

FORGOTTEN WRECKS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR



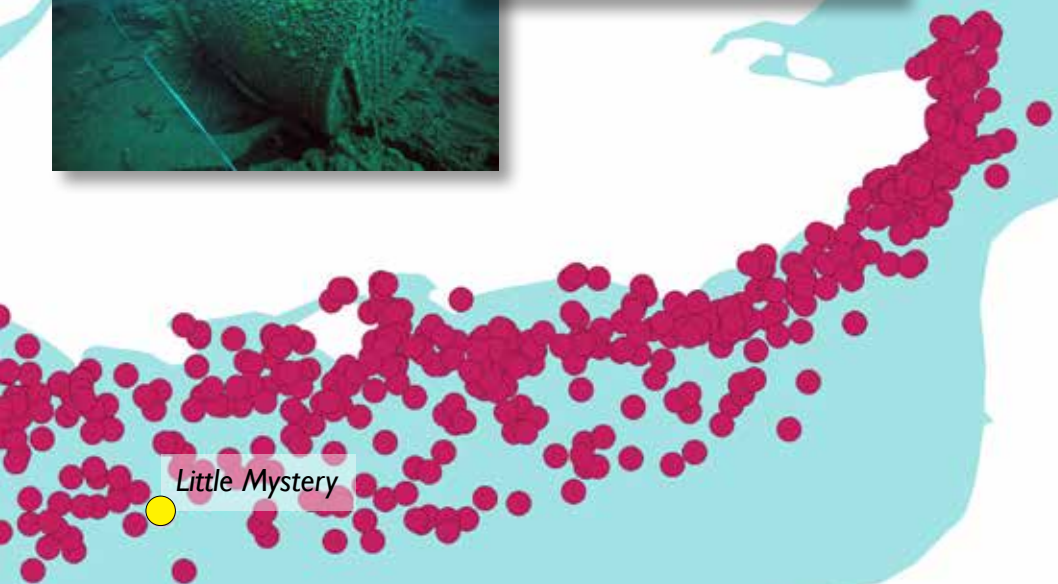
The loss of the
Little Mystery

About the Project

Forgotten Wrecks of the First World War is a Heritage Lottery funded (HLF) four year project devised and delivered by the Maritime Archaeology Trust to coincide with the centenary of the Great War. At the heart of the project is a desire to raise 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 more than 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. Through a programme of fieldwork, research, exhibitions and outreach, the project engaged communities and volunteers and provides a lasting legacy of information and learning resources relating to First World War wrecks, for future generations.

The wrecks of the John Mitchell (below) and the Gallia (right), both sunk during the war.



Little Mystery

This booklet was written by MAT volunteer Chris Heal.

Map: the c. 1,100 First World War wrecks along the south coast of the UK.
Front cover: Model of the Little Mystery, courtesy of the National Maritime Museum.

What a Difference a Day Makes:

The Loss of the *Little Mystery*

UC-61 had meanwhile gone south, and sank by bombs at 7.30 A.M. a small British sailing vessel, Little Mystery, some 25 miles south of Portland. Going north again...¹

What makes for a favoured victim among the over 7,000 vessels hit by U-boats in WWI?² A personal reaction to a curt mention in a list of misery? Something of beauty destroyed for small gain? A name that promised allure? An unknown grave?

Little Mystery, a wooden two-masted schooner, was built in 1887 by shipwright William Date at his yard on the Dart River near Kingsbridge, Devon.³ *Little Mystery* was bought that July by John Stephens, a Cornish small ship owner and entrepreneur, trading from his home port of Fowey and its sub-ports of Charlestown, Mevagissey and Par.⁴ While Stephens and his son Edward with his wife Mary Ann shared



Dates Boatyard, 1983. The visible ribs of a vessel belong to the Little Gem. Image courtesy of Knightsbridge Estuary U3A Local History Group

ownership of half the boat, the rest was split among another twenty people – ‘the butcher, the baker, the master, the manager and by widows and orphans and by local land-owning families’.⁵ One of Stephens’ first small schooners, *Little Beauty*, made a profit of £450 in its first year’s trading and the money was distributed to the shareholders by one of the owner’s sons ‘walking through the Fowey streets and the lanes of the surrounding countryside carrying a jingling wash-leather bag of golden sovereigns’.⁶

‘By national standards [Stephens] was not an enterprise of importance or particular significance, merely one of the many that were planted, grew and blossomed ... in Victorian England only to fade ... after the Great War.’⁷ However, the Stephens’ fleet did last for more than seventy years, managing over fifty vessels during that time. At its largest in 1902, the fleet comprised seventeen ships, averaging just 130 tons gross apiece.⁸ Early on, the fleet became known as the Company of Little Ships because some of them had names beginning with Little – ‘a fleet within a fleet’. ‘The distinction had a certain ambiguity since all of the vessels were little, but only ten – but never more than five at once - were *Little*.’ All were sailing ships with light crews which included some of the fastest passage-makers of their kind, trading as far as the Indian Ocean and the South Atlantic, though concentrating on the western ocean and, in poor economic times, the coasting business.

