight-pull bolt proved to be difficult to operate in combat conditions. In 1907, the short-magazine Lee Enfield (SMLE) Mark II was introduced; the SMLE Mark III followed a few years later. These rifles used a rotating (rather than straight) bolt action and were the standard British infantry rifles during World War I. This smoothly operating bolt enabled a trained soldier to fire up to 15 aimed shots per minute. Further simplification of the SMLE design resulted in the Lee Enfield No. 4. Developed in 1928, it was not produced in quantity until 1941 when it became the standard British infantry rifle. Large numbers of these rifles and their ammunition were packed into the holds. Crated in packs of 6 "butt to muzzle", most of the examples still seen on the wreck have fused together, the wooden packing long since rotted away.

ORDINANCE

The aft section of the ship was packed with a huge amount of ordinance. It is testimony to how quickly the ship sank, that so much remains, otherwise the secondary explosions would have certainly destroyed the entire stern section of the ship. It has been impossible to calculate the exact amount of munitions on

board, even with the help of Wamn's loading list, which although listing sizes of shells, only quantifies in terms of "cases". Two entries alone list; 400 cases of 3.7" shells, 200 cases of 4.5" shells. There are two side holds with cases of 4 shells per case and we lost count at 100 of these!

Not all the cargo was for the RAF. Two of the remaining battle ships were operating out of Alexandria Harbour. At one point these battleships were damaged by Italian charioteers, however their draught was



such that they were resting on the seabed, still above the water and could be used as a very effective firing platforms, before being patched up and towed to America for repairs. H.M.S. BARHAM was not so lucky. We know from Wamn's load list that a huge amount of ordinance was loaded into her aft holds. The list quantifies these shells as "cases of". In some instances we know the shells were packed in sets of six

and this gives us an idea of the numbers for a single entry in the list. The final number will never be known. Many of these were 4" and 4.7", armoured piercing, plus the huge 15" shells used by the heavy cruisers and battleships.

LIGHT PUNDITS

Two of these unusual looking vehicles can be found side by side on the port side tween, just aft of the collapsed water tanker. They are basically airfields identification beacons and consist of a generator, switch gear, lantern and trolley. During transit the lantern is stowed. Tesla coils drove 8 x 400 watts neon tubes flashing two letters in Morse code. These codes were set by ground staff. They have been



described elsewhere as armoured cars on Rolls Royce chassis. At night, the base's Pundit Beacon was employed to flash the airfield's Pundit Code in Morse in red light. Due to the risk of detection and observation by enemy aircraft the beacon was positioned a few miles from the airfield and periodically relocated. Part of crews' pre-mission briefings would include notification of the beacon position in relation to the airfield. When night flying started the duty electrician would

have to walk out to it and switch in on, which could take several minutes to do this and then start transmitting the Morse letters for the station. Each airfield typically had three locations and alternate codes which were employed during WW2. The beacon was powered by a Coventry-Climax 16.9hp

TROLLEY ACCUMULATORS.



Misleadingly described as motor bike side cars in some accounts, these trolley accumulators were used on airfields to start aircraft engines. Basically a box of batteries on wheels, consisting of 6 2 volt batteries, producing 12 volts. When not in use they were recharged via the main circuit. Several of these can be found in the second level of number 1 & 2 holds. The top covers have rotted away revealing the batteries inside.

UNIVERSAL CARRIER.

Three of these small multi purpose tracked vehicles can be seen in the debris field between the two sections of the wreck. Developed from the Light Dragon, an artillery tractor designed by Carden Loyd, the Universal carrier first appeared in three guises, the Bren, Scout and Cavalry by Vickers Armstrong. These were developed into the Universal Carrier, with Vickers producing 43 examples. The production



then went out to Thoneycroft, Morris, Aveling-Bedford and Sentinel Wagons for war time production. They were used mainly for infantry support, and were often fitted with a 303 Bren light machine gun. They were powered by Ford V8 engines and could reach speeds of 48km/h. They could carry up to 5 persons and appeared in many roles including ambulances, flame throwing vehicles, gun tractors and

demolition vehicles. They were highly successful in the Desert Campaign. Production carried on well after the end of WW2.

