

Making Sense Of Scapa Flow

There's always something new to learn about the wrecks of Scapa Flow, as wreck detective Lawson Wood discovered ...



Stern Interior on the Dyle



The Dyle

AS THE author of the Scapa Flow Dive Guide, the work never actually stops even post-publication, as there are always new and exciting discoveries to be made. Now gearing up for its 3rd edition, new and important information has come to light thanks to the extensive research of Kevin Heath and through both of us painstakingly going through all of the archival photographs during WWI and WWII and War Department records.

Kevin in particular discovered in one instance, that back in 1914 when the Admiralty were sinking some of the first blockships in Burra Sound, they made a dreadful spelling error! This is not the first time that such mistakes have happened, as I found out during my research for the book Shipwrecks of The Cayman Islands.

Back to Scapa Flow, and trawling through the National Archives in Kew and the Maritime Museum in Greenwich. We discovered that there was no such ship as the *Doyle*. Sometimes confused with the *Moyle* which was a 1,761 tonne steel, 79.3m (260ft) long, single screw coastal steamer built in Troon. Registered in Belfast, she was used as a Blockship, but not in Scapa Flow, she was sunk in the approaches to Dunkirk on 4

June 1940. Ian Whittaker, who compiled the excellent wreck resource book 'Off Scotland', confirmed these details for me. That spelling error has contributed to the wrong name being used from the date of her sinking in 1915. The ship that was actually sunk in Scapa Flow on 7 October 1914 is now to be known as the *Dyle*.

Built in Newcastle by A. Leslie & Co. Engineers in 1879 for W. Johnson in yard No. 209, she was sold to Turner Brightman & Co in 1886 and finally became the *Dyle* when she was subsequently sold to De Clerck & Van Helmerlyk in 1902 and registered in Antwerp, Belgium. She was eventually sold to a British shipbreakers in 1914, who resold her to the Admiralty for use as a Blockship. Of iron construction with five bulkheads and a 177NHP 2-Cylinder engine and one propeller; she weighed 954 tonnes and was 260ft (79.25m) long.

Many regard the *Dyle* as being the best of the diveable blockships in Burra Sound. As the smallest of the three most intact blockships (The *Gobernador Boreis* and the *Tabarka* being the other two), the *Dyle* is completely open in aspect. Lying on her port side and fairly well embedded in the gravel seabed, her propeller is very distinctive, covered in miniature plumose anemones. Her wooden decks

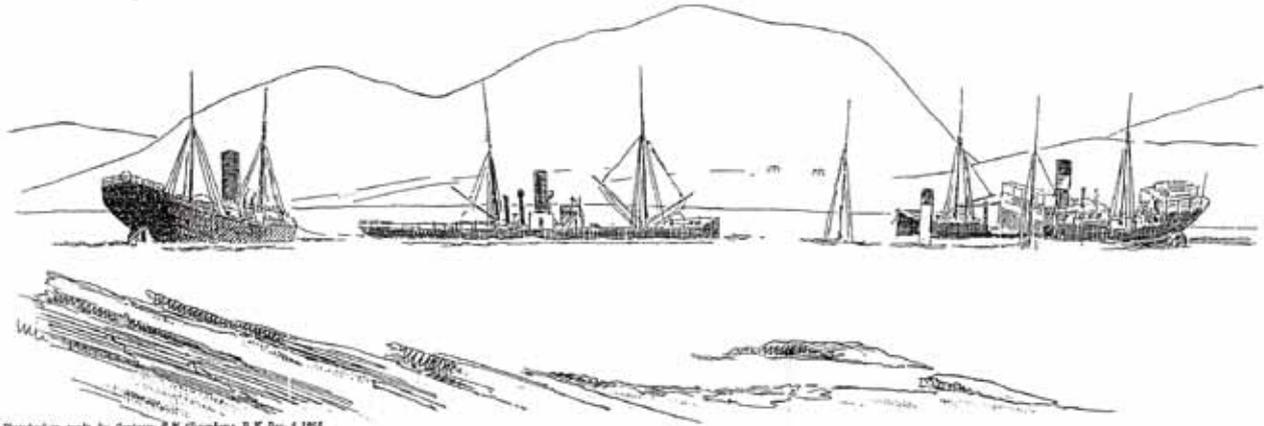
are long gone, creating easily managed swim-throughs between the supporting iron ribs. Both the bows and stern are relatively intact and topped with kelp making for some excellent photographic opportunities.

