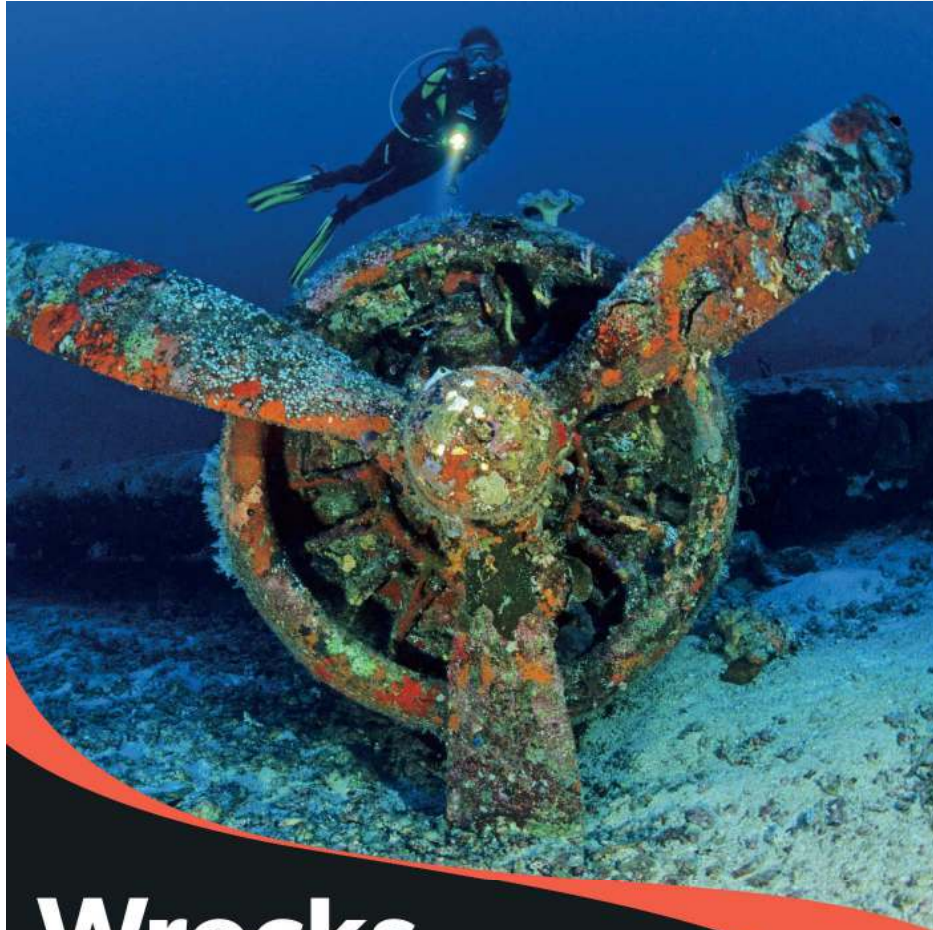


A full-page underwater photograph serves as the background for the book cover. It depicts a diver in a dark wetsuit and mask, positioned in the center-left. The diver is surrounded by an immense, dense school of small, silvery fish that fills the entire frame, creating a shimmering, ethereal effect. The water is a deep blue, and the overall scene is captured with high contrast and vibrant colors.

DIVE! EGYPT'S SHIPWRECKS

Part 1 Sudan border to Safage

By
PETER COLLINGS SSI PRO 5000
FORWARD BY JOHN WOMACK



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DIVE EGYPTS SHIPWRECKS

From Sudan to Sollum a 25 year Journey

Part 1-SUDAN BORDER to SAFAGA

PETER COLLINGS SSI PRO5000

FORWARD by JOHN WOMACK

I am John Womack Snr, BSAC First Class Diver, Advanced Instructor & owner of Otter Drysuits in Yorkshire, having dived the Britannic, Prince of Wales, Repulse and the Victoria plus many more over the last 40 years I would not go anywhere in the Red Sea without one of Peter's guide books. I have been on numerous successful trips of Peter's including wreck searching in Truk Lagoon.

