

## COFFÁU PROFIAD CYMRU O'R RHYFEL MAWR AR Y MÔR COMMEMORATING THE WELSH EXPERIENCE OF THE GREAT WAR AT SEA

*3-4 Tachwedd 2018, Doc Penfro, SA72 6DD*

*3-4 November 2018, Pater Hall, Pembroke Dock, SA72 6DD*

### Speaker biographies

- **Professor Chris Williams.** Chris Williams is Head of the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences at University College Cork, where he also teaches some history. He was a Royal Commissioner with the RCAHMW for ten years until 31 October 2018.
- **J D Davies.** David Davies is Vice-President of the Society for Nautical Research, a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and the author of *Britannia's Dragon: A Naval History of Wales* (2013). A prize-winning author, originally from Llanelli, he also writes a bestselling series of naval fiction set in the seventeenth century. Website: [jddavies.com](http://jddavies.com).
- **Geoffrey Hicking.** Geoffrey Hicking is an Information Officer and Researcher currently working with the Royal Commission. His research interests are primarily naval in nature. Having previously researched mercantile information networks in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world, he is currently researching the First World War naval bases of Wales.
- **Dr Huw Lewis Roberts.** Born in Moelfre, Anglesey, Dr Huw Lewis Roberts is the first of his father's family not to go to the sea, instead, spending years as a family doctor in Gwynedd. He is interested in local history, Chair of the Caernarfon Family History Society, and enjoys sailing around the Anglesey coast.
- **Dr Gareth Huws.** A biochemist by training and a historian by inclination, Dr Gareth Huws has a particular interest in the 'long' nineteenth century (1790-1918) and its effect on the social and political development of the port of Holyhead and its place within the wider catchment area of Anglesey. He believes that Holyhead's maritime history has national and international relevance and has been woefully overlooked.
- **Dr Mark Matthews.** Dr Mark Matthews is a maritime and business historian who has published a wide variety of articles on the maritime history of Wales. He is currently Chairman of Morol/ Institute of Welsh Maritime Historical Studies. He is married to the Welsh writer Jo Mazelis and lives in Swansea.

- **Andrew Hemmings**, BA(Hons) FCILT. Andrew is the author of *Secret Newport* and researcher for the Heritage Lottery Fund project: *First World War: Newport and the Sea*. Presently Chair of the Advisory Body Newport Harbour Commission, he brings lifelong interests in industrial archaeology, transport and the First World War to his talk.
- **Dr John Morgan-Guy**, having been a Research Fellow, Lecturer and Chaplain at University of Wales Trinity St David, Lampeter, is currently an Hon Research Fellow at the Roderic Bowen Research Centre at the same university. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, of the Royal Historical Society, and the Society of Antiquaries, he has published widely in the disciplines of medical and church history.
- **Deanna Groom**. Deanna is the Royal Commission's maritime archaeologist who has been responsible for the development of maritime record of the National Monuments Record of Wales for the past 10 years. Previous to this, she was responsible for developing the development of the maritime record of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (now Historic Environment Scotland) and the National Register of Historic Vessels funded by The Heritage Lottery Fund. The latter is now maintained by the National Historic Ships at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.
- **Helen Rowe**. Helen is a qualified archivist with experience in digitisation and oral history, Helen has worked on several previous HLF funded projects, including Britain from Above during her 10 years at the Royal Commission. She has been involved extensively with People's Collection Wales, sourcing and uploading RCAHMW content to the site and training community contributors. Now Community Engagement Officer on the U-boat Project, she has been working with museums and venues around Wales to discover the local stories associated with the War at Sea.
- **Ellie Waters**. Ellie is the Project Manager for the *U-Boat 1914–18 Project* and an experienced strategic communications, business development and marketing professional. She has over a decade's experience in communications and project management. Her experience spans private and public sectors, multinational corporations and complex public bodies as well as SMEs. She is well versed in delivering externally funded projects and in community engagement and organisation. Ellie has a keen interest in maritime history thanks to her amazing Grandpa.
- **Dr Gethin Matthews** is a lecturer in History at Swansea University, in a post funded by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. He edited *Creithiau* (2016) which studied the impact of the Great War upon Welsh society and culture, and his new book *'Having a Go at the Kaiser'* is to be published in November.
- **Ian Cundy**. Ian has a B.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering and an M.A. in Maritime Archaeology. He has been diving for 24-years, and is a Senior Tutor and Welsh Regional Co-ordinator for the Nautical Archaeology Society. Ian has worked in the field on archaeological projects in the UK, USA, Israel, Croatia, Abu Dhabi & Lebanon.
- **Dr Rita Singer**. Dr Rita Singer specialises in fictional and non-fictional Welsh writing in English from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Working as Community Engagement Officer for the *U-Boat 1914–18 Project*, she supports local museums and community groups across