At least eight of these vehicles had been salvaged from the wreck and utilized by local military services. They were still in use when the Israeli's invaded the Sinai in Operation Kadesh, October 1956. Rather than let them fall into the hands of the enemy, the Egyptians dumped them into the sea near Sharm El Maya.

AIRCRAFT SPARES

There are many aircraft wings scattered around the forward holds. These were originally in crates and listed in Wamn's particulars of loading as fuselages, and wings for Westland Lysanders and engine parts (possibly for the Lysanders or Bristol Blenhiems), plus starter trolleys (sometimes called accumulators) as a well as many spare engine covers. These were all originally crated, and like the wooded parts of the wings the crates have all rotted away. Thus today only the aluminium sections remain, and it is difficult to say which is which. The starter trolleys

can be found near the bikes on the tween deck, starboard side. The manifest states they were packed in the forward holds but no sign of the fuselages has ever been found. Whether they were salvaged or lie deep inside the lower holds is to this day unconfirmed. A detailed look at Wamn's list would indicate they still remain in the forward well deck hold.

The sinking

A flight of German Bombers having failed in their mission to find and sink the Queen Mary, then being used as a troop ship looked for a secondary target and found the Thistlegorm After straffing the ship , the circling Hienkel 111 dropped two bombs which hit the aft holds which were carrying the ordinance. The initial and secondary explosions almost ripped the ship in two and sent both steam locos hurtling through the air. Her fate was sealed and as she sank the crew abandoned ship and were taken on board the "S.S Salamanua" and "HMS Carlisle" The explosion also caught the fleeing bomber, which eventually crashed a few miles to the north. Nine of the crew were killed. The date Oct 6th 1941. For the crew this was to be the start of their misery. Not only was their pay



stopped but they had to make their own way home.

SURVIVORS ORDEALS

ANGUS Mac LEAY; *"I was about to jump when I saw one of the gunners lying unconscious flames all around him. I managed to get the man onto my shoulders across the burning deck and into the life boat"*

HRRY BANSALL; *"H.M. SCARLISLE was anchored close by, the two lifeboats reached its side as the light from a tremendous explosion turned night into day. Broken in two by the blast she sank below the water"*

JOE DAGG; *"as I ran over the red hot deck a locomotive hurled through the air disappearing over the port quarter"*

JACK BLAIR; *"When Captain Ellis came on board we did a head count and five gunners and four sailors had gone down with the Thistlegorm"*

NORMAN ELAND DUNN; *"I was awakened by the thudding on deck and the sound of two heavy explosions. The afterdeck was in flames it was impossible to get to the boat deck The plane came round again and dropped a bomb which exploded in the water and machine gunned us. We jumped overboard"*

DENIS GRAY (from the HMS Carlisle) *"We could see the se planes coming in very low and very fast, if they had their wheels down they would have hit the mast"*

Gunner Glynn Owen; *"I saw the hammock above my head catch fire I could see the whole ship was on fire ,I thought my family will never know how I died"*

CAPTAIN WILLIAM ELLIS: "On 6th October 1941 at about 2am, while the vessel was at anchorage in the straits of Jubal (Gobal) with other vessels under Naval Control, I was awakened by the sound of explosions. I immediately went on deck and found the vessel had received a direct hit from an enemy bomber. The after part of the ship was enveloped in fierce flames and I realized right away there was no hope of saving the ship"

"Orders to abandon ship were given as the crews quarters were aft the sailors and firemen of the watch were cut off from the boats. Two boats were launched and the men whose quarters were amidships were safely got away. My boat drifted aft and was successful in picking up three or four men who had jumped overboard"

THE WRECK TODAY

The wreck has now been extensively dived and diver overload has taken its toll. Thoughtless mooring by dive masters to the handrails means they have long since gone along with their soft corals. The front boiler cover of the



port steam train has now fallen off, the port deck above number 1 hold has collapsed, threatening to send a water bowser down into the hold, (as it has for years) flattening trucks, bikes and rifles. Sadly the last remaining paravane on the starboard side has been destroyed - again through thoughtless mooring - the water bowser having been lifted and then dropped onto the towing array. All but a few of the portholes have disappeared. Never the less, The Thistle Gorm is still a superb dive.



Dropping onto her bow is quite a site, her starboard anchor chain plunging down to the seabed below. Swimming over the foc'sle railway stock flank number one hold.