The first ‘Little’ in the Stephens’ fleet was *Little Beauty*, built at Polruan, Cornwall, in 1875, ‘so called because her timber was too small to be used in another ship, the *Ocean Swell*, being built at the same time’.⁹ *Little Mystery* was the sister ship of the *Little Wonder*, launched a year before it in 1886 from the same yard.²³ In 1893, *Little Gem* was added to the fleet, another sister ship of *Little Mystery* ‘from whose model she was built, the measurements of the two vessels hardly differing’.¹¹ They were singled-decked, carvel-built boats, eighty-four feet long, 114 gross tonnage when built, and noted for their clean lines, square stern and full female figureheads.¹² In 1894, *Little Mystery* was reduced to 95 tons following the addition of a lower forecabin, sail room, bosun’s store, master’s room and a chart room.¹³

Little Mystery and its sister ships epitomised their half-namesakes, the ‘small fry of the ocean’, and mostly traded to Newfoundland with salt, returning with dried fish cod.¹⁴ ¹⁵ ‘Until the beginning of the First World War there were nearly always six or seven of these vessels on the Atlantic.’ The Boon brothers of Bideford recalled that maintenance was done at a yard local to them.¹⁶ John Stephens would come from Fowey, sitting in his own small folding chair, watching work in progress on a Little or other fleet ship:

Of all the schooners we saw, those ships were the most perfect. They were all coloured green under the waterline and painted black above, their decks were scrubbed, their masts scraped and varnished – for they could afford to do those things in those days. The apprentices used to work overtime scraping off the surplus pitch after the caulking and thereby seeking to supplement their five shillings per week. Even then, Mr Stephens would be sitting there ... to make sure that we did a perfectly good job.¹⁷

Captain R A Fletcher wrote a love-book to the world of tall ships, but amongst its pages he made space to laud the small schooners which he saw, year in year out, ‘thrash their way back and forth’ across the Atlantic, chiefly carrying fish from Newfoundland, St Pierre, and Miquelon to Gibraltar or to Spanish or French ports.¹⁸ The Stephens’ ships performed winter and summer with a ‘regularity which spoke volumes for the seamanship of those who commanded them and was a glowing testimony to the strength of their construction, their suitability for their work, and the excellence of their equipment’. Fletcher named particularly *Little Secret* and *Little Mystery* as well known – ‘the romance of the sea can never die out while such vessels and such crews as manned them are afloat’.

Once I saw one of these ocean-going schooners showing what she could do in a howling North Atlantic gale, with the sea running mountains high ... The sailing ship I was in was under reduced canvas. As the schooner crossed our bows less than half a mile distant we could see her leaning over until her lee gunwale was under water. Her three little scraps of sail, looking not much bigger than handkerchiefs, tore her along at a great pace amid a smother of foam, and clouds of heavy spray and sometimes green water swept her from end to end. We could see two oilskin-clad figures at the wheel; they must have been firmly lashed or they would have been washed away. She seemed a living, a mad thing as she rushed down the slope of one wave and up the next, bounding ahead in a fashion that even the famous Dreadnought, the ‘wild boat of the Atlantic’ ... could not have surpassed.

Basil Greenhill, life-long champion of ships like *Little Mystery*, continued the paean: ‘These schooners did not often heave-to, indeed they ran often until it was too late to heave-to.¹⁹ Their particular danger, of course, was that of being pooped and swept clean by a fast following sea.’ The common method of combating this danger was to tow a hawser behind the vessel in order to slow it down and smooth its wake. ‘With a heavy sea, a small mistake would mean lost spars, perhaps a smashed wheel, cleared decks and a broach-to.’

Little Mystery usually carried four or five men drawn from the country around Fowey; West Country men known to the owner. ‘Local boys sometimes learned the tricks of this exacting trade in a few years of apprenticeship, and it is said that one small schooner once made an Atlantic passage under the command of a young man only eighteen years old.’

Little Mystery’s best known master was John Henry Greet of Plymouth. Born in 1867 in St Blazey, Cornwall, he passed his master’s certificate at Fowey in 1894, aged twenty-nine.²⁰ Greet’s own father was blind and lived by teaching the blind. Greet’s second wife, Rhoda, waited at home in Plymouth with their twelve-year-old daughter, also Rhoda.²¹ On Monday 30 April 1917, Greet, now fifty-two-years-old, and greatly experienced with his ship, was on a south by east course, twenty-five miles south-south-east from Portland Bill on the Dorset coast. *Little Mystery* was alone in a smooth sea and, through the slight haze, the ship was visible from six miles away. Despite all sails set, it was making only a vulnerable three knots in the light breeze from the north. *Little Mystery*’s cargo was 168 tons of coal, shipped by Hansa Brothers, loaded at Cardiff and bound for Cherbourg where it was consigned to Messrs I Cavroy of Paris.²²

The area around Portland was busy in 1917 patching up merchant ships, unloading trains with munitions and loading them into transports for the Western front.²³ The Portland naval authorities were also responsible for the controlled sailings in the French coal trade, a lifeline to the French economy since the Germans had captured their eastern coalfields. Two months before,

matters became so serious that the French prime minister sent a three-man delegation at a day's notice from Paris to London asking for them 'to be received without delay by Mr Lloyd George and the competent British authorities on questions relating to coal'.²⁴

The French Government are faced by an extremely grave crisis caused by the coal shortage in France. This shortage has already necessitated the closing down of a number of factories engaged in work of national defence. M. Briand fears that if the present state of affairs is prolonged there will be an interruption in the production of the most important requirements.²⁵ The French Government consider that it is essential to address to the British Government an urgent appeal begging them to make a serious effort capable of remedying this state of affairs.



