



**FORGOTTEN WRECKS
OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR**

**HM Trawler *ALBION II*
SITE REPORT**



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i Acknowledgments

The Forgotten Wrecks of the First World War project was generously funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund through their Heritage Grants Programme.

MAT would like to thank all the volunteers who gave up their time to help with research and to dive on the *Albion II*. Roland Brookes, Laura Mears, Duncan Ross, and Andy Williams.

Maritime Archaeology Trust staff involved in fieldwork: Jan Gillespie, Christin Heamagi, and Brandon Mason.

Maritime Archaeology Trust staff involved in research and reporting: Jan Gillespie, Jasmine Noble-Shelley, Julie Satchell.

Special thanks also to local dive boat skipper and historian Dave Wendes who made his research collection available for scrutiny by MAT staff.

ii Copyright Statement

This report has been produced by the MAT with the assistance of funding provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund through their Heritage Grants Programme. Unless otherwise stated all images are copyright of the MAT.

iii List of Figures

FIGURE 1: FT *BEATRICE* M212, THE SAME TYPE AND BUILDER AS *ALBION*

([HTTP://WWW.LLANGIBBY.ECLIPSE.CO.UK/MILFORDTRAWLERS/ACCIDENTS%20&%20INCIDENTS/BEATRICE.HTM](http://www.llangibby.eclipse.co.uk/milfordtrawlers/accidents%20&%20incidents/beatrice.htm) CAPTION: AS *BERGEN IJM-16* COURTESY OF JAN HARTEVELD VIA GIL MAYES) 5

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1 Project Background

Forgotten Wrecks of the First World War is a Heritage Lottery Funded project which is dedicated to raising the profile of a currently under-represented aspect of the First World War. While attention is often focused on the Western Front and major naval battles like Jutland, historic remains from the war lie, largely forgotten, in and around our seas, rivers and estuaries.

With over 1,100 wartime wrecks along England's south coast alone, the conflict has left a rich heritage legacy and many associated stories of bravery and sacrifice. These underwater memorials represent the vestiges of a vital, yet little known, struggle that took place on a daily basis, just off our shores. The study and promotion of these archaeological sites presents a unique opportunity to better interpret them and improve physical and virtual access.

The project focuses on underwater and coastal sites between Kent and Cornwall, which include merchant and naval ships, passenger, troop and hospital ships, U-boats, ports, wharfs, buildings and foreshore hulks. These sites, under water and on the foreshore, have been degrading and deteriorating due to natural and human processes for approximately 100 years and, as a result, are extremely fragile. In many cases, this project represents a final opportunity to record what remains on the seabed and foreshore before it is lost forever.

The project aims to characterise the nature and extent of the maritime First World War archaeological resource surviving on the south coast's seabed and around the coast. This will enable an understanding of maritime activity just off our shores during the conflict and provide a window onto some of the surviving sites. While it will not be possible to visit and record all c.1,100 vessels dating to the First World War, lost off the south coast of England, a representative sample of sites have been selected for more detailed study, analysis and interpretation. This report collates information collected during the project, relating to one of the south coast's First World War wrecks, namely that of *Albion II*.

2 Methodology

General detail on the methodologies employed during the project are outlined within *Forgotten Wrecks of the First World War: Project Methodology Report*, this report section concentrates on approaches and resources relating specifically to the *Albion II*.

2.1 Desk Based Historic Research

Online information/sources

A range of online sources were searched for information on *Albion II*, with the following being identified:

Pastscape:	http://www.pastscape.org.uk/hob.aspx?hob_id=1162139
Wrecksite EU:	http://www.wrecksite.eu/wreck.aspx?11464
uboat.net	http://www.uboat.net/wwi/ships_hit/160.html
Other URL:	http://www.llangibby.eclipse.co.uk/milfordtrawlers/accidents%20&%20incidents/albion.htm http://1914-1918.invisionzone.com/forums/index.php?showtopic=93119 http://www.fleetwood-trawlers.info/index.php/2009/01/st-zena-dare-fd149/

Records at other archives/ collections

Historian Dave Wendes kindly gave access to his research collection relating to HMS *Albion II*. This collection contained records from The National Archives which are associated with the sinking of HMT *Albion II*:

- ADM137/3151 Court of Enquiry
- ADM53/33837 Log of HMS *Apley*
- ADM53/58115 Log of HMS *Robina*
- BT110/235 Transcript of Register

2.2 Associated Artefacts

No artefacts positively identified as being from the wreck of the *Albion II* have yet been located, those reported to the Receiver of Wreck are now considered to have come from the wreck of the *Spiros* (Pastscape 2015).