Peter's new book is awesome, there are so many wrecks and to give detailed descriptions of all the wrecks themselves is great, it makes you feel like you have dived them already. I remember doing a night dive on the Thistlegorm which was just fantastic it was pitch black with pin points of light from fellow divers lights. In the south, Peter, Tom and myself went looking for the wreck of the Maidan on Rocky Island, we followed the debris trail down to 65mtrs and there before us was the huge shadow of the wreck hanging over the abyss starting at 80 mtrs. We could only look down in wonder, but we had found what we were looking for after 10 years.

Peter's trips are a must and very much like his trips his books are a must read, Peter is a walking encyclopaedia on all things diving and ship wrecks. A lot of great ships were made in the North East and it comes as no surprise to me that this is where Peter came from too, we have been friends/fellow wreck divers a lot of years and hope to be sharing experiences and books for many more years to come.



John Womack
MD Otter Watersports
Yorkshire. March 2018
[Otter Drysuits, UK](http://www.otterdrysuits.co.uk)

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INTRODUCTION

Although I had one previous trip to Egypt, a shore based foray that took me, in a fishing boat, for the first time to Abu Nuhas, to “liberate” tiles from a shipwreck(1979) this publication started some 30 odd years ago-April 17th/14th 1983 at Abu Nu Has as the Giannis D ran aground and began to sink. My first of over 500 livaboard adventures in Egyptian waters from the Sudanese border to the entrance(literally) of the Suez Canal and then beyond into the Mediterranean with land based forays and even time spent living with local fishermen on their tiny feluccas.

Its worth noting that on neither of those trips was I aware of the Thistle Gorm, Rosalie Moller, or indeed any other of the 30+ wrecks we dive in Egypt today. Yes we dived the Jolanda in 83 but she is now in the realms of extreme trimix. Wrecks were not really on the agenda-it was the sharks, reefs and marine life that, despite the inaccessibility drew us to these waters. My interest in maritime history, born out of those early North East publications, was indeed to draw me back time and again. It has been a life long journey, and this I suspect will be my Swansong!

It was though the vision of Chris Scott, who's words back in the early 90's, “There's a great future in livaboard diving”, and “ We could run a wreck safari”, moved my career away from teaching underwater photography into wreck hunting.

By 1995 I had formed the Red Sea Wreck Academy. Backed by the Red Sea Association the initial group of 10 was to grow into a world wide team of divers, maritime historians, and archivists, all of whom have played a vital part in this work. Discovery followed discovery, many during the BSAC southern expeditions and then our forays into the Gulf of Suez

The success did not go unnoticed-awards from America and Egypt acknowledged and endorsed the discoveries. By 2005 over 30 wrecks had been discovered, surveyed and identified.

I've often been asked how I discover wrecks. The answer ranges from Sidescan to a flock of seagulls, witnessing a sinking and living with local fishermen, and I have included some of those stories herein. Sometimes truth outstrips fiction!

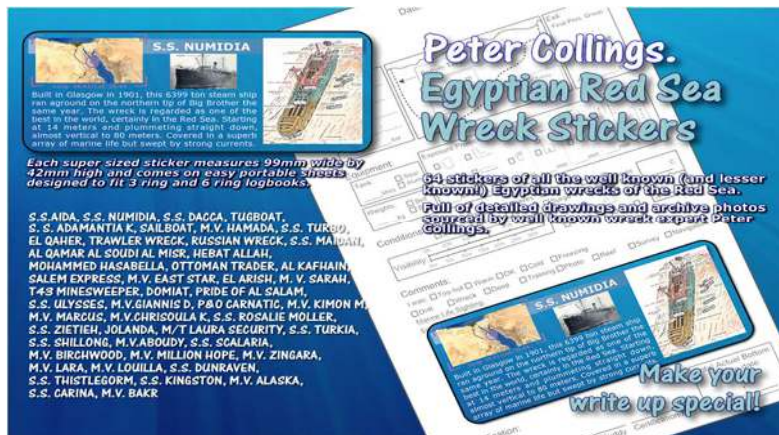
Such success was bound to bring adverse propaganda from armchair experts who simply said I was wrong or the wrecks didn't exist, simply because of who I was and not because of fact. They have been eliminated from all enquiries and do not play any part here other than to have encouraged and inspired me to succeed! Funny though, they often copied my work!