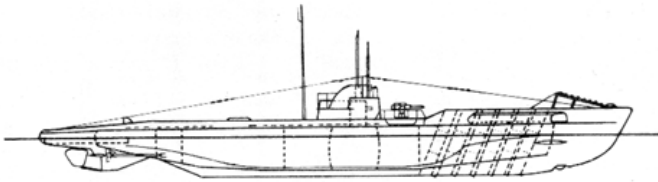
Portland Harbour in 1905.
Image courtesy of Henrietta Sandford.

Little Mystery's 168 tons of coal may have been a small cargo, however, its voyage contributed to the British response to the French plea. The coal was undisputed war contraband at any stage of the conflict notwithstanding the German re-declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare just three months before.²⁶ It was enough to guarantee the ship's sinking if caught by a U-boat and, if British propaganda about U-boat callousness and frequent atrocities was to be believed, or the crew was just unlucky, the intervention could be fatal.

Colliers bound for Cherbourg and ports west, and colliers with speeds under eight knots bound for Brest and the Bay of Biscay ports, assembled at Portland under a French-run scheme.²⁷ This arrangement precluded small schooners like *Little Mystery* who were at the mercy of the wind and, on this day, moving at walking pace. At seven in the morning, a submarine was sighted on the surface two miles away to the north east and closing quickly.²⁸ John Greet immediately threw all of his weighted confidential papers overboard. There was no escort or Allied patrol boat in sight and no radio to call for help. Greet kept to his course for thirty minutes.²⁹

Oberleutnant zur See Georg Gerth, commander of the minelayer UC-61, had enjoyed a busy night. He was the son of the president of the Berlin Tram Company and joined the Imperial Navy as a cadet in 1907.³⁰ UC-61 left its base at Bruges at 0130 on Saturday, 28 April, accompanied by two other U-boats, UC-65 bound for the inner Firth of Clyde and UC-69 bound for the steamer passage at Belle Île and Quiberon Bay off the south coast of Brittany.³¹ These second-series UC minelaying boats were equipped with eighteen mines, an 88 mm gun, a machine gun, and three 50 cm torpedo tubes, two high and forward and one aft below the waterline.³² Torpedoes could not be fired until the mines, kept in six 100 cm open-water shafts in the bow, had been laid. Gerth's orders were to lay the mines in the English Channel at a depth and spacing of his choice, 'if possible at the turn of the tide'.³³ He was then to conduct a 'trade war according to special instructions' and to return at the latest after eighteen days 'depending on capability and ammunition consumption'.

Gerth took his boat to the bottom in order to wait for the right tide. Shortly after midnight on Saturday, he laid two mines at four meters below mean sea level (as with all of his mines) at the Needles off the Isle of Wight; after twenty minutes four more were laid one and a half miles away; just over an hour later there were three more at Anvil Point; and at 0225 three more at St Alban's Head. This laying of mines was a highly dangerous operation as they slid weighted out of the tubes to the sea floor before an automated mechanism caused them later to rise to the required depth while remaining tethered to the weight below. The U-boat passed overhead as the mines sank; if the mines stuck in the shaft or rose prematurely the U-boat was at fatal risk. At least nine of the seventy-nine UC boats launched before 1918 were thought to have been casualties of their own mines.³⁴ Altogether, by information gathered by 2013, some 40% of all U-boats destroyed in the First World War were the known victims of mines, whether Allied or Axis, and a further 14% had an unknown fate.³⁵



Type UC II submarine, of which UC-61 was one. They could carry 18 mines at one time. Image courtesy of Uboat.net

At 0325, Gerth surfaced in a near-calm sea and started his diesel engines in order to recharge his electric batteries, used to power the boat underwater, and his compressed air containers, intended primarily to blow air into water tanks when surfacing. *Little Mystery* was sighted at 0630, UC-61's diesels were stopped, and the submarine approached its prey, initially under water but keeping watch through the periscope.

UC-61 surfaced about two hundred yards away on the port side close to the schooner's stern; this manoeuvre was designed to lessen the damage if the U-boat found its prey was actually a trap - a Q-ship. *Little Mystery's* capture was slightly farcical - no torpedo was used as they were too expensive to

expend on a small schooner and, besides, there were still six mines aboard; no warning shell either from the 88 mm cannon. Twenty-nine-year-old Georg Gerth stood in the conning tower when close alongside and fired six or seven shots from his pistol and that was enough. At the first shot, *Little Mystery* hove to, its crew decided not to return fire with their own hand weapons. A Russian able seaman, Carl Eglit, was hit in the fleshy part of the muscle in his left arm. Greet, Eglit and the three other crew, two British and one Portuguese, immediately got into their 'almost new' boat and rowed across to UC-61 taking with them as directed their ship's papers.