Dropping down through rows of trucks and motor bikes, it is possible to continue aft to number two hold passed "six packs" of rifles and aircraft wings. Number two hold is full of more trucks, boots and gives access to

the bunkering hold. This is very roomy and has a resident school of hovering in its upper reaches. Again moving aft, the wreck seems to disintegrate. This is where the bombs struck. Shells litter the collapsed there are three Bren gun carriers. Fifty feet to port sits the locomotive - upright like her twin on the starboard side. All that remains is the smoke boilers lie elsewhere and there is no sign of the engineers cab anywhere - contained many brass controls. Levers etc they may have been removed during a salvage operation.



sweepers hold and bolt box - the as these during a

The stern section lies over to port, and the aft hold has all but disappeared leaving piles of munitions scattered around. The 3.5" anti aircraft guns still in place. Stern companionways around the weather deck make great swim throughs and more glass fish fill in the gaps. With care the rear accommodation area can be explored. Rounding the stern provides a view of her now motionless prop and rudder in 32 mtrs.



The return swim to the bridge section passes the



triple expansion engine and here the force of the explosion can be seen –the deck is folded back on itself and above the galley hang sinks-upside down!. There are several access points to the bridge level, The radio room can also be located here Hidden under the upturned deck is the entrance to the galley, with it's ranges still intact. Swimming forward now, along companionways

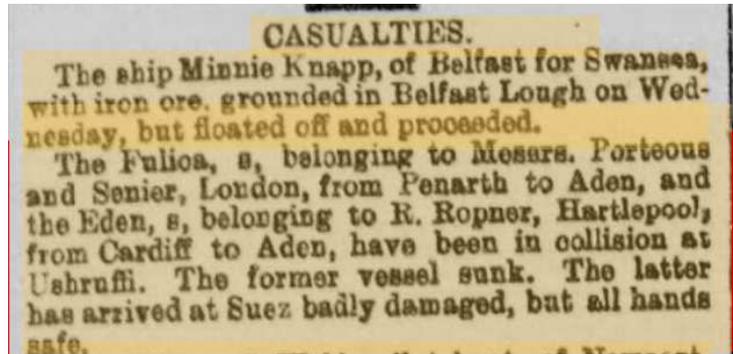
accompanied by Batfish, Jacks, Snapper and Barracuda, the true splendour of the Thistlegorm can be experienced. Here amidst drones, masts, winches and davits swim all the resident Red Sea fishes, and tucked away safe from the constant finning action of divers there are still bushes of soft corals surviving. Visit the entire foc'sle before returning to the shotline.

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75 YEARS UNDERWATER

S.S. FULCA

The vessel's sole owner was Porteous & Senior, of London. With L. O. Moen serving as her captain thru 1878/79 . T. Young thereafter. The Mercantile Navy List ('MNL') of [1880](#) lists Gilbert Porteous of London as her then presumably managing owner. Built by Mounsey and Forster in 1878 at South dock Sunderland 256.3 ft. long 34 ft beam. 23 ft draught. signal letters RHWB, 170 HP, 2cy 33" x 62 " engines by Blair & Co. Limited, of Stockton. In 1879 Fulica went aground in fog at New York & cracked her shaft. In early Feb. 1880, the vessel was en route from Penarth, Wales, to Aden with a cargo of coal. On Feb. 11, 1880, the vessel was in collision with Eden (see below) when in the straits of Gubal, Gulf of Suez, 2 miles off the Ashrafi Lighthouse. Fulica sank as a result of the collision but fortunately no lives were lost. Eden, badly damaged, made its way safely to Suez. As per [this](#) contemporary newspaper cutting. It would seem that a couple of court cases resulted. In an earlier case referred to in [this](#) decision it indicates that Fulica had been found in such case to be solely responsible for the collision. Eden? A



1446 gross (933 net) ton steamship, built by W. Gray & Co. at West Hartlepool in 1879, owned in [1880](#) by Robert Ropner of West Hartlepool, ON 81503. Eden had left Newport, Wales, on Jan 7, 1880 for Aden with a cargo of J. Cory & Son coal, under the command of captain Wilkinson. It clearly survived the encounter.