Wales in developing workshops and exhibitions that commemorate the impact of German submarine warfare on local communities.

- **Gwerfyl Gregory** is a volunteer at Amgueddfa Forwrol Llŷn/ Llŷn Maritime Museum. Her mother's family originated from Morfa Nefyn where her great-grandfather had a small ship named the *Margaret* which traded between Porthdinllaen and Liverpool. She moved back to Morfa Nefyn to live, having left Wales when she was 9 years old, because of the pull of family history, the heritage of the area, and absolute awe of and admiration for the ability of ordinary people to survive and even thrive in a place of such poverty.
- The **Ceredigion Heritage Youth Panel (CHYP)**, was formed in 2013 to run Ceredigion Museum's youth project 'Out on the Town'. Most of the founding members have moved on to University or to the workplace, but a committed group of 10 – 20 young people, who are passionate about researching, recording, caring for and sharing their local heritage, continue to meet on a weekly basis. Recent and current projects include, the *U-boat Project: Commemorating the War at Sea* at Ceredigion Museum; a *Loud in Libraries* music event at Ceredigion Museum; and *Unloved Heritage: Ceredigion Off-limits?* at the RCAHMW. The panel also plans and helps with heritage events for other youth groups in Ceredigion, the wider community, and visitors to the county.
- **Greg Hardman, VC Gallery.** The VC Gallery is a registered Charity based in Pembrokeshire. We help service veterans and those in the wider community by getting them engaged in a variety of art projects. We passionately believe that art and culture can improve health, wellbeing and overall quality of life. Barry John MBE founded VC gallery after 24 years of service in the Army. With his artistic background and his involvement in mental health work, he realised the need in the community for his expertise and experiences. Now the VC Gallery is working with veterans, older people, children and anyone who feels they need time out to express themselves through art.
- **Thomas Jeffers.** Thomas Jeffers is aged 59 and has lived most of his life in North Wales. He graduated in Genetics from London University, and worked 30 years in the Pharmaceutical Industry. Having an interest in family history he recently began volunteering at Conwy County Archives taking a particular interest in First and Second World War era.
- **David James.** David James is Secretary of West Wales Maritime Heritage Society which is based in Hancock's shipyard on Front Street, Pembroke Dock. It is an historic shipyard which is now a volunteer-run, working maritime museum. David James has recently written a book about Hancock's Yard and gathered memories and stories of former employees and from the former owner, Mr Peter Hancock. David has been the chief organiser of recent commemorative events for the centenary of the sinking of the Japanese ship, the *Hirano Maru*, on 4 October 1918.
- **David Swidenbank,** Vice Chairman of Porthcawl Museum. He has studied to diploma level in local and family history and holds a degree in photographic practice. He has written or co-written five local history books, as well as writing and photographing for a number of national family history magazines.

- **Carmen Mills.** Carmen is studying for her PhD in Fine Art at Aberystwyth University, researching into the concept of the archaeological imagination. She is currently making work in response to the *U-boat Project* as part of her residency with RCAHMW and is experimenting with audio tape as a drawing tool.