What the crew saw at close quarters was a U-boat with a black hull and large grey conning tower, all in old paint, a canvas bridge screen, one gun and a periscope. An arrangement was noticed in the bows, circular with teeth, like a saw.³⁶ Three officers and six men were on deck. Two of the officers were in 'duffle clothing', one in a blue uniform. The men were in 'civilian clothes and appeared dirty and unkempt'. One of the men had a cap ribbon of the Flanders Flotilla, another wore a ribbon of SMS *Derfflinger*, a battlecruiser of the Kaiserliche Marine.³⁷

Greet was told by a junior officer who spoke good English that he should have got his boat in the water more quickly. The master was kept on UC-61 while a boarding party laid a single explosive device on *Little Mystery's* waterline. The party also scoured the schooner for food, described in one official report as 'looting'.³⁸ Greet made no such claim except that the German commander 'seized my ensign' and volunteered that he was allowed to return to the ship to get his compass and was told he could take some of his photographs as well. 'We saved a few things.'

The bomb exploded at 0745 and *Little Mystery* sank in five minutes going down by the stern, apparently in one piece. UC-61 departed above water and after a time submerged showing its periscope. In the thirteen months fourteen days beginning with Boxing Day 1916, Stephens, *Little Mystery's* owners, lost ten vessels, of which nine were by enemy action, mostly by

U-boats. What seems certain is that these sinkings ‘represented a heavy loss for which they received no compensation’.³⁹

Greet and his crew pulled towards Portland and, at about 0945, sighted *Royalo*, an armed trawler, which ‘from a very far distance’ [four miles] opened fire with eight rounds.⁴⁰ UC-61 moved out of sight above water and Gerth recommenced charging his boat’s batteries and compressed air supplies. *Royalo* picked up Greet and his crew and took them to Weymouth.

For the Admiralty and for Gerth it was a hectic afternoon and evening. First, UC-61’s morning mines had already been spotted and the minesweepers were out in force, while at the same time Gerth moved, after charging, to lay his remaining six mines. Second, there was clearly another U-boat operating in the same general area as several reports came in of minor U-boat skirmishes and these are not reflected in UC-61’s war diary.⁴¹

Early on the Saturday, even before *Little Mystery* had sunk, the Admiralty moved to clear these new mines laid by UC-61; that speed brought Gerth’s second success of the day, although unknown to him until later. HMT *Arfon*, a coal-burning, ketch-rigged Milford trawler, was requisitioned for war service



The boiler of the wreck of the *Arfon*. You can tour the wreck of the *Arfon* virtually online at: www.cloudtour.tv/arfon

as part of the general naval mobilisation a few days before war was declared and was converted for minesweeping duties.⁴² At 0945, *Arfon*, with the armed trawler *Vera Grace*, was sweeping for the three mines laid a few hours earlier at St Alban's Head. One mine was exploded by rifle fire, a second hit the fore part of *Arfon* and it sank within two minutes; of the crew of thirteen the ten who worked under cover died.⁴³

On his way that afternoon to the Shambles Bank at Portland, Gerth stayed above water while evading a destroyer. At about 1700, he spotted a steamer and headed for it, then dived to let it pass, approached under water and surfaced to fire about ten shots from his 88 mm canon. This was the Uruguayan SS *Gorizia* of Montevideo, 1,246 tons, travelling from New York via Falmouth for [Le] Havre carrying 'general cargo', including oranges.⁴⁴⁴⁵ The main steam pipe in the boiler room was the only hit, but *Gorizia* immediately hove to, and the mixed-nationality crew of twenty-two took to their lifeboats and pulled clear. *Gorizia* was boarded and, in the same manner as *Little Mystery*, its American master George Rex was kept on *UC-61* while two bombs were attached. He noted the U-boat crew's 'greenish-colour duffle suits'. *Gorizia* sank by the stern within five minutes. The armed yacht *Lorna* having heard the gunfire was fast approaching the confrontation, let off five shells which fell short by fifty yards, but the U-boat quickly dived and all that remained was to pick up *Gorizia's* crew and take them to Weymouth.

Finding an American master on *Gorizia* was bad luck for Gerth as the Germans were desperate to keep the US neutral. The United States government had publicly announced their position the year before.⁴⁶

*If the commanders of German vessels of war ... should destroy on the high seas an American vessel or the lives of American citizens, it would be difficult for the Government of the United States to view the act in any other light than as an indefensible violation of neutral rights which it would be very hard indeed to reconcile with the friendly relations now so happily subsisting between the two governments.*⁴⁷

Gerth, speaking excellent English, listened while Rex protested his American nationality and replied with a laconic, 'I am very sorry, but war is war'.⁴⁸ He then told Rex to get back to his boat as the approaching *Lorna* had been spotted.

