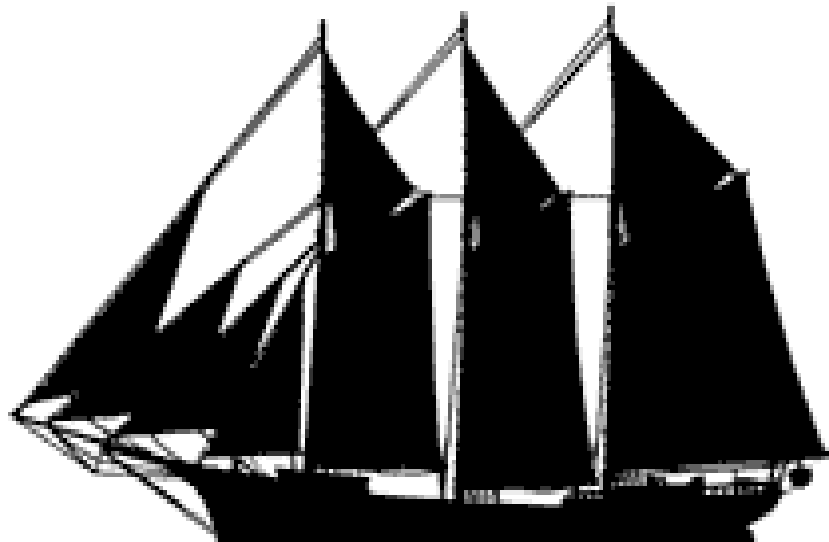


**Welsh Wreck Web Research Project
(North Cardigan Bay)
On-line research into the sinking of the:
Walpas (Schooner)**



**Report compiled by:
Gareth J.S. Davies**

Report Title:

**Welsh Wreck Web Research Project
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*Walpas (Schooner)***

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1.0 Abstract

Since 2001 the Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit (MADU) has developed a database of vessels known to have wrecked around the coast of Wales.

This project is to discover information relating to the history and sinking of the schooner Walpas (MADU Ref. 415) 15 miles WNW of Bardsey Island, Caernarfonshire on April 27 1918.

The Walpas was a 3-masted schooner build in Finland in 1901. From newspaper articles the Walpas sailed worldwide to Brazil, North America, South Africa and Europe. In April 1918 while sailing from Fleetwood Lancashire to Cadiz Spain with a cargo of pitch, the Walpas was fired upon and sunk by the German U-boat U-91. One crew member of the Walpas was killed in the action.

A very small wreck orientated north-south and with a height of 3.6m above the seabed thought to be the wreck of the Walpas was located by HMS BEAGLE in October 1981. The site was included in the multi-beam surveys undertaken by Bangor University in 2018, as part of the Royal Commission's HLF funded Partnership Project - 'Commemorating the Forgotten U-boat War around the Welsh Coast 1914-18'.

The research has been conducted from information gathered from MADU and on-line sites as I do not reside in the U.K.

2.0 Index

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2.4 Contributors

Ian Cundy MADU Archaeological Diving Unit,
 Nautical Archaeology Society (Regional co-ordinator for Wales)

2.5 Abbreviations

MADU Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit

2.6 Appendices

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3.0 Introduction

The schooner Walpas was chosen as:

- it covered a period of sea history from the early 20th century and through WW1.
- for the circumstances of how it was sunk.
- it was a similar ship and time to other ships I had researched from the MADU Wreck list.
- I live overseas online information would be my priority research tool and similar to my previous research a ship from this period should be reasonably well documented online.

The following topics form the basis of the research:

- What were the vessel's specifications?
- What historical information is available relating to the vessel?
- What was the story leading up to the sinking?
- What happened after the sinking? Has anyone previously investigated or researched the vessel back story?
- Has anyone dived, recorded, surveyed or worked on the site?
- Has any salvage, etc. been carried out?
- Have there been any previous reports produced relating to the vessel?