Other discrepancies have also occurred in the descriptions of the *Clio (I)* and the *Clio (II)* over at the opposite side of Scapa Flow at the Churchill Barriers. Both ships were thought to be steamers, identical in size at 2,733 tonnes, 70m (230ft) long, built in Hartlepool in 1889, but sunk 10 months apart. The records should now show the following: *Clio (I)*: 2,733 tonne steamer, 90m (300ft) long, built in West Hartlepool in 1889 and sunk in Water Sound on 29 April 1914. (She was scrapped prior to the construction of Barrier IV. Confused with the identically named S.S. *Clio* that was sunk ten months later at Barrier III on 27 February 1915).

S.S. *Clio (II)*: 793 tonne steamer 70.1m (230ft) long, she was built in Kinghorn in 1873 and sunk in Weddell Sound on 27 February 1915. (The firing circuit failed and the *Clio* was swept out to sea. A wreck out to the east of Glimps Holm may be this ship. Confused with the identically named *Clio* that was sunk 10 months earlier at Barrier IV on 29 April, 1914).

Further research by Kevin Heath has now confirmed and cleared up some confusion

SUNKEN VESSELS - SCAPA FLOW



Sketches made by Captain R.K. Chambers R.N. Dec. 1 1915

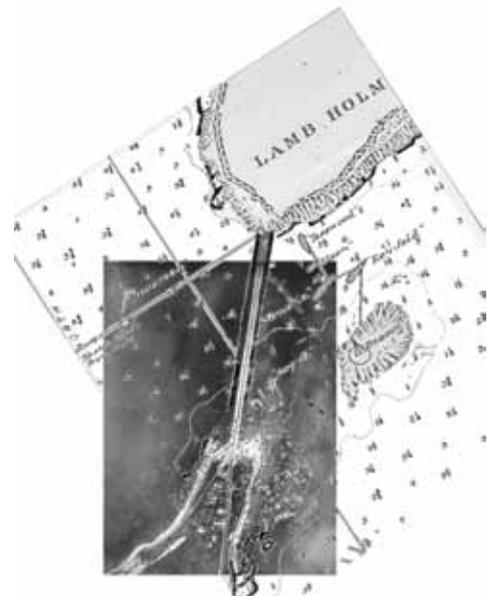
ROTHERFIELD

BUDRIE

RONDA URMSTONE GRANGE

RIBRA SOUND - Co. of the Northward

208...	Dovre	Bk	Nor	Tvedstrand	400	75	Tved-	A. B. Olsen	P.O. Y.P. Giefeldt b.	...	Lvpl
209...	Dovre	Bk	Nor	Flekk'fjord	304	78	Aradal	A. Jacobs	F.E.O.H.	...	Exp Gbg
210...	Dowan Hill	Bk	Br	Glasgow	1976	93	Pt. Glas-	J. M. Camp-	St; BH	...	San F
211...	Dowgate	Scw	Br	London	1986	91	Stockton	H. W. Dillon	Cyl; 22; 30, 64; 42;	...	Prot
212...	Doyo Maru	Scw	Jap	Tokio	1242	80	Glasgow	I. Kube	Cyl; 23; 62; 45;	...	Pd O
213...	Drachenfels	Scw	Ger	Bremen	4704	99	Newcastle	Deutsche	Cyl; 24; 36; 25; 4;	...	N Y
214...	Dragoman	Scw	Br	Liverpool	3215	90	Newcastle	W. & R.	Cyl; 24; 40; 44; 45;	...	N Y
215...	Drammenseren	Bk	Nor	Drammen	629	77	Sunderland	E. B. Aaby	I; BH	...	Lvpl



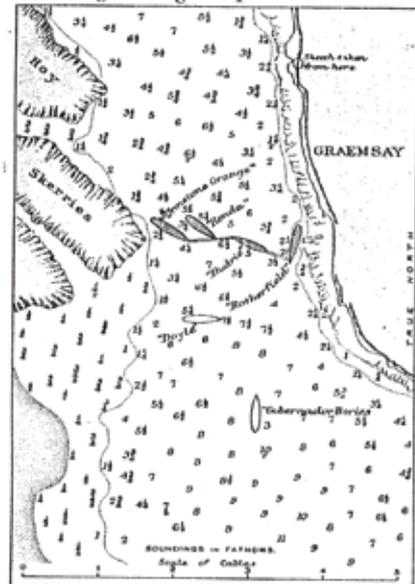
222...	Durbridge	B	Br	London	1121	70	Pt. Glas-	Potter	St; BH	...	San F
400...	Durendart	Scw	Ger	Hansen	2429	106	Flensburg	Roland	Cyl; 20; 36; 52; 29	...	N Y
401...	Dyle	Scw	Hlg	Antwerp	654	79	Newcastle	De Clerk &	Cyl; 22; 62; 36;	...	Ned
402...	Dynas Powis	Scw	Br	London	1380	78	Stockton	Ralph E.	Cyl; 24; 36; 52; 36;	...	Balt
403...	Dynamae	B	Br	Liverpool	1800	72	Liverpool	H. Fernie	I; BH; Dk; 11; 32	...	St J