Gerth finished his twenty-four hours by recharging his batteries while on the surface before continuing to the Shambles to drop his last mines. On the way, shortly before midnight, he saw a large, unidentified, steamer running with dimmed lights. Gerth was about to shoot when his U-boat was spotted in the moonlight and the steamer turned and made off. A little later, Gerth was forced to dive before a destroyer. At the Shambles, the moonlight was still strong so Gerth dived *UC-61* to avoid being silhouetted in the bright night at the time of his greatest vulnerability; he laid his six mines at irregular distances. After another fruitless day failing to engage two steamers and three sailing ships and being fired at by armed trawlers and destroyers escorting a steamer convoy, and during it all at different hours evading four patrol boats, two trawlers, four destroyers, an airship, and a plane, Gerth prudently headed towards Ouessant off the coast of Brittany.⁴⁹

What had *UC-61* achieved during 30 April? Eighteen mines had been dropped in a prime Allied shipping lane. This was at a time when no second-series UC boat had been examined by the British who, therefore, did not know how many mines they carried. As some of the mines were quickly spotted, dozens of naval craft were diverted to search.⁵⁰ Naval reports suggest that only eleven had been found by the end of the day and the cost had been high with the loss of *Arfon* and ten men dead. The confusion did not end there as the next day, Tuesday, 1 May, at 0730, the Commodore-in-Charge, Portland, was forced to close Portland and Weymouth Bay to all traffic 'on account of mines'; at that time only four had been neutralised.⁵¹ The warning was reiterated at 1330, 'no entry, closed until further notice'. The all clear came the next day at 2150, but immediately St Alban's Bay was closed. The disruption to traffic and convoy management was considerable. A ten-year-old steamer of 1,246 tons, *Gorizia* was sunk together with a possible cargo of

brass, probably ordered by the French Government and, equally probably, euphemistically placed on the manifest as ‘general cargo’.⁵² And then there was the loss of *Little Mystery*, with its wounded man, and cargo of coal.

And the cost to the Flanders Flotilla and the Kriegsmarine? The balance sheet shows a day’s U-boat running costs, eighteen mines, no torpedoes, ten 88m shells, three bombs, and a magazine of pistol ammunition.

There was no sign of *Little Mystery* breaking up on the surface - the ship took five minutes to go down, ‘sinking stern first’. The charted position is 50° 10’N; 2° 13’ 9”W, but as Jan Lettens says on wrecksite.eu this could be one kilometer in any direction. It is possible that some of the coal cargo which was all carried in the hold could have spilled out of the hole in its side on the way down. The bottom here is about sixty meters with varieties of sand, shell, gravel, pebble and mud. The good timber from Date’s Dart River yard is likely to be wearing well if it is buried below seabed sediments, any protruding remains are expected to be slight, with some potential to have snagged fishing nets; marine life on the wreck might include sea urchins, peacock worms, anemones, pouting and pollock. *Little Mystery* might only show as a faint trace on geophysical survey, but the site is yet to be located.

John Henry Greet, master of *Little Mystery*, was awarded two war honours in 1919 – the First World War Mercantile Marine War Medal (pictured right) and the British War Medal.⁵³ After the war he moved from Plymouth to Middlesex, England, where he lived with his daughter Rhoda and her two children. He died in 1934, aged sixty-eight.



Georg Gerth stranded UC-61 on 26 July 1917 at Wissant near Calais. Ironically, he ordered his boat to be blown apart on the beach to avoid its capture utilising the very type of bombs that had sunk *Little Mystery* and *Gorizia*. All of the crew survived. Gerth was a prisoner of war until 1920 at Boyardville on L'île d'Oléron on the French Atlantic coast. He retired from the Reichsmarine in 1921, married and had four children, and took a doctorate in political sciences at the University of Würzburg in 1923. After a successful career with his own business, Gerth rejoined the German navy and for two years from 1942 held a senior position at the Torpedo Research Centre at Eckernförde. He died in 1970, aged eighty-two.

Much too early he started suffering from his serious illness and only rarely when you visited him, the remembrance of times spent together lit up in him.⁵⁴



The remains of UC-61.

It may come as a surprise that *Little Mystery* lives on. Apart from articles and book references, there is a full hull model on a frame on display at the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, London.⁵⁵ The model is decked with a number of crew in sight, fully equipped and rigged with sails set. So popular is *Little Mystery* that a print and a mug with the ship's image are also available.

The loss of *Little Mystery* may be seen as a part of the hastening of the demise of the cargo sailing ship. Losses to First World War U-boats identified to 2016 total 7,241 ships. While it is impossible to clearly categorise all of these, or even to be certain about their propulsion in each case, what is sure to just a few percentage error points, is that for every ten ships sunk, three were sailing ships, some 2,171.⁵⁶ However, for Basil Greenhill and the Stephens' fleet it was not so simple:

During the war there were a sufficient number for convoys to be made up of schooners alone, and such convoys were escorted by armed vessels of their own class. Very many were sunk, others fought successful operations with submarines, and some were borrowed for conversion into Q-ships. The wartime losses among the sailing coasters were actually very considerable ... but nevertheless very many survived and these, together with the vessels taken over from the enemy, schooners bought from Holland during the shipping boom, and a few newly constructed ships, must have made quite a considerable fleet ready to resume normal work after the cessation of hostilities.⁵⁷