4.0 Background

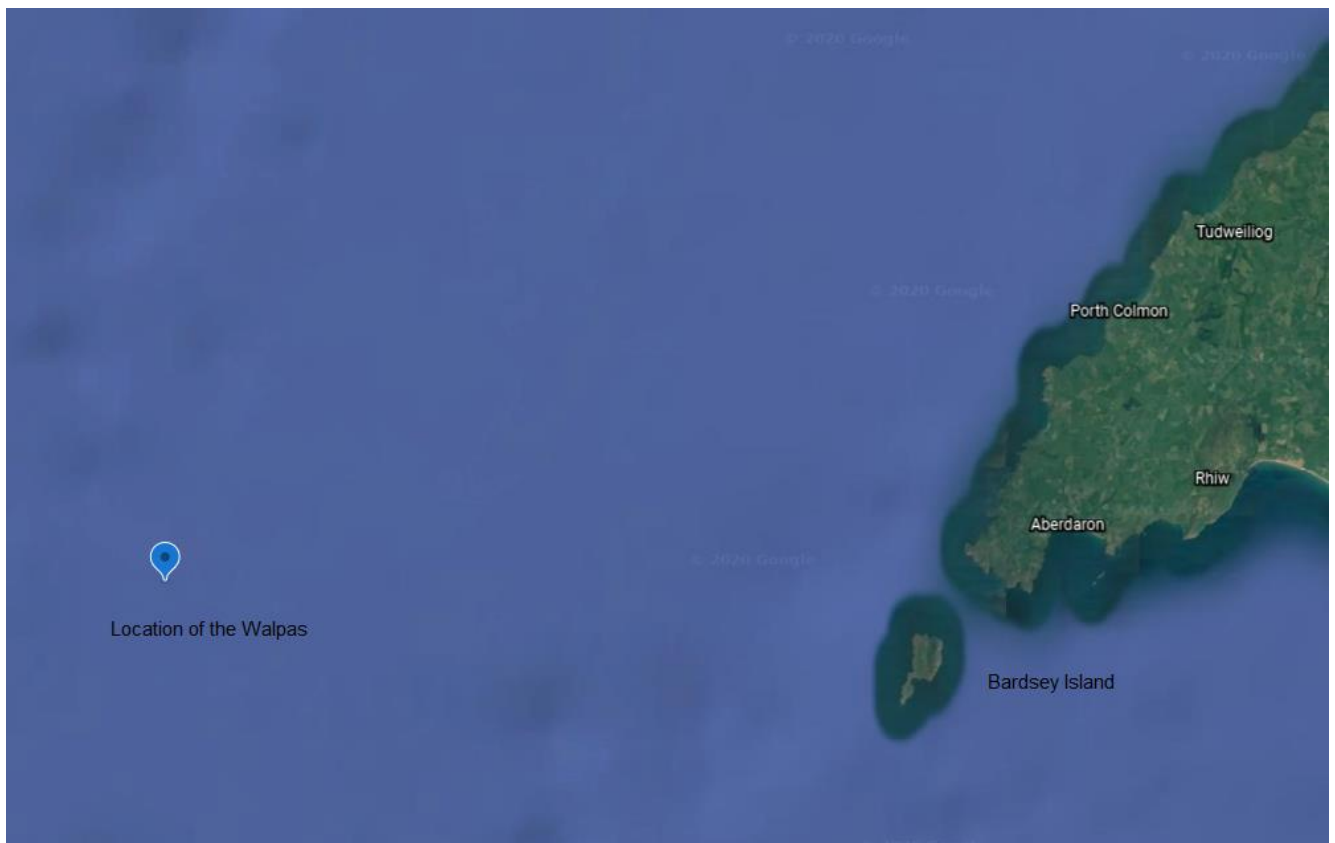
Prior to starting this research the only known data available to me was from the MADU Master Wrecksite Database Listing (Table 1) supplied by Mr Ian Cundy.

Table 1: Extract from MADU Master Wrecksite Database

MADU Ref. No.	Date Wrecked	Name	Location 1	Location 2	Details	Vessel Type	Matls	Ref.
415	27/04/1918	Walpas	Caernarfonshire	Lleyn Pen, Bardsey Island, 15M WxN		Schooner	wood	rl

In April 1918, the schooner Walpas while sailing from Fleetwood to Cadiz in Spain was fired upon and sunk by the German U-boat U-91 approximately 15 miles WNW of Bardsey Island (Fig 1).