The work has grown beyond my wildest dreams-and will be published in 5 volumes. This then is a free edited version. The final two sections are my “gift” to future generations of divers and show a marked difference in the format of the work. These two sections, the Mediterranean coast contain a wealth of undiscovered wrecks-documented but undived. The first 3 volumes cover the Egyptian Red Sea and Gulfs of Suez and Aqaba. Where we have located a wreck it is titled “THE WRECK OF THE.....” and where they are undived simply listed by their name at the time of sinking(if known).

It seemed logical to start in the south at the Sudanese border and work northward through the Fury shoals, onto Safaga and Hurghada, taking in the islands on the way, the Sinai region and into the Gulf of Suez. The final two sections then run east to west to the tantalizing border with Lybia...

While its my name on the cover, so many people have been involved over the years, From shipwreck survivors to those who spend their days between dusty shelves of historic documents, my fellow members of the RSWA (transient and enduring) and of course those who have sponsored the E book guide series. I have to thank them all for their inspiration endurance and most of all friendship.

S.S.= STEAMSHIP, M.V.=MOTOR VESSEL,M.Y.=MOTOR YATCH.HMS =BRITISH WARSHIP,RO-RO=ROLL ON, ROLL OFF FERRY.





THE SUDANESE BORDER.



The CEDAR STAR, high and dry on the Sudanese border.

The border between Sudan and Egypt can appear rather disputed confusing and uncertain-depending on which map you view, but on a recent expedition to Sudan, it was made very clear the Egyptian Navies point of view. They consider that the centre of ELBA REEF, and a 24 mile strip either side is a “no go area”-we were not permitted to dive within this perimeter. Thus the magnificent LEVANZO was off limits. .She is south of the line so would not have featured here anyway.

The area is at the far reaches of Egyptian livaboards, visited by the odd 10 or 14day exped's. It stands to reason, while we don't have any current targets there may yet be some new discoveries. Perhaps if tourism moves south, maybe if Berenise ever opens up , then this area may one day become a regular destination for livaboards .

There are many as yet undived reefs and as such until a reef is dived we can't say there's no wreck there..they might just be!

Ans so the journey begins in Egypts very southern waters taking us north via the Islands on the way to The northern outskirts of Safaga.

UNIDENTIFIED WRECK

It is rather ironic that this is only one of two wrecks which remain unidentified throughout the 40 or so listed in these volumes. (The other being the “Clark Chapman wreck in Safaga port)

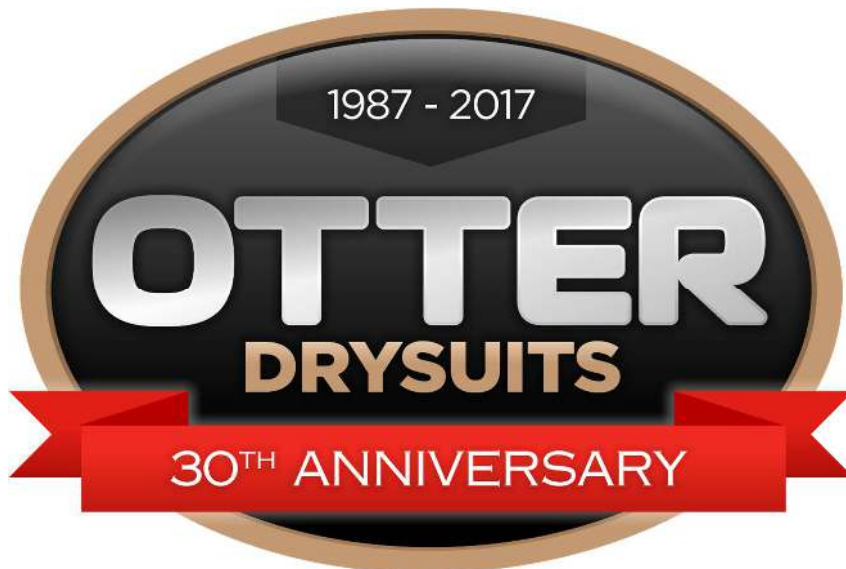
The stern section of wreck lies in part on top of the reef with her main hull sloping down the reef into deeper water.....