## Abstracts – Saturday

### **Professor Chris Williams. *Responding to ‘Abominable Methods of German Warfare’: Cartoonists and the U-Boat Threat, 1914-18***

For the British general public during the First World War, the German submarine threat to Allied and neutral shipping was, arguably, as shocking a dimension of the conflict as the gargantuan scale of the losses incurred in the trenches. This was primarily for two reasons: first, U-boat attacks on merchantmen and passenger liners was widely regarded as contravening the ethics of warfare as understood at the time; and second, such attacks came as close (in 1917) to eliminating Britain from the conflict as any setback faced on the Western Front. The outrage sparked by episodes including the sinking of the *Lusitania* (1915), the execution of Captain Charles Fryatt (1916), and the resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare (1917) was exemplified by the response of many British press cartoonists, who often sought thus to appeal to America to enter the war against Germany. Cartoonists, working in the immediate moment, also bore witness to the level of public anxiety as merchant tonnage lost reached stratospheric proportions in the first half of 1917.

This paper revisits the contemporary public understanding of the U-boat campaign by focusing particularly (though not exclusively) on two cartoonists whose work resonated in wartime Britain. Cardiff-based J. M. Staniforth reached a wide and popular audience via both the *Western Mail* and the *News of the World*, and drew more than eighty cartoons on the topic, usually from a strongly patriotic perspective. Dutchman Louis Raemaekers, who moved to London during the war, utilised pen and ink no less stridently in composing his fiercely anti-German and moralistic cartoons, which were credited with having had a significant impact on neutral opinion. These appeared initially in the periodical *Land and Water*, subsequently in the *Daily Mail*, and were then syndicated in dozens of other newspapers. Investigating the visual representation of the German submarine campaign

assists our comprehension of its public perception and raises interesting questions about how it should be remembered and commemorated.

**J D Davies. *'On the Wrong Side?': The Welsh Contribution to Allied Naval Superiority in the First World War***

Wales might have been on the 'wrong side' of the naval war in a purely geographical sense, but in one critical respect, it is no exaggeration to say that without Wales, the Royal Navy would not have been able to put to sea, let alone fight; and to an extent, the same was true of all the principal allied navies, with the sole exception of the United States. Despite the pre-war decision to change the Royal Navy's principal mode of propulsion from coal to oil, the vast majority of British capital ships remained coal-powered throughout the war, and the same was true of the French, Italian and Russian navies, all of which depended heavily on Welsh steam coal, regarded as indisputably the best in the world, which was derived from a relatively small central area of the South Wales coalfield. Getting these supplies to the allied fleets, and above all to the Grand Fleet at Scapa Flow in Orkney, was thus absolutely vital to the allied war effort. This paper will examine the means by which this process happened, presenting little-known contemporary evidence from the Admiralty papers at The National Archives to consider both the extraordinary 'shuttle service' of colliers from Cardiff, and its even less well known adjunct, the 'Jellicoe Special' coal trains which ran 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for the entire duration of the war from Quaker's Yard and Pontypool Road to their ultimate destinations at Immingham and, above all, Grangemouth. The sheer demand meant that the main lines alone were sometimes inadequate, so coal for Scapa Flow was also routed over obscure country lines, meaning that even such isolated communities as Aberedw, Pantydwr and Dolwen were, in a sense, pivotal to the naval war effort. The paper will also consider the means used to supply Welsh steam coal to the French, Russian and Italian navies, and the impact that industrial action, notably the strike of 1915, had on both the actual and potential operational capability of the Royal Navy.