Fig 1: Location of Walpas Sinking, off Bardsey Island, Caernarfonshire



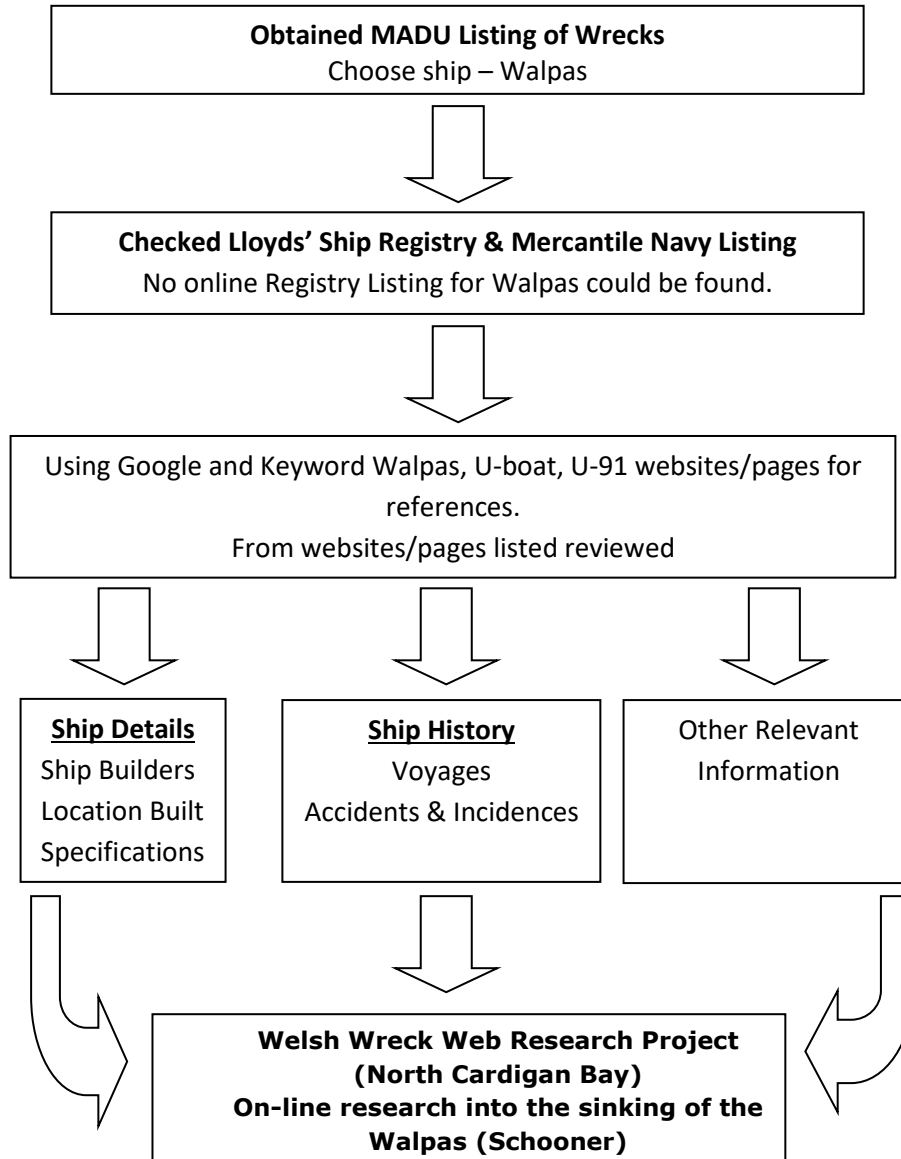
5.0 Research Methodology

Computer System

Acer Desktop 64 bit OS; 8 GB Memory, wireless connection.
Windows 10Pro
Microsoft Office 2007

Search engines used: Google Chrome

Methodology



See Section 9 for list of websites viewed

6.0 Results

Table 2: Walpas (Schooner) Specification and History

Vessel	Name/s	Walpas		
	Type	Sailing Ship - Schooner		
		General Cargo		
Built	Date	Laid Down: N/A		
		Launched: N/A		
		Delivered: 1901		
		Cost: N/A		
	Builder	E. Eklund		
		Raumo, Finland		
Construction	Materials	Wood		
	Decks	1		
	Bulkheads	N/A		
Propulsion	Type	Sail		
	Details	3 x masts		
Dimensions	Length	127 ft	0 ins	38.73 m
	Beam	30 ft	0 ins	9.27 m
	Draught	12 ft	0 ins	3.68 m
Tonnage	Gross	312		
	Net	N/A		
Owner	First	N/A		
	Last	Westberg, Augustus,		
		Luvia, Finland		
Registry	Port	Raumo		
	Flag	*Russia		
	Number	N/A		
History	Routes	N/A		
	Cargo	General		
Final Voyage	From	Fleetwood		
	To	Cadiz, Spain		
	Captain	Frans Emil Huhtala		
	Crew	9 (with captain)		
	Passengers	0		
	Cargo	447 tons of pitch		
Wrecking	Date	27/04/1918		
	Location	52.47N 05.12W, ~15 miles WNW of Bardsey Island Sank in ~78m water depth		
	Cause	Sunk by gunfire from German U-Boat U-91		
	Loss of life	1, hit by gunfire		
	Outcome	Sunk		

*N.B. At the time of construction Finland was a Grand Duchy of Imperial Russia, thus the Walpas was Russian registered.

7.0 Analysis

The Walpas was built by E. Eklund at Raumo Finland in 1901 at Luvia Finland. At the time of construction Finland was a Grand Duchy of Imperial Russia and the Walpas was registered as Russian.

From newspaper articles the Walpas was recorded:

- Sep 12 1901: passed Copenhagen
- Oct 19 1901: arrived Cardiff from Morlaix, France
- Nov 01 1901: departed Cardiff for Belen, Brazil

- May 05 1902: departed Gravesend for Table Bay South Africa

- Mar 28 1903: arrived Yarmouth from Trapani Sicily with cargo of salt
- Apr 23 1903: arrived Blyth from Yarmouth
- Aug 10 1903: departed from Sunderland to Skinnarvik Sweden
- Aug 17 1903: passed Elsinore Denmark
- Aug 21 1903: arrived Abo Denmark from Sunderland
- Nov 28 1903: arrived Shields from St Briec France
- Dec 11 1903: departed Newcastle for Ceara (Brazil)

- Mar 05 1904: arrived Barbados from Ceara (Brazil)
- Mar 23 1904: departed Barbados for Santa Cruz, Cuba
- May 1904: departed Santa Cruz Cuba for Havre France. Left Plymouth Jul 21 1904
- Aug 16 1904: arrived Wear from Havre France
- Sep 05 1904: passed Elsinore Denmark
- Sep 17 1904: arrived Abo Denmark from Sunderland

- Oct 18 1905: departed from Cherbourg for Copenhagen
- Oct 31 1905: departed from Copenhagen for Cherbourg

- May 25 1906: cleared Bjerneborg Sweden & Rafso Finland bound for London
- Jun 15 1906: arrived London Surrey Docks
- July 05 1906: anchored off Southend
- Oct 03 1906: arrived Soderhamn Sweden from Portsmouth

- Aug 02 1907: cleared Abo Denmark for St Brieue France
- Nov 02 1907: cleared Lunde / Hernosand Sweden for Leghorn Italy
- Nov 30 1907: passed west of Beachy Head

- Jan 09 1908: arrived Leghorn Italy from Hernosand Sweden
- Mar 06 1908: sailed from Ibiza Spain for Rafso Finland
- Mar 26 1908: passed west of Tarifa Spain
- Apr 21 1908: passed east St Catherine's Point IOW
- Sep 09 1908: arrived Legue from Kotka Finland