2.3 Site Visit/Fieldwork

Forgotten Wrecks site visits and fieldwork aimed to:

- Provide opportunities for volunteers to access and take an active role in the recording and research of a range of different types of maritime First World War site.
- Record extant remains for heritage records.
- Record extant remains for public dissemination, enabling 'virtual' access for those not able to achieve physical access.

The most appropriate methods for site recording were chosen on a site-by-site basis, and included: site sketch, measured survey, photography and/ or video.

Forgotten Wrecks funded diving from the dive boat *Wight Spirit* took place on the wreck of HMT *Albion II* on 26 June 2014.

Initial dives aimed to assess the condition of the remains and obtain a sketch drawing, then to build on this information with a measured sketch/survey and photographic recording where possible. Four divers undertook a total of 168 minutes diving on the wreck. The dive team used self-contained breathing apparatus (SCUBA) with a breathing gas of oxygen enriched air (EANx) using accelerated decompression procedures.

Diving conditions were exceptionally poor on the *Albion II* dive site. Video and photography were abandoned due to almost blackout conditions and very poor visibility.

3 Vessel Biography: *Albion II*

Albion II was chosen as one of the Forgotten Wrecks case study sites because of the important part Auxiliary Patrol vessels played during the First World War. The vessel also represents one of the steam trawlers commissioned to help with mine sweeping during the First World War (Figure 1).

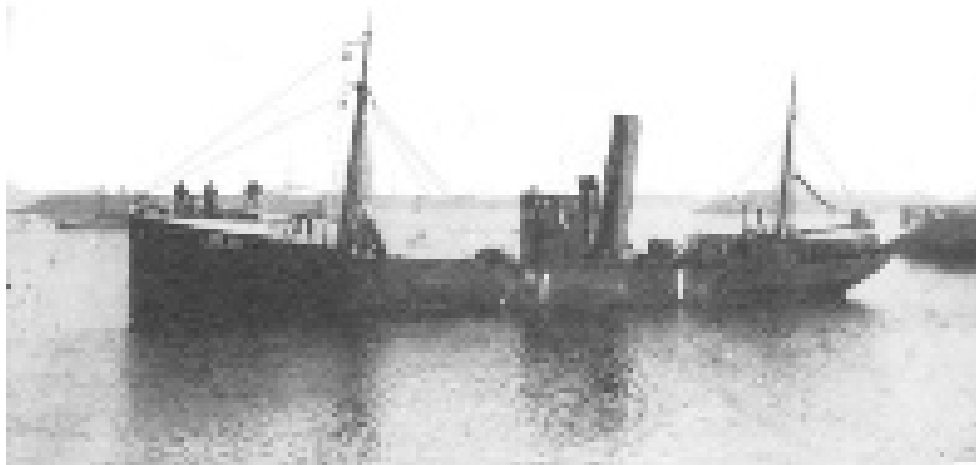


Figure 1: FT *Beatrice* M212, the same type and builder as *Albion*

(<http://www.llangibby.eclipse.co.uk/milfordtrawlers/accidents%20&%20incidents/beatrice.htm> caption: As *BERGEN* IJM-16 Courtesy of Jan Hartevelde via Gil Mayes)

3.1 Vessel Type and Build

HM Trawler *Albion II* was built by Smiths Dock, North Shields, and completed in December 1907. The ship was a British steel screw steam fishing trawler with a three cylinder triple expansion engine with one single ended boiler and 68 registered horse power. The vessel had a gross tonnage of 240 tons. The 120ft 3ins (c.36.6m) long ship had a beam of 21ft 6ins (c.6.5m) (Wendes, 2006).

3.2 Pre-war Career

Between 22 December 1907 and 1 August 1914 FV *Albion II* (then known as *Albion*) was a fishing trawler sometimes working in Moroccan and Portuguese waters, *Albion* made local news several times due to hefty and valuable catches. According to the *Pembroke County Guardian* of 21 January 1910, the *Albion* brought in a catch which realised £632 (Milford Trawlers).