State of Tide $\frac{1}{2}$ Flood

Name	Length (Feet)	Date Sunk	Remarks
Date of Report			26-6-15.
Urmstone Grange	340	22-3-14	Unballasted. Has not moved. In very good condition. Brecastle nearly submerged. Will last a long time.
Rotherfield	320	23-9-14	Unballasted. Has moved slightly. In good condition. Brecastle nearly submerged. Will last a long time.
Doyle	260	7-10-14	Unballasted. Completely submerged. Three fathoms over her at L.W. Davis visible.
Governador Bories	286	12-10-14	Unballasted. Completely submerged. Three fathoms over her at L.W. Davis visible.
Date of Report			26-9-16.
Ronda	274	20-8-15	Concrete Ballasted. In good condition and likely to last.
Budrie	285	3-10-15	Concrete Ballasted. In good condition and likely to last.



Part of Original Chart C.S.D. No 5 showing soundings and position of Wrecks



Making Sense Of Scapa Flow

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over the blockships in Skerry Sound to the east of Churchill Barrier II. The wreck we assumed was the *Cape Ortegat* should now be recognised as the *Almeria*, as the remains on the seabed only show two boilers. The *Cape Ortegat* had three boilers and as the area where she was sunk was in the deepest part of the Skerry Sound channel it looks entirely possible that the ship sunk into the deepest part of channel, similar to the fate of the *Minieh* to the west of Barrier I.

Through studying naval photographs and documents; Ordnance Survey and other aerial resources; the archives in the Orkney Library and newspapers, as well as all records held in the National Archives, we have discovered no evidence or records of her being scrapped for salvage, so we can only assume that the *Cape Ortegat* now lies directly underneath Churchill Barrier II as no other evidence has been found – yet. A full survey of the substrata of the barrier is yet to be undertaken to confirm this, but the evidence at this stage is very strong for the findings.

Also over on the Churchill Barriers we now have positive confirmation of the *Naja*! I have this Blockship on Barrier IV that crossed Water Sound, identified as the *Maja*. Again, a spelling blunder

led us all along the wrong path, and I have seen the same ship identified as the *Nadja*, *Maja*, *Nada* and the *Madga* in various books and periodicals. We can now confirm that this ship is the *Naja*.

We have her original bill of sale; how much she was then resold to the Admiralty for; how much Metal Industries charged the Admiralty for her sinking, her position and even a contemporary line drawing of her in her eventual position. She was never salvaged and still lies beneath the ever encroaching sands of Water Sound.

In the last few years, virtually all obvious signs of these once great blockships are now gone. The shoreline is now over 130m (400ft) further out to sea and sand dunes have covered virtually all of the ships, excepting for the bridge of the *Collingdoc* and a small part of the steel mast of the *Carron*.

The Warwick aircraft which ditched after engine trouble on 10 June 1944 was always a mystery. We searched for her relentlessly over several seasons near Lyness on the Isle of Hoy and she has finally been found, or what is left of her remains. She actually ended up on the shore and parts of her bomb bay are still underwater, but what was left on the shoreline was all salvaged.

Finally, a more contemporary shipwreck is located near Houton to the north west of Scapa Flow. A small fibreglass cabin cruiser with the registration numbers TS37 sunk apparently in 1995, however the photograph that we have managed to get from the Orkney Image Library was taken in December 1995. She once belonged to the late Kenny Bain and was driven ashore in bad weather. Subsequently towed off from the shore by a local pilot boat, she was so badly damaged that she sank on her way back to Scapa Pier. She's now lying on the bottom of the flow just off Greenigoe in 29m (97ft) of water, relatively intact and upright on the seabed.

Undeniably, some of the ancient High Seas Battle Fleet are seriously deteriorating, but with due care and caution, there is no reason why we cannot continue to enjoy these superb shipwrecks in an area which can be dived all year round and is suitable for all levels of diver. The shipwrecks of Scapa Flow are some of the most important historical shipwrecks accessible to divers in the whole of northern Europe and the fact that we are still discovering information on their history is fascinating enough to make you want to go back and dive them all again.

Dyle interior





Diver exploring the Dyle

Dyle bow with diver



Dyle propellor