- Aug 11 1909: passed Elsinore Denmark
- Sep 14 1909: arrived L'Orient France
- Oct 07 1909: arrived Copenhagen from Lorient France
- Oct 16 1909: arrived Luoto Finland from L'Orient France
- Oct 18 1909: cleared Luoto Finland for Luvia Finland

- Jun 18 1915: departed from Parrsboro NS for Belfast
- July 22 1915: arrived Belfast from Parrsboro NS
- Aug 12 1915: departed from Belfast for St John New Brunswick
- Oct 15 1915: arrived St John New Brunswick from Belfast
- Oct 28 1915: departed St John New Brunswick for Havre, France

- Apr 18 1916: arrived Gulfport from Havre
- July 16 1916: arrived Cardiff
- Nov 30 1916: arrived Preston from Miramichi, New Brunswick

- U-91 departed Heligoland Germany on April 10 1918 (Appendix B) and sailed up the Danish coast before crossing the North Sea and heading down the west coast of Scotland.

- The Walpas left Fleetwood Lancashire on Apr 26 1918 bound for Cadiz Spain with a cargo of 447 tons of pitch.

- The watch on the Walpas consisting of 1 man at the wheel and 3 on deck spotted the U-91 on the surface travelling in a NW direction at about 6:15pm. As soon as the U-91 was sighted the Walpas run up the Finnish flag and continued on its SW course.

- Having been sighted the U-91 submerged and circled around the Walpas. From the personnel diary of KapLt Alfred von Glasenapp (Appendix C) prior to the sinking there had been much confusion about the identity of the Walpas:
 - Having spotted the periscope of U-91 the crew of the Walpas had hoped to escape by lowering and raising their flag indicating they were not a British ship.
 - There was confusion on the U-91 as to what flag the Walpas was flying. The Walpas at the time was flying a Finnish flag of a yellow lion on a red field, used since Finland had gained independence from Imperial Russia earlier in 1918.
 - Captain Glasenapp decided to attack the Walpas as it was travelling in the enemy's interest.

- The U-91 surfaced at 6:40pm and fired on the Walpas. A first burst of gunfire consisted of 2 rounds during which 1 Finnish seaman on the Walpas were killed.

- The crew of the Walpas took to the lifeboat but were caught by the U-91 and ordered to hand over their papers. The captain of the Walpas did not appear to be concerned as a price of DM 75k had been paid for the cargo which was three times the price of the cargo in peace times. In addition a bonus of DM 2k had been paid to the captain. The estimated cost of the Walpas was no more than DM 20k.

- The U-91 then fired a second burst consisting of 25-30 rounds into the Walpas which caught fire.

- The crew were released and informed that the coast was to the east. The U-91 continued in a northerly direction before submerging about 8pm.

- The Walpas was observed to be still a "gigantic torch of burning pitch for 4 hours before sinking at 11pm.

- A report on the sinking was conducted at the Naval Base in Holyhead (Appendix D).

Table 3: U-91 Specification and History

Vessel	Name/s	U-91 (Appendix A)
	Type	U 87 U-boat class
Built	Date	Ordered: Jun 23 1915
		Laid Down: Aug 01 1916
		Launched: Apr 14 1917
		Commissioned: Sept 17 1917
	Material	Steel
	Builder	Kaiserliche Werft, Danzig
	Owner	Imperial German Navy – Kaiserliche Marine
Dimensions	Length	65.8m (50.07m pressure hull)
	Beam	6.2m (4.18m pressure hull)
	Height	9.35m
	Draught	3.88m
Tonnage	Gross	757t (surface); 998t (submerged)
Propulsion	Type	2 shafts, 2 × 1.66 m (5 ft 5 in) propellers
Engine	Details	2 × 2,400 PS (1,765 kW; 2,367 shp) surfaced 2 × 1,200 PS (883 kW; 1,184 shp) submerged
	Speed	16.8 knots (31.1 km/h; 19.3 mph) surfaced 9.1 knots (16.9 km/h; 10.5 mph) submerged
	Range	11,380 nmi (21,080 km; 13,100 mi) at 8 knots (15 km/h; 9.2 mph) surfaced
		56 nmi (104 km; 64 mi) at 5 knots (9.3 km/h; 5.8 mph) submerged
	Depth	50m
	Crew	4 officers, 32 enlisted
Armaments		4 × 50 cm (19.7 in) torpedo tubes (two bow, two stern) 10-12 torpedoes 1 × 10.5 cm (4.1 in) SK L/45 deck gun
Captains		Kptlt. Alfred von Glasenapp 17 September 1917 – 11 November 1918
Operations		8 patrols
Victories		37 merchant ships sunk 83,202 tons 2 merchant ships damaged 11,812 tons
	Date	26/11/1918
	Location	Surrendered to France
	Outcome	Broken up at Brest, July 1921

- On 1 February 1917 Germany declared a renewal of 'unrestricted submarine warfare' in a last ferocious attempt to force an end to the First World War.
- KapLt Alfred von Glasenapp (1882-1958) was the commander of U-80 and U-91 during WW1. He sank a total of 52 ships and damaged another six.
- During his command of U-91, he sank a number of ships in Welsh waters, among them the WALPAS, DAMÃO and ORONSA between April 27 and 28 April 1918, and the HEATHPARK, commanded by captain Hugh Jones of Borth, on October 5 1918.
- Following the war, he left naval service, but returned as complementary officer in 1928.