**Geoffrey Hicking. *Progression, Regression and Stasis: Technological Developments in the Irish Sea during the First World War. 1917–1918.***

By 1917, the U-Boat menace had posed a sufficient threat to Britain's supply routes that the admiralty predicted a loss of control of British waters by 1918. To prevent this, the British were forced to completely re-assess how they conducted naval warfare. In doing

so, cherished theories from the pre-war period on commerce protection were both proven and subverted—sometimes in unexpected ways. Directing ships towards or away from U-boat activity and utilising a variety of advanced weapons such as the depth charge, mingled with more traditional methods of sea-control, such as arming civilian craft en-masse and forming convoys. With one of the key hotbeds of U-Boat activity being the Irish Sea, Wales was therefore well placed to witness and influence this revolution in naval strategy.

This paper seeks to examine the ways in which anti-submarine work employed both pre-modern and cutting-edge technologies to win the U-Boat war. It will compare the methods of the Royal Navy in combating commerce raiding in previous centuries with the changes in operations in the First World War, whilst examining how the work of naval bases in Wales such as Milford Haven affected these changes.

Finally, in briefly examining developments in command and control since the First World War, this paper will outline how technologies developed for the war are still relevant in the military and civilian sectors in Britain today.

### **Huw L Roberts. *Capten Harry Roberts, Moelfre, 1886-1976***

My grandfather was born in 1886, one of eight children, in Moelfre, Anglesey. Like most of the villagers he went to sea, and from 1901 until 1915 he worked on a coastal sailing ship. By 1912 he was master of a three-masted schooner, the *Earl of Lathom*, Connah's Quay, and captained it until 1915. Grandfather moved to a steamer, but someone else from Moelfre, an old schoolfriend, became the new master of the schooner. On the 6th of May 1915, on a voyage to Limerick, by the 'Old Head of Kinsale', the *U20* arose close by. Following 'Prize Rules', the crew were given 5 minutes to escape in their rowing boat, and the schooner was sunk by the *U20*'s deck gun. The crew were saved by a fishing boat. There was no point wasting a torpedo on an old sailing ship, but two days later a torpedo was used against the *Lusitania*, resulting in the loss of over a thousand lives.

Two years later, Grandfather was master of a fairly new steamer, the *Lynburn*, carrying a cargo of timber (pit props) from Cork to Workington. Whilst sailing near Wicklow, and following a channel between shallow sand banks, the ship was blown up. It had struck a mine. Three crew members, who happened to be on the open bridge, were thrown into the sea. One of these was Grandfather, but amongst the eight who drowned were three young

men from Moelfre, the second mate, Lewis, 20 years old, Grandfather's younger brother, Owen Evans, 19, their cousin, and Owen Williams, 17. Grandfather and the other two survived by holding onto the pit props floating around them, and were saved by the Wicklow Lifeboat. Imagine, seriously, Grandfather as master of the ship having to face the three families upon returning home to Moelfre.

**Dr Gareth Huws. *Holyhead, Women and the Leinster: was 1918 the year everything changed?***

This lecture will focus on the sinking in the Irish Sea of the mail-packet boat, the *Leinster* on 10 October 1918 and how this tragic event brought about changes to the town of Holyhead, to the women of the town, and to the course of world history. It will introduce the effects of the Central Powers' unrestricted submarine warfare policy on the way the cross-channel service between Wales and Ireland was organised, and how the mercantile marine service based in Holyhead (which consisted of both men and women) dealt with this near constant threat. Holyhead in 1918 will be described, as will the history of the postal service which had chosen the town as the main conduit for mail passing between Ireland and the remainder of Britain. This, in turn, will introduce the changing pattern of employment within the town from the middle years of the nineteenth century to the years of the First World War. There will be an emphasis on the role of women within this social employment pattern, and how societal changes culminated in the December 1918 general election when some women, for the first time ever, were allowed to vote. The aftermath of the sinking will also be explained, and the lecture will deal specifically with the way Holyhead came to terms with the loss of 27 of its inhabitants in a single incident (when a total of over 550 passengers and crew lost their lives) and how this loss had a deleterious effect on the families (mostly the widows). It will also cast light on the women employed by the mail-boat service and how their role was perceived within the town. Finally, in global terms, it will be argued that the tragedy affected the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 which, in turn, had consequences for the long-term political development of the countries of the Middle East and Europe (including Ireland as she set out on her road to revolution). This will be an analysis of a single event and its significance not only as a tragedy per se but also as a means of gaining greater understanding of an important historical period involving the Welsh experience of the Great War at sea.

