

**Welsh Wreck Web Research Project
(North Cardigan Bay)
On-line research into the wreck of the:
*SS Chelford***

No verifiable image located

Report compiled by:
Ashton East

Report Title:

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(North Cardigan Bay)
On-line research into the wreck of the:
*SS Chelford***

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Abstract

The SS Chelford was a cargo-carrying screw-steamer launched 1905, and wrecked 1918 off Caernavon Bay by torpedo from German submarine UB-73 without loss of life. This report summarises the ship's particulars and history as identified by a review of primary sources, limited to those available in online format only, conducted in May 2020.

Introduction

The SS Chelford was launched in December 1905 with steel hull and completed January 1906 with installation of Triple Expansion engine, twin boilers and single screw propeller. The wrecking event occurred on 14 April 1918 while carrying ballast only. The ship was wrecked by a torpedo fired from German submarine UB-73, without loss of life. No record of post-wrecking salvage was located. The site appears to be well documented by the Uboat Project and reliable co-ordinates are available for the likely wreck site. No records of verification or survey dives were located.

Research Methodology

The research was conducted in May 2020 during the stay-at-home restrictions, and therefore limited to online resources. The research was conducted on a Microsoft Surface Pro, operating system: Microsoft Windows 10, and internet browser: Google Chrome.

In the first instance the ship's entry was located on wrecksite.eu. This website uses wiki-type crowd sourcing for information and has generally poor referencing. Information sourced from this website must be validated against primary sources.

Lloyd's Registers for the period 1906-1918 were not available online at the time the research was conducted, however the Mercantile Navy List was available via the Crew List Index Project for most years.

The following primary sources were examined:

- 1) Lloyd's List – searched through the British Newspaper Archive advanced search function for “Chelford”, “Lloyd's List” and date range 1900-1949;
- 2) General search of the British Newspaper Archive for “Chelford” with results limited to “articles” and date range 1900-1949;
- 3) Mercantile Navy List made available through the Crew List Index Project;
- 4) HSMO's 1919 publication of merchant shipping losses 1914-1918; and
- 5) National Maritime Museum crew records made available through The National Archives.

Finally, general searches were conducted through the Google search engine to identify any further information that might be available. Search terms: “Chelford” “SS Chelford” “Chelford 1918” “Chelford Caernarvon” “Chelford ship” “Chelford 1906” generated additional relevant results.

Results

Vessel	Name/s	SS Chelford
	Type	Cargo
Built	Launched	27 December 1905
	Completed	January 1906
	Builder	William Gray & Co Limited
		West Hartlepool
Construction	Materials	Steel
	Decks	3
	Bulkheads	5

Propulsion	Type	Screw steamer	
Engine	Details	Triple expansion engine	
		24" 38" 64" cylinders, 42" stroke	
		270	
		Central Marine Engine Works	
	Boilers	2 boilers 15.6x10.6, 160 lb pressure	
Drive	Type	Screw propeller	
Dimensions	Length	303 ft 7 ins	92.5 m
	Beam	46 ft 1 ins	14 m
	Draught	21 ft 9 ins	6.6 m
Tonnage	Gross	2995	
	Net	1907	
Owner	Last	Harry Yeoman, 133 Exchange Buildings, Cardiff (1915)	
	First	Francis Yeoman, 4 Victoria Terrace, West Hartlepool (1907)	
Registry	Port	Hartlepool	
	Flag	Nationality	
	Number	119891 HFLP	
History	Cargo	Coal	
Final Voyage	From	Glasgow 13 April 1918	
	To	Barry Roads	
	Cargo	Ballast	
Wrecking	Date	14 April 1918	
	Location	10 miles NW by W from Bardsey Island -5.06, 52.78	
	Cause	Torpedoed by German submarine UB-73	
	Loss of life	None	
	Outcome	Loss	

Analysis

Searches of the British Newspaper Archive for references to the SS Chelford in the Lloyd's Shipping Index produced a large volume of results. However, the OCR quality of records in this resource is poor and the search function is quite limited. It is probable that references were not picked up by the search.

The chain of ownership was established by reference to the Mercantile Navy List. The identity of the German submarine responsible for sinking was established by reference to a secondary source with high confidence (uboat.net).

No information concerning post-wrecking salvage or inspection could be located. The site appears to be well documented by the Uboat Project and reliable co-ordinates are available for the likely wreck site. Remote scans of the wreck site show the vessel largely intact and resting upright. No records of verification or survey dives were located, the site would benefit from a preliminary survey program to validate the identify of the wreck as the SS Chelford.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Approximately two hours were spent on this project. The majority of time was spent searching various online resources mentioned above for references to this ship. The SS Chelford would be a good example of an early twentieth century tramp steamer. The apparently upright and intact state of the vessel at the potential wreck site warrants an exploratory dive for verification of the wreck identity.

