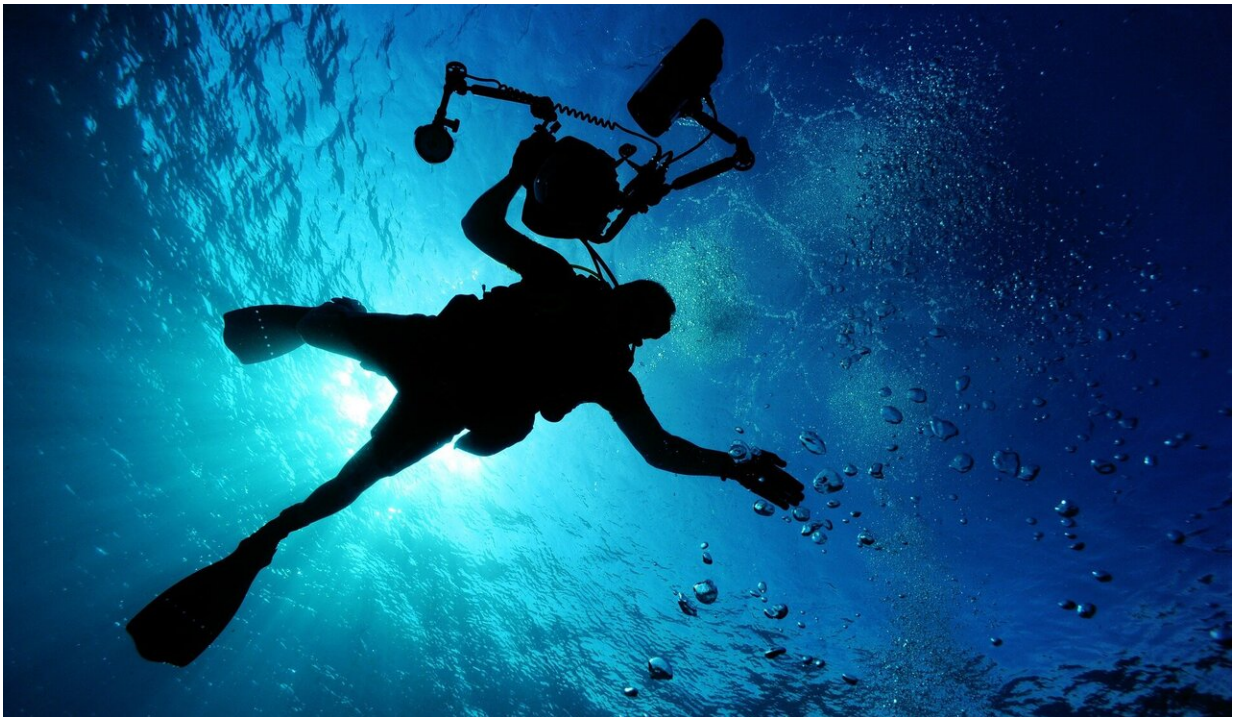


Researchers locate cargo ship SS Hartdale, torpedoed in 1915

March 13 2024, by Bangor University



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The final resting place of a British cargo ship, missing since being torpedoed by a German U-boat, has been established by a team of researchers working on the Unpath'd Waters project. The initiative led by Historic England is enabling scientists and historians to combine marine data with maritime records in new and unique ways to efficiently

identify shipwrecks in UK waters, assess their condition, and predict how wreck sites may change over time.

The exact location of SS Hartdale has been a mystery since U-27 attacked the vessel in the Irish Sea on 13th March 1915, but its remains have now been identified as lying at a depth of eighty meters, twelve miles off the coast of Northern Ireland.

Project researchers from Bangor University identified the missing ship by combining multibeam sonar data from wreck sites in the Irish Sea with a range of maritime collections and [historical records](#), many of which are available online.

Dr. Michael Roberts, who led the Bangor team, hopes that this initial discovery will be the first of many to arise through this element of the Unpath'd Waters project, which is focused on identifying historically important wrecks in an area of the Irish Sea between the Isle of Man and Northern Ireland.

Dr. Roberts said, "Connecting [scientific data](#) with our disparate, diverse yet information-rich maritime record has enabled us to identify this previously unknown wreck and create a comprehensive and detailed narrative centered around the vessel that it once was and improve our understanding of UK maritime archaeology."

"This vessel is just one of the many thousands of merchant ships known to have been lost in UK waters that remain listed as missing or have been incorrectly identified due to a lack of high-quality data. We certainly now have the capability and technology to able to rectify this largely overlooked issue."

The SS Hartdale was built in Stockton-on-Tees in 1910 and was originally named the SS Benbrook before being sold and renamed in

1915. The vessel was transporting coal from Scotland to Egypt when it was dramatically chased down by a U-27 and sunk by a torpedo.

Two of the crew lost their lives as the [vessel](#) sank, and survivor accounts, as well as U-27's own official war diary, provided researchers with crucial information relating to the exact location of the attack, important descriptions of the actual torpedo strike, and poignant accounts of SS Hartdale's final moments.

Of the wreck's identification, Barney Sloane, Principal Investigator of Unpath'd Waters at Historic England, said, "This is one excellent example of the vast, untapped potential waiting to be unleashed through the creation of a linked, accessible, and sustainable national collection of the UK's cultural and heritage archives, museums and records; potential to unlock human stories and unleash scientific innovation."

Provided by Bangor University

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