There were seven Masters of the vessel prior to the vessel being requisitioned by the Admiralty and converted to a minesweeper in August 1914 (Milford Trawlers). The names of the masters can be found in Section 8.3.

The vessel was renamed *Albion II* on 9 April 1915 (Milford Trawlers).

3.3 First World War Use & Loss

The *Albion II* was a British vessel, owned by the Pater Steam trawling Company and was operated at the time of loss by the Admiralty for service as a minesweeper (official number 127410, pendant number 363). At the time of the sinking the *Albion II* was on route from Portsmouth bound for the Needles area to sweep for mines. The vessel was armed with a 1 x 3 pounder gun (Pastscape, 2015, Wendes, 2006:70).

The ship was one of four vessels sent to minesweep to the southwest of the Needles. Orders were given to the Auxiliary Patrol to sweep the area to clear it of mines along with the *Zena Dare* on the morning of 13 January 1916. The sweeping gear became entangled and a mine was found to be on the kite (an underwater device designed to work with the sweeping wire) when hauling it in. Captain Clark Mead halted the lift but could not see the mine, on slackening the sweeping wire so the mine could be cut free and destroyed the kite wire was hauled in again and the mine exploded. The seacocks were blown out and the engine room flooring was reported to be lifting. It was reported to Captain Mead by the engineer that the water was over the crank pits below and water was gaining rapidly (Wendes, 2006).

The second hand, Frederick Morgan, was asked at the subsequent court of enquiry if there was no attempt to save the ship to which he replied that it was impossible as the water was coming in and the steam pumps were no good, he reported that they were about a mile off land. The first engineer Charles Neller told the enquiry that the explosion was on the port side of the keel in the fore part of the engine room just abaft the boiler and the steam in the engine room was coming from the cold water running in and coming into contact with the hot boiler, the flooring of the engine room was blow up and the water was then running in the furnaces (Wendes, 2006).

The Captain and the crew of 12 abandoned ship 15 minutes after the explosion and boarded the *Zena Dare* and the *Albion II* sank 30 minutes later. The mine had been laid by UC-5 which had earlier sunk the *Algerian*.

3.4 Associated Vessels

The sailing trawler *Zena Dare* was a Fleetwood sailing trawler built by the Dundee Shipbuilding Co Ltd and launched in 1909. The trawler was requisitioned for war service as a minesweeper by the Admiralty in December 1914 and carried a three pounder gun. After the war the ship was returned to its owner in Swansea and was wrecked in March 1937 (The Bosuns Watch, 2008).

The German UCI type submarine UC-5 commanded by Oberleutnant Herbert Pustkuchen had laid the mine that sank the *Albion II*. He was a successful commander being twice awarded the Iron Cross and the Royal House Order of Hohenzollern. He died in command of UC-66 along with 22 others on 27 May 1917 off the Isles of Scilly, when the submarine was bombed and sunk by RNAS Curtis H.12 flying boat No. 8656 piloted by William Anderson who was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for the attack (Uboat.net, 1995-2016).

UC-5 was attributed to the sinking of 28 ships (36,126 tons), seven ships damaged (20,262 tons) and two warships sunk (1,105 tons) and finally ran aground on 27 April 1916 on the Shipwash Shoal where the boat was scuttled but charges failed to explode. The crew were captured by HMS *Firedrake* and the boat put onto a floating dock which was dangerous as there were two unexploded bombs on board. It was towed and displayed at Temple Pier on the Thames River, then moved to Central Park in New York the following year for propaganda purposes (Figure 2) (Wikipedia, 2017).



Figure 2: UC-5 on display in Central Park, New York for propaganda purposes
(public domain https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SM_UC-5)

3.5 Post-loss Activity

Albion II was discovered by a salvage firm in 1975 and was upright and complete (Pritchard and McDonald, 2001).

The wreck of the *Albion II* was thought to be the *Reindeer*, a wreck nearby, and the name used by local fishermen, several artefacts have been recovered from the area, including an 8" bell, oil lamp tubes, portholes and pulleys, but it is now thought that they belong to the *Spiros* (Pastscape, 2015).

The wreck of the *Albion II* was later identified by the ships bell (Pritchard and McDonald, 2001).

4 Seabed Remains

4.1 Site Location and Environment

Albion II sits in around 25m of water on a shingle seabed around three miles off St Catherine's Point south of the Isle of Wight in position 50.63806 -1.5697 WGS84 (UKHO) (Figure 3). The sand and shingle has partially buried much of the wreckage.