The wreck was found by Red Sea Explorers owner Fiesel Khalaf and his team in 2018, reporting th wreck upright in 73 mtrs. With most of the hull remaining.

The loss of the S.S.FULICA

“Between 4.15 and 430am on the 11th Feb, last the Fulica with a crew of 25 hands on a voyage from Cardiff to Aden with a cargo of coal was in the Red Sea off Ashrafi Light. The wind at the time was about SW blowing a light breeze. The night was fine and clear but dark. The Fulica was proceeding under steam steering a course SE by S, making 9knots an hour. At this time the Eden which for a long time had been following the Fulica was observed at a distance of half a mile bearing on the port bow, and showing her mast and green lights.

At about 4.30, the revolving lights of Ashrafi which was bearing broad on the Fulica’s bow, appearing to be somewhat too near, the helm of the Fulica was starboarded to keep her clear of the land and then her helm was steadied, and when the light was abaft the beam the helm was ported.

The Eden overhauled the Fulica and came upon the port side of her and was then loudly hailed to starboard her helm, the helm of the Fulica being put hard a port, and her engines stopped, but the Eden with her stem and starboard bow struck the Fulica abaft the fore rigging and sank her in a few minutes”

The entire crew were rescued and taken on board the Eden. The court of enquiry deemed the Fulica to be solely to blame for the collision,

The wreck was found by Red Sea Explorers owner Fiesel Khalaf and his team in 2018, reporting the wreck upright in 73 mtrs. With most of the hull remaining, but damage to her bow. Described as similar to the Roslie Moller, it would appear she was carrying coal at the time of her demise. The wreck is covered in glassfish and is swept by strong current. Lying out from Ashrafi in the shipping lane.

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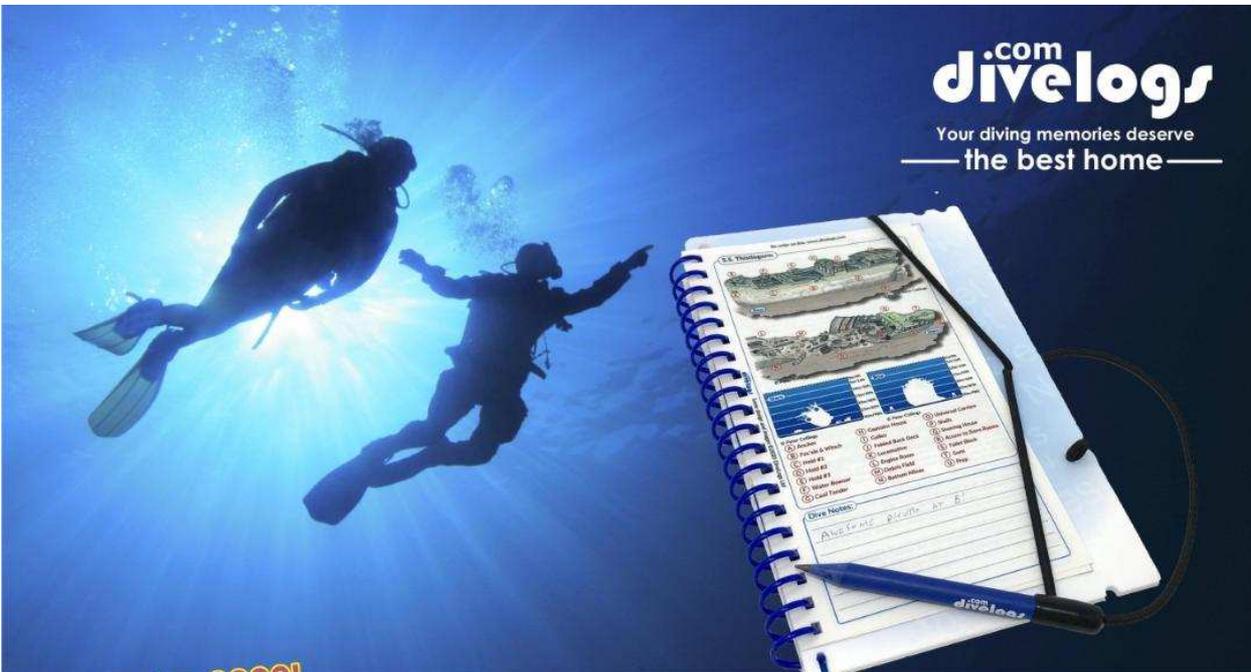