**Dr Mark Matthews. *Welsh Women at sea during World War One***

The experiences of women at sea have in recent years begun to attract the attention of both historians and those interested in representations of gender relations, and there is now a burgeoning literature that seeks to cover these subjects. There is as yet, though, little examination of the work of women in the mercantile marine during the period of the First World War. While it is true there were relatively few women working at sea during this period, they can however be found at sea as matrons and stewardesses on a surprisingly wide variety of vessels. This paper examines experiences of women from Wales who were at sea during World War One as revealed through the evidence found in the 1915 crew lists and elsewhere.

### **Andrew Hemmings. 'Glenart Castle'—lost 26th February 1918**

I am proposing to tell the story of the sinking of this ship which dramatically illustrates a number of themes and topics:

- human experience of maritime conflict,
- wartime duties of the Mercantile Marine,
- remembering the war at sea,
- the roles undertaken and experiences of women and girls.

The *Glenart Castle* left Newport Docks en route to France on 26 February 1918. A number of Newport men and a lad aged 15 had signed on. At 04.00 the hospital ship was hit in No.3 hold by a torpedo fired by German submarine U 56. A total of 162 people died with only 32 reported survivors. Those killed include the captain, 8 nurses of the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, 7 Royal Army Medical Corps officers and 47 medical orderlies, and at least 8 men and boys from Newport. The paper will describe the ways in which such losses were remembered at the time and in subsequent years.

Examples include national memorials at Tower Hill, London, and Southampton, a memorial plaque at Hartland Point Devon, the diary and writings of Miss Kate Beaufoy, the matron of the *Glenart Castle*, the Scottish military charity Glen Art founded by Fiona MacDonald in honour of her great aunt Nurse Mary McKinnon, a video made about the wreck lying on the seabed in the Bristol Channel, and the Merchant Navy Memorial in the City of Newport.

### **Dr John Morgan-Guy. *The College Afloat: St David's College, Lampeter Graduates Serving on Board Ship during World War 1***

From the admission of its first students in March 1827, St David's College, Lampeter, was closely associated with the preparation of men for the ordained ministry of the Church of England. During the First World War, several graduates of the college were commissioned as chaplains to the Forces, primarily serving with the Army. Less well known are those who were appointed as chaplains in the Royal Navy, or who served on board hospital ships. This paper seeks to identify these men, the ships upon which they served, and their experience of ministry afloat. One notable example was the Revd Timothy Rees, later a much-loved Bishop of Llandaff, awarded the Military Cross for his ministry under fire, who served aboard a hospital ship at Gallipoli, and who recorded his experience on board in letters home.

## Abstracts – Sunday

### **Dr Gethin Matthews. *First World War Memorials Commissioned by Welsh Communities which Commemorate those who Served and Died at Sea***

There are thousands of memorials to the First World War around Wales, many of which commemorate those who were killed at sea. As well as the civic memorials found in public spaces in town centres, or on village greens, there are a range of memorials created by specific communities to honour and remember their own. These were very often commissioned and unveiled within a year of the Armistice – most often before the committees for larger, civic memorials had made their decisions on how to proceed – and so they reflect the individual communities' feelings about the war in its immediate aftermath. Also, as these were memorials which were entirely under their own control, with no-one telling them what to do or how to do it, they are exceedingly diverse in their messages and designs.

Some memorials include naval imagery which might surprise the contemporary observer. A number of chapel memorials have images of warships at full steam – some have mixed messages, with images of warships alongside an image of the chapel.

