Indian City

On the 12th March 1915, the U-boat SM U-29 stopped the Indian City, a brand new British cargo steamer, 10 miles south of the Isles of Scilly. The submarine commander, Otto Weddigen, hailed the steamer and gave the crew 20 minutes to abandon ship. Once the crew had got clear in the ship’s boats, U-29 torpedoed the Indian City, which caught fire and sank several hours later.

Weddigen then manoeuvred his U-boat alongside the ship’s boats and took them in tow. The captain of Indian City was even invited on board the U-boat for a glass of wine, which he accepted! The crew were towed toward the Isles of Scilly and eventually cast off when Royal Navy patrol boats came out of harbour to attack the submarine.

U-29 encountered another two steamers that afternoon. Despite the dangers to which they had been exposed, Otto Weddigen’s gentlemanly conduct in allowing the crews time to abandon ship meant that no lives were lost in any of the sinkings. He and his crew were not quite so lucky though. On the 18th March the U-boat was rammed by HMS Dreadnought and Weddigen and his entire crew were lost.