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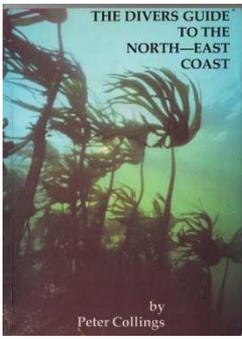
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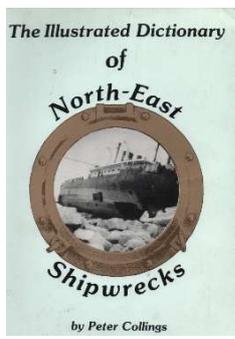




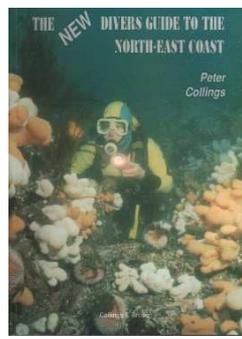
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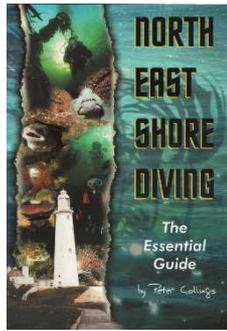
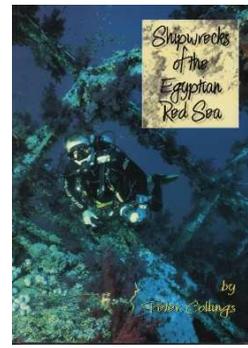
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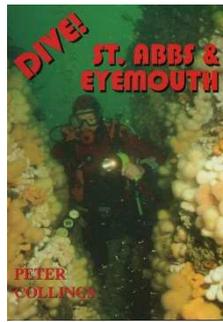
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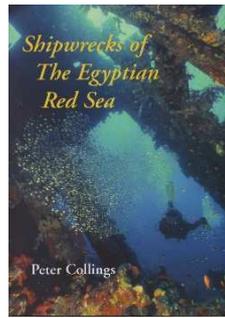
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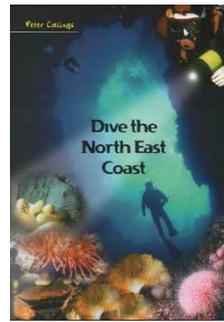
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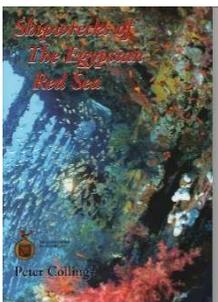
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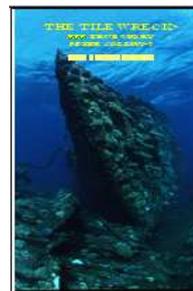
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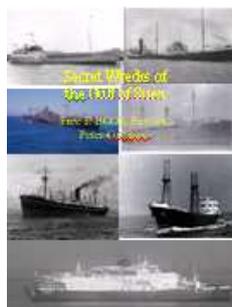
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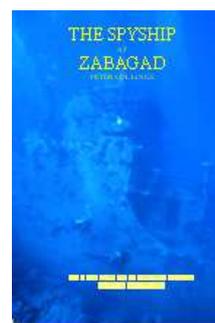
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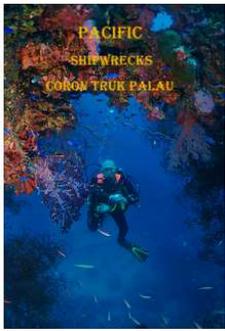
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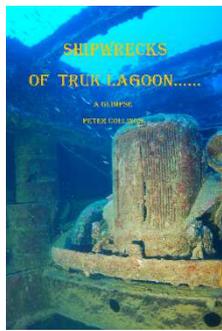
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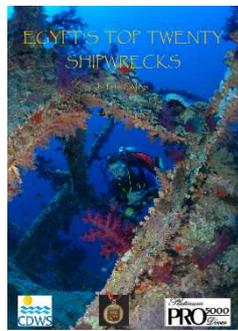
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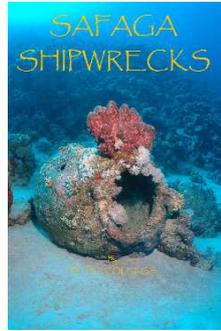
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SHIPWRECKS OF MALTA AND GOZO