More proudly, perhaps, *Little Mystery* provided its own epitaph and was the spur that saved many other schooners on the coal run to France, including some from its home port in Fowey. Less than a month after the sinking, the shipping intelligence officer at Portland wrote to the Admiral's office in Devonport telling him that he had started 'collecting small ketches and schooners and sending them to France as convoys' protected by armed vessels:

One lot of eleven left here about three weeks ago and arrived safely, and five left Fowey on 17 May. These latter were French and had one thousand tons of coal between them. They were attacked by a submarine en route, but the attack was beaten off by the escort. It is extremely difficult to obtain escorts, but it would appear worthy of consideration ...⁵⁸

Eight days later, the Admiral concurred. Soon, schooners were made up into regular convoys in their own right and escorted by armed sailing ships.⁵⁹

Convoy. Painting by Mike Greaves.



This article was written by MAT volunteer Chris Heal. He has also written *Sound of Hunger: One German Family's Chronicle of the Chivalry, Politics, Lies, Murder and Aftermath of War*, available now from all major bookshops and online retailers rrp £30. (Uniform)

Sources

1. Naval Staff Monographs, Historical Staff, Training and Staff Duties Division, Vol. XVIII, 'Home Waters - Part VIII', December 1916 to April 1917 (C.B. 917Q; O.U. 5528[G]), 5/1933, Section 357, p. 448.
2. Figures provided by Michael Lowrey, uboat.net/forums/read.php?23,92184,92188#msg-92188 (accessed 18/5/2016).
3. 'William Date, Shipwrights Yard and the Fruit Schooners', Knightsbridge Estuary U3A Local History Group, 16/10/2103, u3asited.org.uk/files/k/kingsbridgeestuary/docs/williamdateanddatesboatyard.pdf (accessed 18/5/2016).
4. Ward-Jackson, C H, Stephens of Fowey, A Portrait of a Cornish Merchant Fleet 1867-1939 (National Maritime Museum, Maritime Monographs and Reports, No 43, 1980), p.5.
5. TNA, BT 110/349/50, *Little Mystery*, Ship's Register (official number 85828). Many shares were mortgaged from time to time; detailing of the consequent transfers of shares would require a chapter in their own right. Also, Greenhill, Basil, *The Merchant Schooners*, Vol. 2 (David & Charles, Newton Abbot 1968), p. 109, and see pp 111-15, 120-29.
6. Greenhill, Basil, 'The Rise and Fall of the British Coastal Steamer', *The Mariner's Mirror*, Vol. 27, Issue 3, 1941, p. 250.
7. Ward-Jackson, Stephens of Fowey, p. 5.
8. Ward-Jackson, Stephens of Fowey, p. 5, offers the comparison of the *Cutty Sark* (1869) at 863 gross tons – over six times the size of a *Little*; the full-rigged *Preussen* (1902) at 5,548 tons; and the largest sailing vessel, *France II* (1911), at 5,806 tons (a multiple of almost forty-five).
9. These and following details are taken liberally from Ward-Jackson, Stephens of Fowey, particularly pp 21, 34, 37-38, 76, 84.
10. *Little Wonder* was lost in mid-Atlantic on 24/9/1891. It was travelling from Newfoundland with codfish when in a gale the cargo shifted. The masts had to be cut away and the mate was drowned, though the rest of the crew, lashed to the stumps of the masts, were saved by a passing steamer. Twenty-six people from around Fowey had shares in it (Ward-Jackson, Stephens of Fowey), p. 37.
11. 84.5 feet x 21.1 x 10.8 (TNA, BT 110/349/50).
12. Carvel-built: Wooden planks which do not overlap, as opposed to clinker-built. Gross tonnage at that time was a measure of a ship's cargo capacity.
13. TNA, BT 110/349/50.
14. The phrase about 'small fry' is from Lubbock, Basil, *Last of the Windjammers*, Vol. I (Brown, Son & Ferguson, Glasgow 1927), pp 455, 460.
15. In John Stephens' day 100,000 fishermen were employed in the Newfoundland trade. 'Making fish, involved hand-cleaning, extracting the liver to rot down into cod liver oil, washing, salting and placing in kegs to pickle in a shore-side shed, then spreading out on racks to dry in the sun, and finally weighing in quintals or 112 pound lots (Ward-Jackson, Stephens of Fowey), p. 36.
16. The two maintenance yards were Benjamin Tregaskis at Par and at Cleave Houses, on the north bank of the Torridge between Bideford and Appledore.