8.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

The project took approximately 3 working days with half of that time spent on on-line research.

Having read the report sufficient information has been collated to compile a comprehensive history of the sinking of the schooner Walpas by German U-boat U-91.

Many different WebPages were viewed ranging from large organisations e.g. Lloyd's Registry Listings to smaller WebPages such as local history or people with a given interest in a subject. The quantity and quality of the WebPages appeared depended on the targeted audiences and the amount of work undertaken. Some of the historical and interest in a subject WebPages were extremely useful. Newspaper archives were also very helpful in giving an overall picture of the operation of the ship and filling in information gaps.

Much of the data collated between websites checked out with some discrepancies observed.

A few WebPages viewed led to pay to view pages. However in most cases the information was obtained from other sources.

From the research conducted, setting a goal and how to reach that goal should be mapped out first. Careful use of specific words in search engines is very important. As Walpas is not a common word newspaper reports were easily viewed due to their number.

From reports the Walpas plied many trade routes between Europe, North and South America.

Since it's sinking the Walpas has been part of a major project The U-Boat Project 1914-18, a collaboration between the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, Bangor University and the Nautical Archaeology Society. Although yet to be confirmed as the wreckage of the Walpas a wreck in the location where the Walpas sank has been investigated in 2018 (Appendix E).

9.0 References

9.1 Online WebPages

The following websites and pages have been used in the compilation of this report:

<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

Keyword: Walpas, U91

<https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/271668/details/walpas>

<https://www.google.co.uk/>

<https://www.peoplescollection.wales/collections/991501>

<https://www.peoplescollection.wales/collections/1012466>

<https://rcahmw.gov.uk/100-years-ago-this-month-submarine-attacks-in-welsh-waters/>

<https://uboat.net/wwi/>

<https://uboat.net/wwi/boats/?boat=91>

<https://uboatproject.wales/2018/12/12/pup-rescue-all-at-sea-lotte-and-the-u-91/>

https://uboat.net/wwi/ships_hit/6430.html

<https://uboatproject.wales/wrecks/walpas/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_shipwrecks_in_April_1918

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SM_U-91

<https://www.wrecksite.eu/wreck.aspx?69790>

9.2 Personal Correspondences

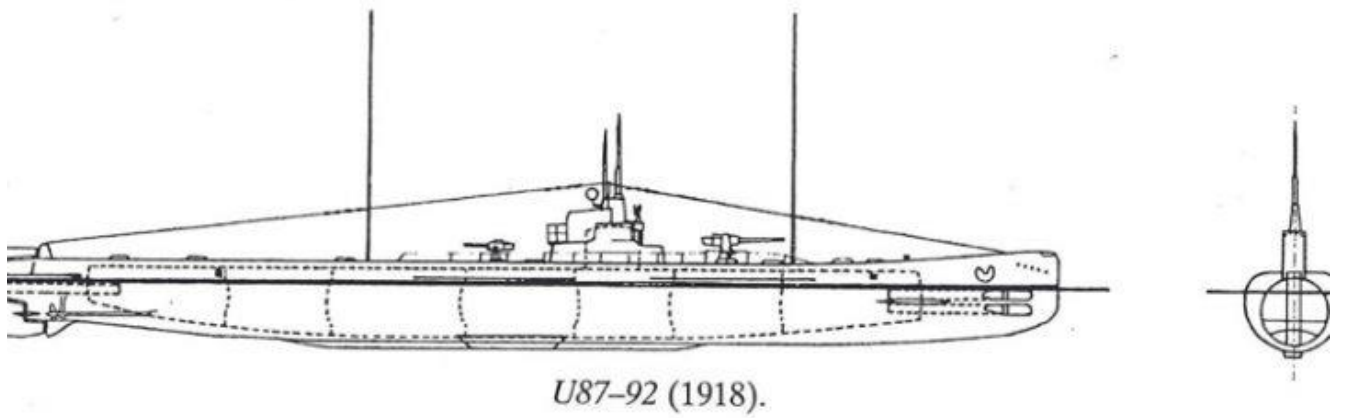
I would like to thank Mr Ian Cundy for supplying the initial information and other information with regards to the research project.