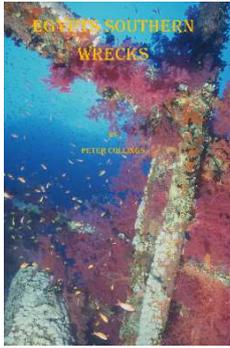
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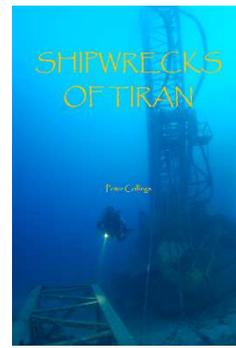
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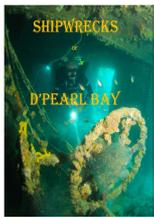


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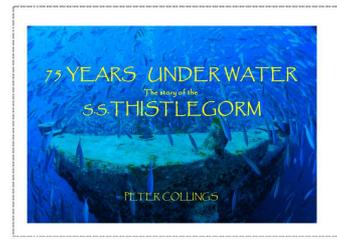
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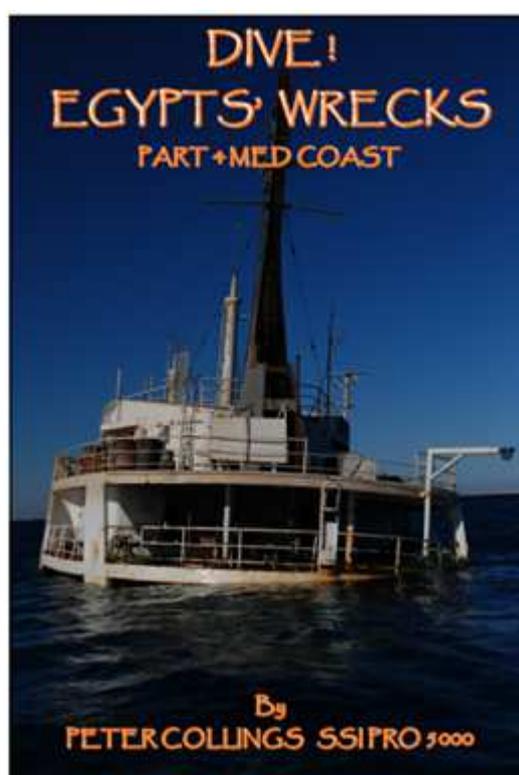
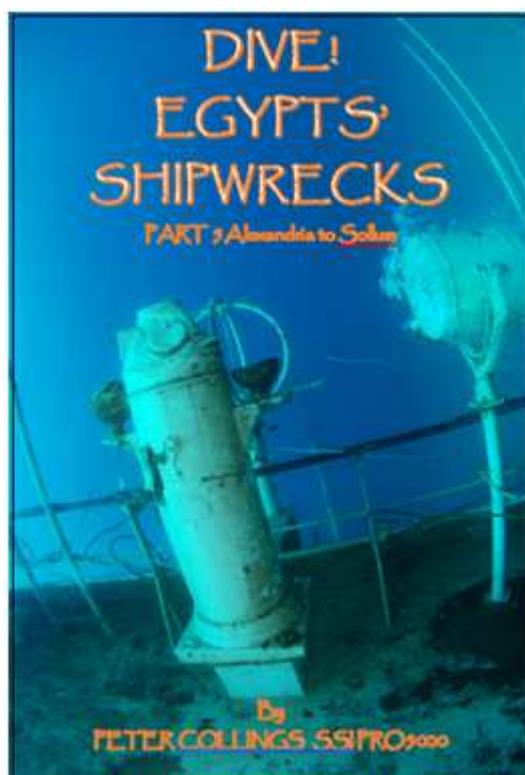
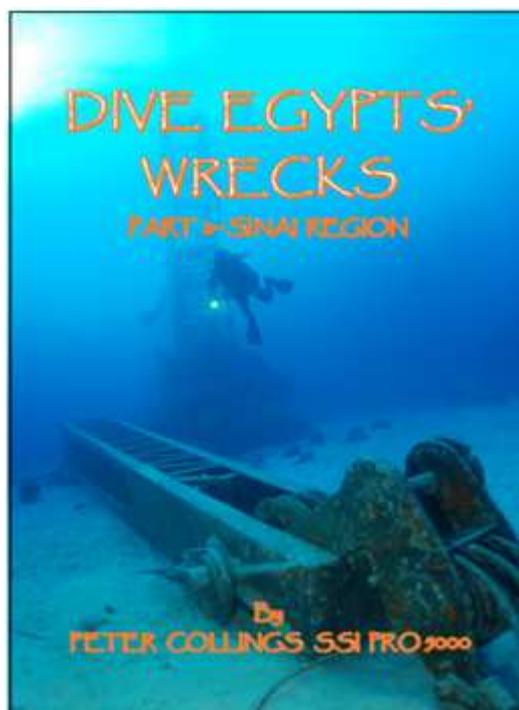
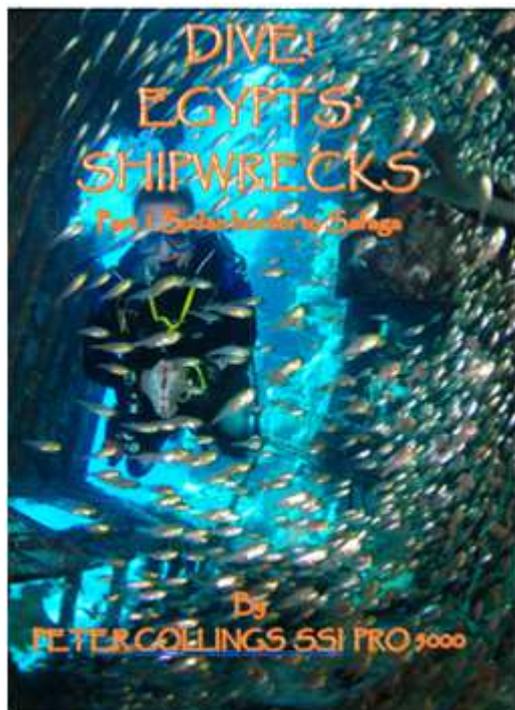


