



Welsh Wreck Web Research Project
(North Cardigan Bay)
On-line research into the wreck of the:
SV Erica

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:
*SV Erica***

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Abstract

The SV Erica was a cargo-carrying three-mast schooner launched 1911, and wrecked 1918 off Caernavon Bay. The German submarine U-110 sunk the ship with gunfire. 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 SV Erica was launched 1911 with steel hull and three schooner rigged masts, originally as a German fishing vessel. In 1914 she was captured by a British warship and sold as a prize of war. Under her new owners the SV Erica was used for cargo including coal. The wrecking event occurred on 8 February 1918. The ship was wrecked by gunfire from German submarine U-110 with no loss of life. No record of post-wrecking salvage or verifiable site visit was 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 1911-1918 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 “Erica”, “Lloyd's List” and date range 1910-1919;
- 2) General search of the British Newspaper Archive for “schooner Erica” with results limited to “articles” and date range 1910-1919;
- 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: “Erica ship” “SV Erica” “SV Erica 1911” “SV Erica 1918” “Erica Caernarvon” generated only no new relevant results.

Results

Vessel	Name/s	SV Erica (formerly Erica of Germany)
	Type	Cargo (formerly fishing)
Built	Launched	1911
		Lehe, Germany
Construction	Materials	Steel
Propulsion	Type	Sail
	Details	Three mast schooner
Tonnage	Gross	167
	Net	137
Owner	Last	Frank Tyrrell, Bride House, Arklow, co Wicklow (1914)

Registry	Port	Dublin
	Number	136056 JRBP
Final Voyage	Captain	Serreson
Wrecking	Date	8 February 1918
	Location	5 miles SW from Bardsey Island
	Cause	Sunk by gunfire (16 shells) from German submarine U-110.
	Loss of life	None
	Outcome	Loss

Analysis

Searches of the British Newspaper Archive for references to the schooner Erica produced a small number of results. However, the OCR quality of records in this resource is poor and the search function is quite limited. Given the ship was constructed in Germany it is possible that searches of German archival material could yield more information about ship's history in the period 1911-1914.

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, and no reliable co-ordinates for the wreck site were identified. The ship is unlikely to be easily located but the information in this report may assist with identification of unknown wreck sites in the area.

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. Only limited particulars of the ship could be established from online resources. It is possible that German archives may yield more information about the ship's construction and history in the period 1911-1914.

Previous attempts to locate the wreck site appear unsuccessful. While records of the SV Erica can be improved from the particulars identified in this report as part of the broader investigations into North Cardigan bay, no distinguishing characteristics of vessel, cargo or story were identified that would justify priority attention.

References

British Newspaper Archive <available 10 May 2020 at <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>>.

HSMO, "Navy Losses and Merchant Shipping (Losses)" (1919) <extracted content available 10 May 2020 at <https://www.naval-history.net/WW1LossesBrMS1918.htm>>.

Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen, "Mercantile Navy List" <available 18 May 2020 at <http://www.crewlist.org.uk/data/viewimages?year=1917>>.

uboat.net, "Erica", <available 18 May 2020 at https://uboat.net/wwi/ships_hit/1988.html>.

Wiki-type contributions, "Erica SV [+1918]", Wreck Site <available 20 May 2020 at <https://wrecksite.eu/wreck.aspx?69837>>.

Appendix A – The Timeline for the SV Erica

1911	Launched Lehe, Germany
1914, 24 September	Ordered to be sold by the Naval Prize Court, and the proceeds to be paid into the court.
1917, 15 January	Ran aground on entering Dungarvan harbour, refloated without damage next day
1918, 8 February	Sunk by gunfire from German submarine U-110

Appendix B – The Location for the SV Erica