9.3 Publications

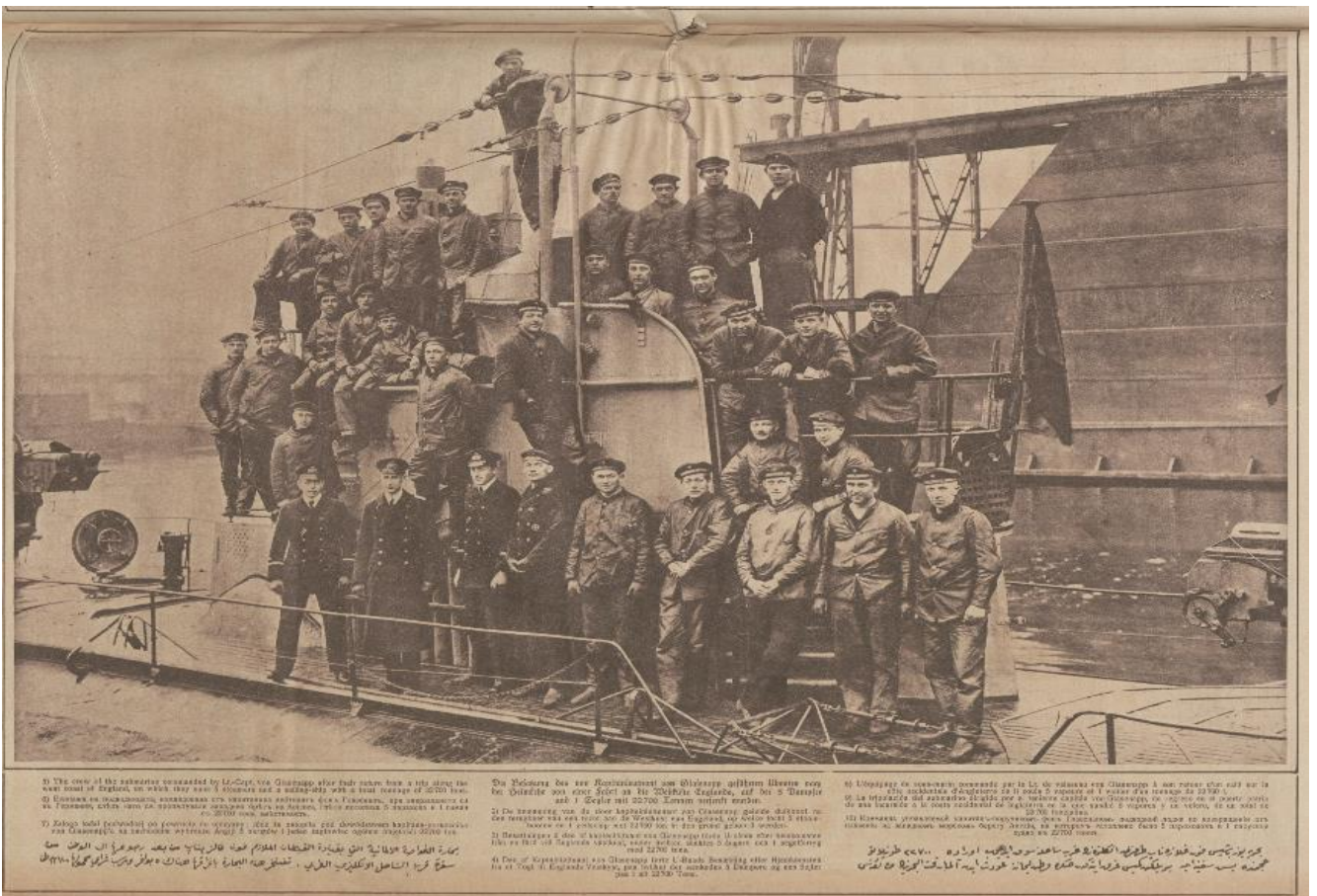
Larn, R. & Larn, B., 2000, *Shipwreck Index of the British Isles: Volume 5 – West Coast and Wales*. Lloyd's Register of Shipping.

Appendices:

Appendix A: U 87 Class Submarine



Appendix B: U 91 Crew on deck, Spring 1918



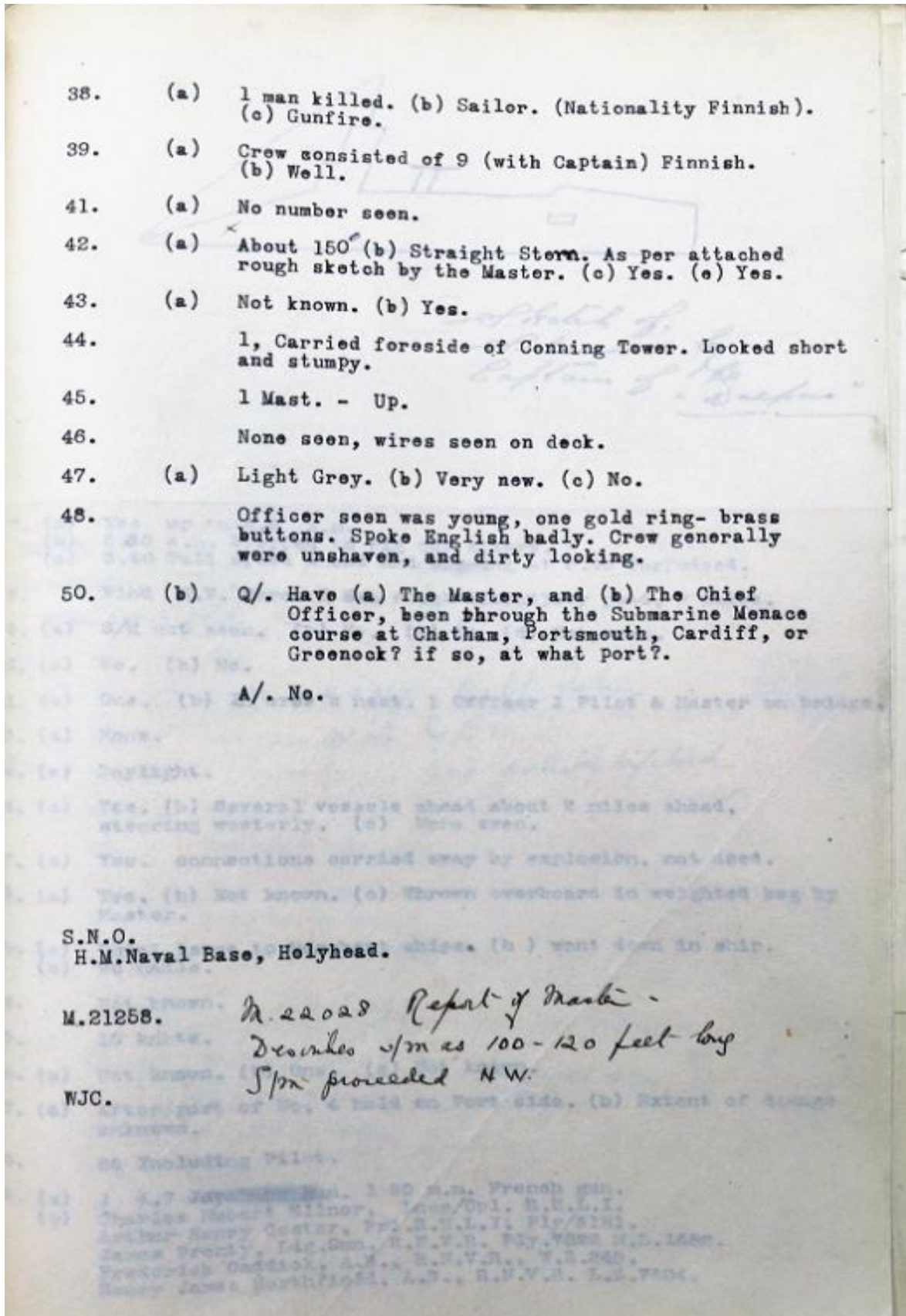
Photograph published in the magazine Welt im Bild mit Erläuterungen in 12 Sprachen