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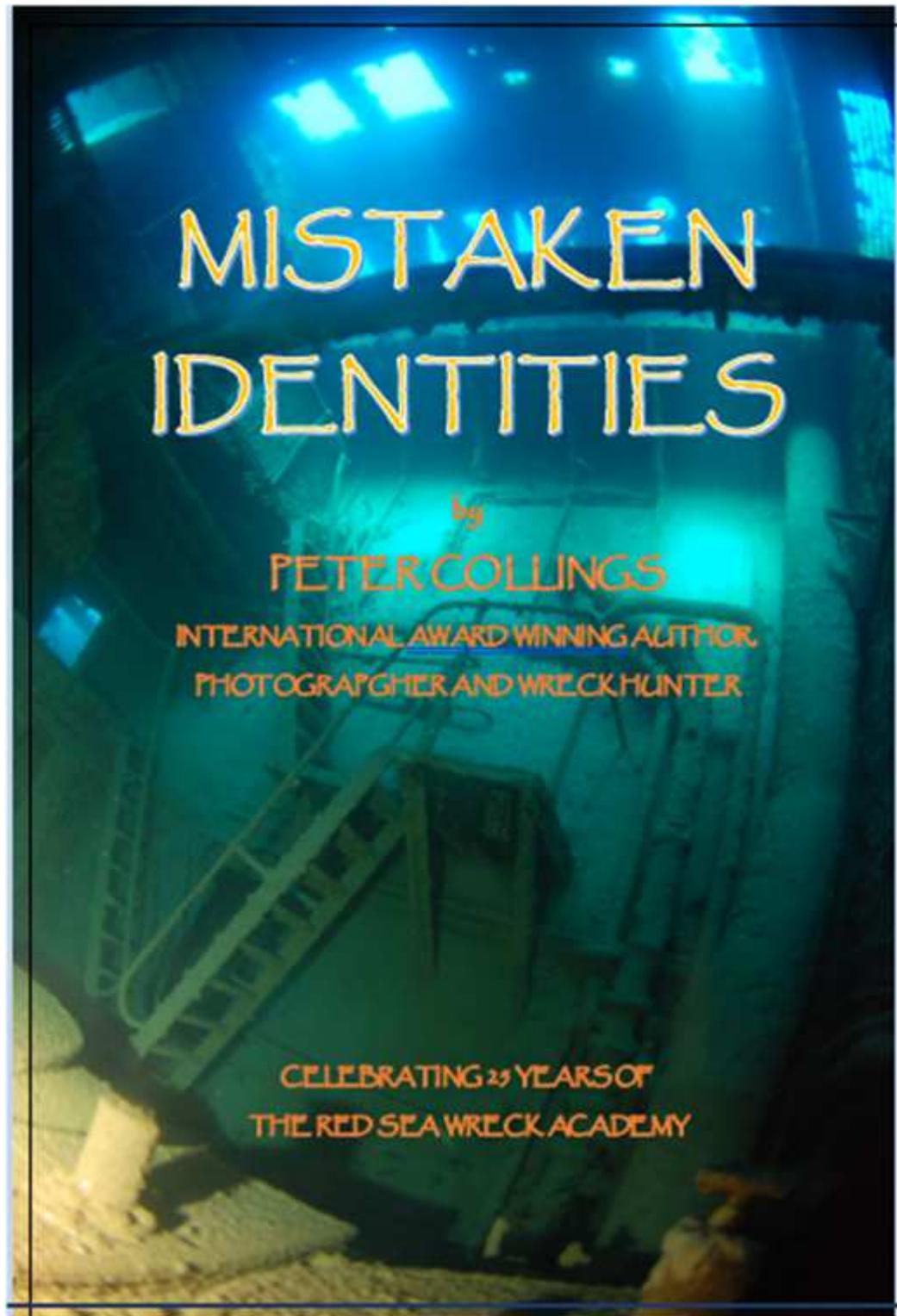