In terms of the patterns of inclusion of sailors, as one would expect there are many more to be found in coastal towns, and in some places with a strong maritime tradition the memorials are dominated by the names of those who died at sea. Those who were killed

in the merchant navy are commemorated just as readily as those who served in the Royal Navy. There are also memorials which commemorate women who were killed at sea during the war, such as the one to the fallen of Hyfrydle Chapel, Holyhead (which names six soldiers, four who served in the Royal Navy, three men who were in the merchant navy, and Hannah Owen, a stewardess on *RMS Leinster*).

This talk will show a variety of WW1 memorials from all around Wales which show the variety of responses to the need for communities to commemorate war, and which give an idea of how the 'Great War' was understood in the immediate post-war period.

### **Ian Cundy. *The Wrecks of the Cartagena and Leysian***

On behalf of the Nautical Archaeology Society (NAS), a paper relating to the wrecks of the *Cartagena* and *Leysian*. These vessels were both associated with the Great War, and now as shipwrecks they currently form the catalyst behind the two field schools that the NAS are providing as part of the *Commemorating the Forgotten U-boat war around the Welsh Coast 1914-18* project.

The paper will include:

- The back story behind the two vessels.
- A report on the first field school that was held at Traeth Bychan on Anglesey over the weekend of 22nd -24th June this year, based around the wreck of the *Cartagena*.
- The outline proposal for the second field school to be held at Abercastle, North Pembroke in June 2019, based around the wreck of the *Leysian*.

### **4 community presentations – subjects tbc**

Community presentation: **Rita Singer & Gwerfyl Gregory** (Llyn Maritime Museum)

Community presentation: **Anna Evans & CHYPS** (Amgueddfa Ceredigion Museum)

Community presentation: **Thomas Jeffers** Stories from Conwy Archive

Community presentation: **Greg Hardman** (VC Gallery)

### **David James. *Japan & Pembrokeshire – Then & Now***

In the closing months of the First World War, *UB 91*, operating off the Irish coast, torpedoed and sank a Japanese merchant ship, the *Hirano Maru*, occasioning great loss of life. There were only 29 survivors out of the 320 people aboard. In the aftermath, some of the bodies of those who had lost their lives were washed up on the Pembrokeshire coast.

In this talk, David James explores the history surrounding these events and the efforts made to mark the centenary in Pembrokeshire, and also to reinstate the memorial to those who lost their lives on the *Hirano Maru*.

### **David Swidenbank. *The USCG Tampa and Porthcawl***

My presentation will centre around the loss of the US Coastguard ship *Tampa* and its links to Pembroke Dock, Porthcawl, and the US Coastguard. My contact in the US Coastguard Museum may be able to attend the conference and be part of the presentation, however if this is not possible a pre-recorded section by her will be included in the presentation.

### **Carmen Mills. *'Forgotten'—an artist's response***

As artist in residence at the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, I have had the privilege of learning about the *U-boat Project* and seeing some of the wonderful images resulting from those investigations.

In response, I have been developing a body of work called 'Forgotten'. Some of these drawings are influenced by the sonar images the project has produced. Building on the idea that very few people knew about the U-boats scattered along the West coast of Wales, these drawings are about realities that we have lost sight of. They hint at what cannot be seen, through the simple use of line and tone. This evokes the archaeological idea that something can exist below the surface, of which we are aware, but struggle to see and understand exactly what it is.

At the same time, the acts of investigating, recording and preserving, which are the prime preoccupations of the Royal Commission, are together a metaphor for memory, and by association, for dementia. 'Forgotten' seeks to visualise the

struggle it can be for those living with memory loss to fully recover what they once knew.

Taking these ideas further, 'Forgotten' also includes drawings made with old pre-recorded audio tape. On paper and on canvas, these images play with the piecemeal process of recovering lost information. The very fact that audio tape deteriorates and has had to be replaced by digital media points to issues of preserving and erasure, conservation and erosion, the strength of our purposes and intentions in tension with the frailties that come as a natural part of the material world. By implication, this work seeks to capture the experience we all have of trying to hold on to what we treasure as time rolls on and memory fades.