Figure 3: Location of HMT *Albion II*

4.2 Archaeological Methodology

The methodology planned for diving the *Albion II* consisted of:

- Establish a baseline on the site;
- Develop the preliminary site plan, adding further details and key measurements;
- Photos of key features,
- Survey profile of the wreck, including key heights for future monitoring of structural integrity/sediment levels.

The dark and murky conditions underwater on the day of the dive prevented much of the planned methodology from taking place. Photography was impossible but some Go-pro video footage was attempted and some divers took measurements when locating key features.

4.3 Description of Surviving Vessel Remains

The wreck of the *Albion II* lies on a shingle sea bed with most of it buried under the shingle. The boiler is partially buried and stands around 4m high by approximately 2m wide. The triple expansion engine lies slightly tilted over to the port side, approximate measurements of the engine were taken as 150 cm long by 50 cm wide.

Parts of the hull are exposed with a more substantial area exposed at the bow. A gun mounting lies just forward of the boiler (Wendes, 2006) but this was not detected by divers on the occasion of the Forgotten Wrecks dive because of the exceptionally poor conditions.

5. Site Significance & Potential Further Research

The remains of the *Albion II* appear to be largely broken up and much is covered by shingle. The shingle seabed can move around at times after storms, and there may be times when this wreck is more exposed and can therefore reveal more than at present. Sources claim that the wreck was in good condition in 1975 but has since broken up (Pastscape, 2015). Despite the successful career prior to war service little can be found about *Albion II* and an image has not been located. Further research may bring up more information about the ship, and future diving on the site, especially

after there has been substantial seabed movement possibly after a storm, may expose more of the wreck, and could reveal more about its remains.

6. Bibliography

Websites

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<http://1914-1918.invisionzone.com/forums/index.php?showtopic=93119> Accessed 11/10/17

Milford Trawlers (No date). *Albion M219*. Available at:

<http://www.llangibby.eclipse.co.uk/milfordtrawlers/accidents%20&%20incidents/albion.htm>

Accessed 11/10/17 Accessed March 2016

Pastscape (2015). HMS *Albion II*. Available at:

http://www.pastscape.org.uk/hob.aspx?hob_id=1162139 Accessed 11/10/17

The Bosun's Watch (2008). S.T. *Zena Dare* FT149. Available at: <http://www.fleetwood-trawlers.info/index.php/2009/01/st-zena-dare-fd149/>

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Pritchard, M and McDonald, K. (2001). *A Diver Guide, Dive Wight and Hampshire*. Second Edition, 2001, No. 22. pp38

Wendes, D. (2006). *South Coast Shipwrecks off East Dorset and Wight 1870-1979*. BAS Printers. pp70

7. Appendices

7.1. Documents relating to HMT *Albion II*

What	Ref.	Where	Date accessed
Log of HMS <i>Apley</i>	ADM53/33837	TNA	10/11/17
Court of Enquiry	ADM137/3151	TNA	10/22/17
Log of HMS <i>Robina</i>	ADM53/58115	TNA	10/11/17
Transcript of Register	BT110/235	TNA	10/11/17

7.2 List of Masters of the Trawler *Albion* prior to Requisition by the Admiralty

Seven masters are listed prior to Admiralty requisition, these are:

Thomas Edward Cooper, Cert. 6628, age 31, born Hull; residing 3 Gwilli Rd., Hakin, signed on 9 Jan 1908.

A.G. Owston, 7364, 32 Scarborough, 33 Marble Hall Road, Milford. 9 Apr, 18 Jun, 6 Nov, 1908.

James McDonald, 7989, 24 Hull; - 7 Oct 1908

A.G. Owston, 7364 Scarborough; - 6 Nov 1908

Alfred J Kersey, 7748, Stockton, Glenview House, Priory Hill, Milford. 5 Jan 1910

Thomas J. Hawkings 2014, 44, Brixham; 66 Priory Rd., Milford. 12 Jul, 22 Jul 1910; 7

Starbuck Rd., Milford. 9 Jan, 3 Jul 1911; Priory Rd., Milford, 1 Jul 1912, 8 Jan, 1913

James Clarke 3609, 47 Hull; - 20 Mar 1913

Albert Walter King, 7776