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E book concept

The idea of the E-Book series came about after seeing so many incorrect publications quoting the wrong identity of the Tile Wreck at Abu Nuhas in the Egyptian Red Sea. Despite a plethora of undeniable facts presented by myself and members of the Red Sea Wreck Academy, self-proclaiming experts still, for reasons known only to them, continued to quote the Marcus as the Chrisoula K. It was archive photographs from Howard Rosenstein and the location of the ships bell, which added weight to Stephan Jablonski's accounts of the sinkings'. This new material gave us enough to produce the first E-book in 2008.

Being free from restrictions it soon found its way around the world and was passed on from diver to diver. It had the desired effect. Now more and more reports carry the correct identity. Sadly some don't!

It was also an opportunity to give something back to diving. Of course there was also controversy over the identity and purpose of the Russian Wreck at Zabagad, and this lead to the second title. "75 Years Underwater" is THE definitive guide to the worlds most dived wreck. "Suez Wrecks" highlights the achievements of our regular wreck hunting trips up into the Gulf and "dive Egypt's wrecks" in 5 volumes is the most comprehensive guide to these waters .Other area's are also featured ;Subic Bay,Leros Truk Lagoon, Maldives Malta Coron and Palau.

12 years on, the project has proved its worth, despite being ignored by the diving press, and with its place on the issuu platform at KUBI/MIFLEX continues to provide true and accurate information on many of the worlds best wrecks.

So now we have a total of 25 titles available, and more on the way, yours to enjoy and pass on to anyone who may be interested. Don't forget we run regular expeditions and safaris to all these featured wrecks.

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PETER COLLINGS

Peter began diving in 1970. In 1985 he wrote the first of 35 diving related books, and has won several international awards for his publications and underwater photography. His articles and photographs have appeared consistently throughout the international diving press since 1983,

A BSAC Advanced instructor, (Red Sea Wreck Academy) SSI PRO 5000 DIVER and TDI Advance Trimix diver, Peter has lead over 500 wreck and photo safaris

around the world, logging over 7500 dives, and along with his regular team of experts has located and identified many of the shipwrecks in Egyptian waters.

Peter has worked closely with several tourist Authorities such as ESTA, Istria, Chuuk and most recently Leros Active writing and publishing a 25 title series of E-guide books. Several more locations are earmarked in this series of guides which promote tourism through shipwrecks.



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