Appendix C: KapLt Alfred von Glasenapp (1882-1958)



Kapitänleutnant v. Glasenapp.

Appendix D: Report of Walpas Sinking conducted at Holyhead



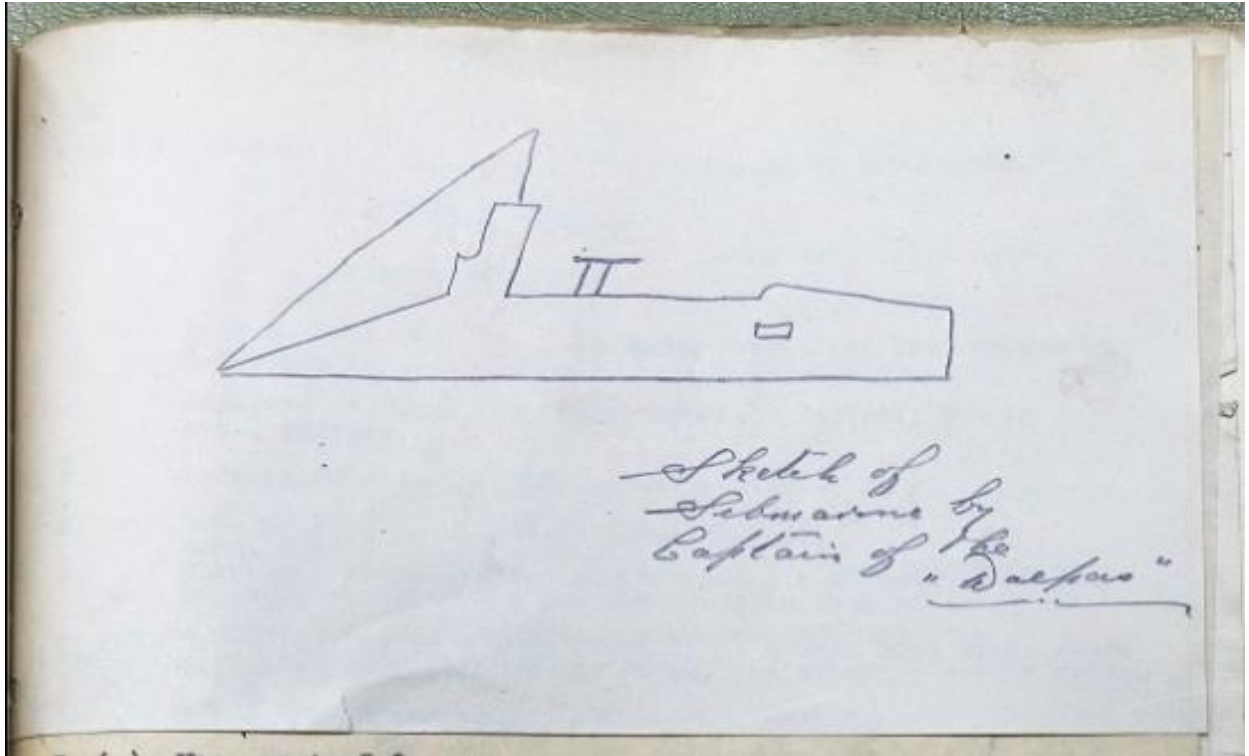
Form S.A. Revised.

Sailing Vessel, Original with M.21258.

"Walpas". (Barquentine). Sunk: 27/4/1918.