17. Greenhill, Merchant Schooners, pp 110-11.
18. Fletcher, R A, In the Days of the Tall Ships (Brentano's, London 1928), pp 32-33.
19. Greenhill, Merchant Schooners, pp 113-14.
20. Certificates of Competency, 023292, Fowey: Mate, 18/12/1890, Master 12/4/1894 (National Maritime Museum, Master's Certificates).Ancestry.co.uk.
21. Greet's first wife, Elizabeth Hannah Ackland, died after two years of marriage in 1899, aged thirty-four. Greet lodged with the extended Ackland family and, in 1902, married Elizabeth's sister, Rhoda Louisa Ackland, aged thirty-five.
22. TNA,ADM 137/1295, English Channel: German submarines, 4/1917.
23. Carter, Geoffrey, The Royal Navy at Portland Since 1845 (Maritime Books, Liskeard 1987), p. 39.
24. Translated letter from the French Embassy, London, 20/2/1917 (TNA,ADM 137/1392, French Coal Trade, Jan-Apr 1972), p. 249. The importance of the French coal trade to the Allied war effort is shown by two volumes of letters and orders, each containing some 600 pages. David Lloyd George was the Liberal prime minister of the British wartime coalition government.
25. Aristide Briand, French prime minister over eleven terms. He resigned within a month following the letter over disagreements on the conduct of the war. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1926 for his work on territorial peace treaties between the Allies and the Axis powers. The delegation was led by René Viviani, French prime minister for the first year of the war.
26. The German Government declared on 31/1/17 that they would resume unrestricted submarine warfare on the following day. Admiral von Holtzendorff and his naval staff calculated that 'if their submarines could sink upwards of 350,000 tons a month when working under restrictions it was reasonable to suppose that when freed from them they could bring the rate up to 600,000 a month' (Patterson, A Temple, Jellicoe: A Biography (Macmillan, London 1969), pp 160-76. See also, amongst many, Compton-Hall, Richard, Submarines at War 1914-1918 (1991, republished Periscope Publishing, Penzance 2004), pp 260-68; and Gibson, R H, and Prendergast, Maurice, The German Submarine War 1914-1918 (John Constable, London 1931, reprint Periscope Publishing, Penzance 2002), Chapter VIII.
27. Carter, Portland, p. 39.
28. Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) is used where possible. Correlating times from British ships' logs, foreign ships in British waters, U-boat logs, and times ashore is problematic during WWI. These times frequently do not match from one ship to another during known incidents. For instance, the British first introduced British Summer Time (BST) from 21/5-1/10/1916 to save fuel because of U-boat pressure. Three British naval ships meeting a U-boat mid-Channel, and researched for contact with UC-61, recorded times in GMT, BST and German summer time, but they were not consistent. See discussion 'U-boat time in 1917', WWI Forum, u-boat.net.
29. The story of the sinking is taken from TNA,ADM 137/1295, /2961 & /4120 and Kriegsarchiv der Marine, Admiralstab der Marine, 'UC-61 Kriegstagebuch' (RM 97; ex-Naval Intelligence Division PG/61 982/NID), www.uboot-recherche.de, The Kriegstagebuch (KTB) was a submarine's war diary, hand-written by the commanders of the Flanders Flotilla in the old German script, translated in the case of UC-61 for the author by Dr Cathrin Brockhaus with assistance from Walter Brockhaus in deciphering the now little recognised cursive handwriting. This contemporary information was checked against www.uboat.net/www/ships_hit/3638.html and www.pastscape.org.uk (both

- accessed 17/5/2016); and Larn, Richard & Bridget, *Shipwreck Index of the British Isles: Isles of Scilly, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset* (Lloyd's Register of Shipping, London 1995), Vol. 1, Section 6.
30. Born 3/3/1888, U-61's KTB. Georg Gerth's brother, Erich, two-years-older, born 25/4/1886, was also a WWI U-boat commander, but in the Mediterranean. He died in Rome in 1943.
 31. U-boat crews did all they could to avoid leaving base on a Friday, but respecting the superstition had little effect. All three of these U-boats were wrecked before the year end. UC-65 was torpedoed by British submarine C-15 fifteen miles south of Beachy Head on 3/11/1917. The first torpedo hit amidships, but did not explode; the second blew off the stern, sinking it instantly; twenty-two dead, four survivors; career sinkings: 105 ships. UC-69 was rammed accidentally by U-96 off Cape Barfleur, sinking immediately by the stern; 'its net cutter fouled U-96's bow, for a short time the two boats were locked together. That turned out to be a blessing, because most of UC-69's crew made their way aboard U-96 by going over the bows. Finally the bows separated. When UC-69's stern hit the seabed, the after torpedo exploded, killing ten men who were in the water' (Messimer, Dwight R, Verschollen: *World War I U-Boat Losses* (Naval Institute Press, Maryland, USA 2002), pp 304, 307.
 32. Groner, Erich, *German Warships 1815-1945, Vol. 2: U-Boats and Mine Warfare Vessels* (1968; revised and expanded by Jung, Dieter, and Maass, Martin, 1983; translated by Thomas, Keith, and Magowan, Rachel, Conway Maritime Press, London 1991), pp 51-52.
 33. Typed orders signed by Korvettenkapitän Bartenbach, head of the Flanders U-boat Flotilla 23/4/1917.
 34. Author's own figures.
 35. McCartney, Innes, *The Maritime Archaeology of a Modern Conflict: Comparing the Archaeology of German Submarine Wrecks to the Historical Text* (Routledge, Abingdon 2015), p. 308.
 36. A device for cutting net wires.
 37. At Jutland on 28/5/1917, *Derfflinger* was partially responsible for the sinking of two British battlecruisers: with *Seydlitz* it destroyed *Queen Mary* and, with the *Lützow*, sank *Invincible* (Massie, Robert K, *Castles of Steel: Britain, Germany and the Winning of the Great War at Sea*, Vintage, London 2007), pp 588-92.
 38. TNA, ADM 137/1295, p. 114.
 39. Ward-Jackson, Stephens of Fowey, p. 53
 40. TNA, ADM 137/675, Weekly Report of Portland Auxiliary Vessels. Monographs, Vol. XVIII, fn. p. 448. *Royalo* was mined and sunk off Penzance 1/9/1940 (u.boat.net).
 41. All within a few miles of Portland that Saturday: at 1100, SS *Vestalia*, 5,528 tons, exchanged fire with a U-boat until it was driven down by patrols (Monographs, p. 448); motor launches 307 and 311 dropped depth charges off Portland Bill at 1130 having seen a wake and claimed a 'kill' which the Admiralty decided was 'improbable' (ADM 137/1295); SS *Oilfield*, 4,005 tons, managed to outrun a U-boat at 1715 (Monographs, p. 448); just before midnight a conning tower was sighted near Lulworth (ADM 137/442); the collier *Querida* sighted a submarine on its starboard beam in the early hours and opened fire as the U-boat disappeared into the darkness (ADM 137/1296).
 42. Milford Trawlers, 'Arfon M223', www.llangibby.eclipse.co.uk/milfordtrawlers, accessed 18/5/2016.
 43. TNA, ADM 137/3255, 'Court of Enquiry'.
 44. 'Le Havre' was consistently called 'Havre' in the Admiralty documents used for this article.