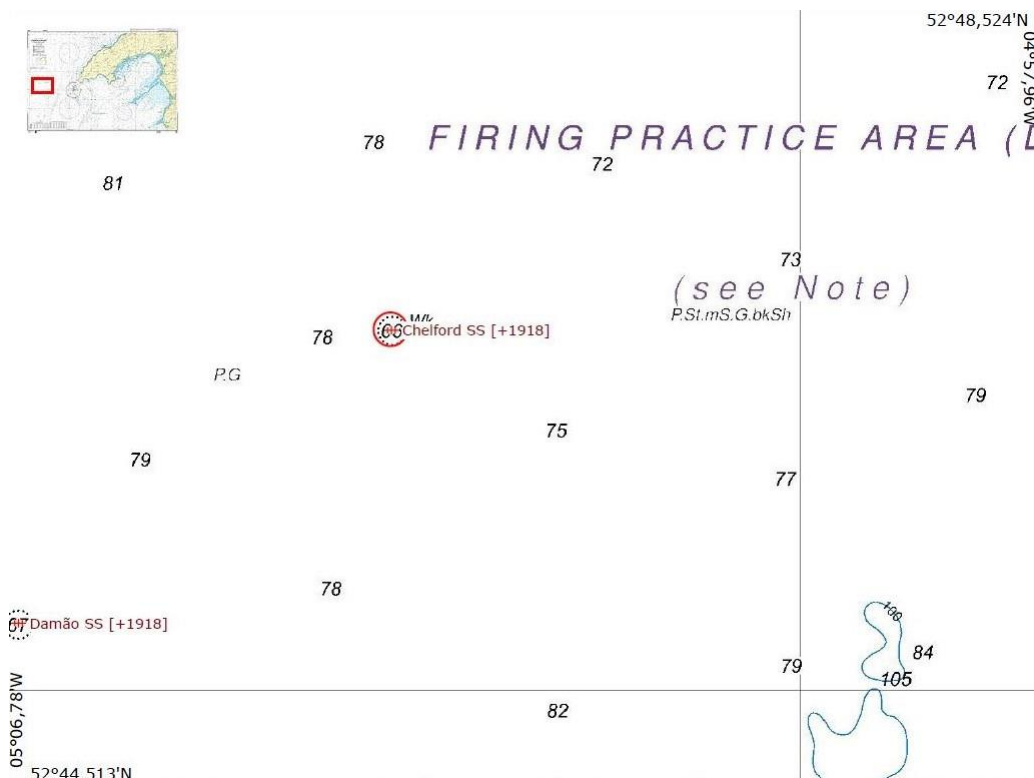
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 uboat.net, "Chelford", <available 18 May 2020 at https://uboat.net/wwi/ships_hit/1238.html>.
 Uboat Project, "Chelford", <available 18 May 2020 at <https://uboatproject.wales/wrecks/chelford/>>.
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Appendix A – The Timeline for the SS Chelford

1905, 27 December	Hull launched without engines at West Hartlepool.
1906, January	Construction completed with installation of engines
1909, 14 March	SS Chelford runs aground on the Bosphorous
1918, 13 April	Depart Glasgow on final voyage
1918, 14 April	Sunk by torpedo from German submarine UB-73

Appendix B – The Location for the SS Chelford



Appendix C – William Gray & Co yard book for the SS Chelford

Ship's No. <u>716</u>		July 20/05		July 1906	
Owners	<u>J. Yeoman Esq</u>		Total Contents for Bales including		} 256831 cft
Name	<u>Chelford</u>		Poop, Bridge and Peak		
Length over all			Fore Peak		} <u>Cross Loaded</u> } 799.
„ B.P.	<u>331.0</u>		After Peak		
Breadth Extreme	<u>46.0</u>		Deadweight		<u>5036</u>
Depth Moulded	<u>24.4</u>		Draught of Water		<u>20.6 1/2 p.k.</u>
Gross, N.M.			Freeboard		<u>4.2</u> <u>Shut Deck</u> <u>2' above</u> <u>top of iron Deck.</u>
Engine Room	Crewspace		Contents Ballast Tanks		<u>855 Tons</u>
Register			Engines, by whom Built		<u>Central Marine</u>
Class	<u>100 A 1 Lloyd</u>		Nature of Engines		<u>Triple</u>
Material			Nominal H.P.		<u>270</u>
Rig			Effective H.P.		<u>1400</u>
Masts			Diameter of Cylinders		<u>24.38.64</u>
No. 1st Class Passengers			Length of Stroke		<u>42.</u>
No. 2nd Class Passengers			Revolutions of Engines		
Poop	Length <u>29.0 x 7.6</u>		Description of Boilers		
Quarter Deck	„ <u>40.0</u>		2 Size of <u>15.6 x 10.6</u>		
Bridge House	„ <u>106.0 x 8.0</u>		Heating Surface		
Deck	<u>Cabin & Engines on Bridge</u>		Working Pressure of Steam		<u>160 lbs.</u>
Top Gallant Forecastle Length	<u>33.0 x 7.6</u>		Coal in Lower Bunkers		} Total <u>261 tons</u>
No. of Decks			„ Cross Bunkers		
Height 'Tween Decks			„ Bridge Bunkers		
No. of Hatchways	Height		Consumption of Fuel		
Size of Forehatch	„		Steam Winches		<u>4 7 x 10 Progn Sep 19</u> <u>2 7 x 10 W & 16°</u>
„ Mainhatch	„		Windlass		<u>8 10 40 1 15 Sep 4/1900</u>
„ Afterhatch	„		Steering Gear Amidships		<u>8 x 10 Progn Sep 23 201</u>
„ Aftermosthatch	„		Steering Gear Aft		
No. of Bulkheads	<u>Shut Five W.T.</u>		Donkey Boiler		<u>Sturton Aug 22 9.6 x 10.12</u>
„ „ Wood			Anchors and Chains		<u>3 Taylor Tons 1 15 Aug 24/05</u>
No. of Holds			Shackles Anchor on Reefs		<u>6 Aug 24/05</u>
Fore Hold, Contents for Grain			Numeral (Frames)		
„ „ „ Bale Goods			„ (Plating)		
Main „ „ Grain			„ (Equipment)		<u>32514</u>
„ „ „ Bale Goods			Launched		<u>Dec 27/05</u>
After Hold, Contents for Grain			Sailed		<u>July 28/06 30</u>
„ „ „ Bale Goods					
Aftermost After Hold, Contents for Grain					
„ „ „ Bale Goods					
Bridge 'Tween Decks					
Total Contents for Grain including	} <u>275095 cft</u>				
Poop, Bridge and Peak					