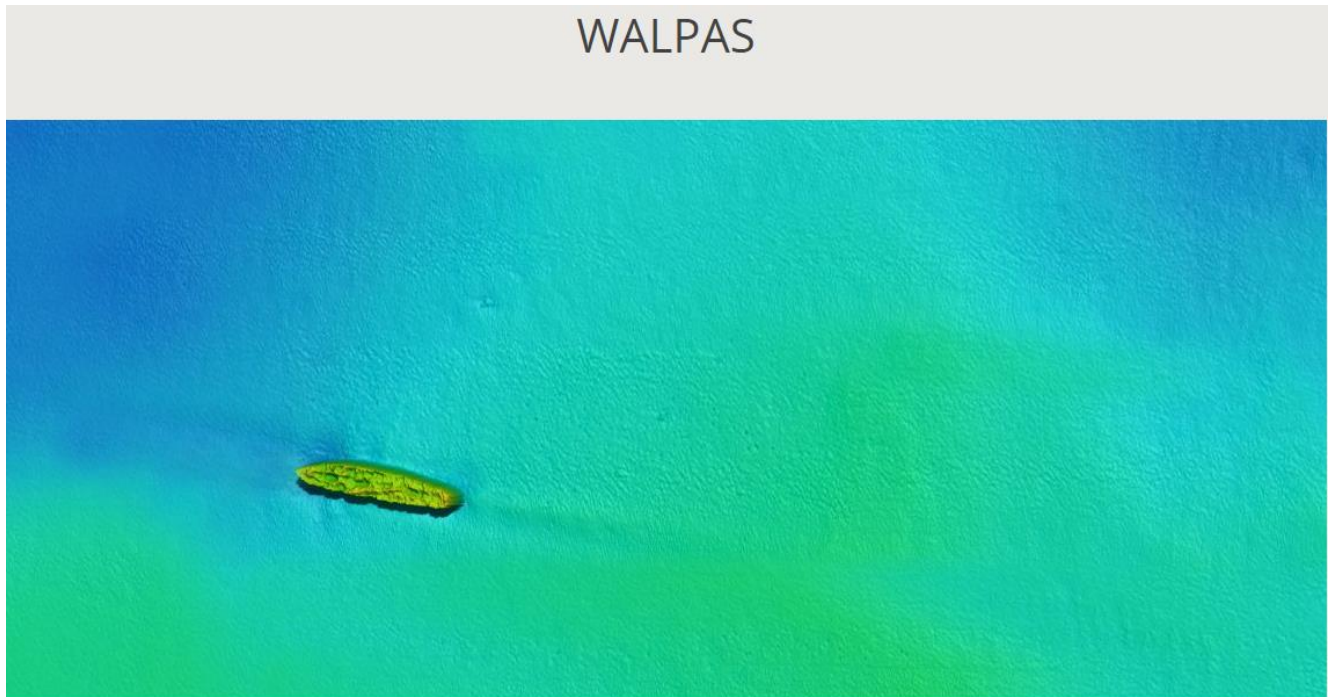
.....

1. (a). Fleetwood. (b) 26th April, (c) Cadiz. (d) As received from Fleetwood.
2. August Westberg. Luvia Finland. Cargo Pitch.
3. Frans Emil Huhtala.
4. (a) 20 W.N.W. Bardsey. 6.40pm. BST. 27th April. (b) 52. 45 N. 5.15 W. (approx) (d) Ship on fire. Seen burning till about 11pm. - flared up and disappeared.
5. (a) Gunfire. (b) Too dark to see if actually sunk. See No 4 above.
6. S.W. 4 knots. Wind astern.
8. Very light wind No sea. Hazy off the land.
9. (d) Submarine was first seen on surface. Submerged and circled round ship. Came to the surface and opened fire.
10. (b) See No 9.
11. (a) 4 men on watch. (b) 1 at wheel and 3 on deck.
12. When on surface submarine was travelling N.W.
13. (a) Finnish Flag. (b) As soon as submarine was sighted.
15. Continued on same course. (SW).
16. (a) No.
18. (a) Northwards on surface and then dived. (b) About 8pm. BST.
20. (b) Torn up into small pieces and thrown overboard. (c) Flag signals to be hoisted: approach of British Warships. (Identification signals).
21. About 6.15 BST. $\frac{3}{4}$ mile. (approx).
22. (a) 2 rounds. 2nd round killing a man. (b) 25-30 rounds. (c) Fast. About 4 or 5 seconds between each shot.
23. (a) Twice. (b) About a dozen times.
30. Commander of submarine spoke very bad english, but two of the crew spoke Swedish perfectly. Commander asked:- What ship? Replied Finnish. Don't you know you are not allowed to sail round here and to England during War time? Asked for ship's papers which were given up. Master of Barquentine asked distance off shore. German Commander replied "about 10 miles Steer E".



Source: ADM 137/4015. Enemy submarines: particulars of attacks on merchant vessels in home waters. 16-30 April 1918. ADM - Records of the Admiralty, Naval Forces, Royal Marines, Coastguard, and related bodies. The National Archives, Kew. n.p.

Appendix E: Sonar Image of Walpas (still to be confirmed)



Source: Yn Coffáu'r Rhyfel ar y Môr (Commemorating the War at Sea Project Llongau-U 1914-18 U-Boat Project).

The U-Boat Project 1914-18 is a collaboration between the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, Bangor University and the Nautical Archaeology Society.

<https://uboatproject.wales/wrecks/walpas/>