45. TNA,ADM 137/1295. *Gorizia* was built in 1907 by A Macmillan & Son of Dumbarton, Scotland, as *Glenmount* for the Montreal Transportation Company, Canada, perhaps later *SS Great Lakes*, passing to its last name at the Oriental Navigation Corporation, New York, and, later, Montevideo, shortly before sinking. Sonar contact was established in 1945. In 1988, divers reported the bows blown off (C Davies, 24/8/1988, 19/7/1989). Examined by survey on 8/5/2003, upright, but partly buried at a depth of forty-two meters at 50° 36'N, 2° 55'W, (DGPS) seventeen miles from Portland Bill (Jan Lettens 27/8/2008; Tony Allen 7/9/2011, www.wrecksite.eu/wreck.aspx?78304), accessed 27/5/2016).
46. American Government Note, 10/2/1915.
47. Peterson, H C, *Propaganda for War: The Campaign Against American Neutrality, 1914-17* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1939), pp 111-12.
48. The Uruguayan Chargé d'Affaires quickly took up the sinking of one of its registered ships, looking 'urgently' for further information, but they met the Admiralty 'playing a straight bat' (TNA,ADM 137/1295).
49. Called Ushant In English, the only place in Brittany to have different names in English and French, and close to the shipping lanes between England and France.
50. The Commodore-in-Charge at Portland had forty larger vessels at his disposal for convoy escort, minesweeping and anti-submarine activity, as well as over a dozen motor launches (ADM 137/675).
51. TNA,ADM 137/442.
52. One unconfirmed diver report says that *Gorizia* was on charter to the French Government, making it a legitimate target. In 1989, divers reported that most of the cargo of brass had been recovered (wrecksite.eu).
53. TNA, BT 351/1/54397, both issued 29/4/1921. The Mercantile Marine War Medal was instituted by the Board of Trade to reward the war service of the officers and men of the Mercantile Marine who, while only trained as peacetime mariners, continued to serve while running the risk of being attacked at sea during the war. The British War Medal was a campaign medal of the United Kingdom which was awarded to officers and men of British and Imperial forces for service in the First World War (en.wikipedia.org), accessed 27/5/2016.
54. 'Obituary', Georg Gerth, Marine Offizier Vereinigung (Navy Officer Association) publication, 12/1970, by WWI u-boat ace Kapitänleutnant Werner Fürbringer, commander of seven U-boats, 101 ships sunk (97,881 tons), UC-61 KTB file; uboat.net (accessed 27/5/2016).
55. National Maritime Museum, SLR1179, collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/67140 (accessed 27/5/2016). The model, dimensions: 860 x 1,174 x 432 mm, was built between 1950 and 1969 by Max T Davey. Other Davey models and prints at NMM: two different versions of the mackerel driver *Ebenezer*, 1867, and the sailing brig *Marie Sophie*, 1879 (prints.rmg.co.uk/artist/28383/Max-T-Davey), accessed 27/5/2016; and in the National Trust Collection, on loan from Cotehele Museum, Cornwall, the *Rhoda Mary* (NT 812819; place of origin, Hove).
56. Database: Michael Lowrey, WWI forum, uboat.net, 18/5/2016; calculations, the author, 20/5/2016.
57. Greenhill, 'Rise and Fall', p. 256.
58. TNA,ADM 137/1393, French Coal Trade, p. 27, letter dated 21/5/1917. An annotation says the admiral agreed on 29/5/1917.
59. Greenhill, 'Rise and Fall', p. 256.

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