The entire wreck has become engulfed into the reef, suggesting she’s been there a while, and the wreck demands more research and indeed dives!

The only possible contender for this wreck (as far as our research has taken us) is the

S.S AYAMONTE

The S.S Ayamonte was built in 1899 at BremerVulkan for the Argo DG of Bremen, and was 903 tons, 180 ft long with triple expansion engines. She remained in German ownership until 1925 when she was sold to Cowasjee & Dinstaw of London. According to the war diaries she was sunk on October 4th 1942, and the coordinates given match this location. However the cause of loss was a collision with the SS NIRPURA who picked up the survivors. It is feasible that the ship drifted ashore before sinking



The reefs of St Johns lie to the north but to date have not offered up any wrecks. The next location to the north is Rocky island, surrounded by world class walls of coral and shark encounters, it offers technical divers a very challenging dive indeed.



THE WRECK OF THE SS MAIDAN



THE VESSEL

Built at Glasgow by W. Hamilton & Co, the Maidan was launched in March 1902. At 8,205 tons, and 500 long, 58 x 32 ft 747 nhp, she was one of the biggest ships of her day. Her early career saw her operating as a passenger/ cargo ship between Europe and the far east. In 1914, at the outbreak of war she was engaged in troop transport, notably the "Liverpool Scottish Regiment" and the "Queens Westminster Rifles". In 1919, she underwent a major refit, and a new 4-cylinder

THE MAIDANERS

At the end of the 1st World War only 65 of the 1000 men from the Liverpool and Scottish Regiment had survived. They became known as the Maidaners, because of their association with the ship. In insight into life on board is recorded in the diaries of Sergeant B.BROOKES. See www.LondonScottish.org.uk

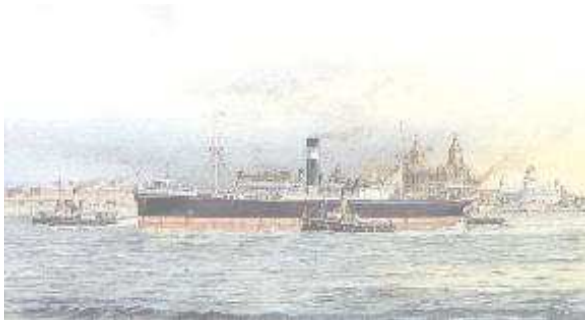


Revolutionary quadruple expansion steam engine fitted to the Maidan during her refit, increasing her speed and efficiency

THE FINAL VOYAGE

In April 1923 the Maiden was in Calcutta having discharged her cargo and reloading with another. Heading back towards Europe her progress found her in Ceylon towards the end of May and Bombay by early June. A short stop was made in Port Sudan, where she rebunkered and took on additional cargo before setting course for Suez through the Red Sea. It was the intention of her captain to sail within sight of Zabagad (then St. Johns island) to make an accurate fix. However over the next 140 miles the Maiden was to slowly drift off course, and by late afternoon she was some 3 miles west of her course. By the early hours of the next day, the 10th, Zabagad was sighted dead ahead on the horizon. The calm waters hiding the tell tale surf of a low lying island dead ahead, Its sandy colour blending in with that of the higher island behind and the poor or little light adding to the danger ahead. By the time the Captain and second officer had discussed who was to blame shallow water was sighted ahead.

Despite evasive action the Maiden grounded onto the south west side of the island, grinding her keel into the jagged reef in the early hours of the 10th June 1923 By midday the 100 crew and passengers had safely made it ashore, to be later picked up by a passing ship the Warwickshire. 12 hours after her grounding the Maiden slipped back and tumbled down the reef into the deep waters of Rocky Island



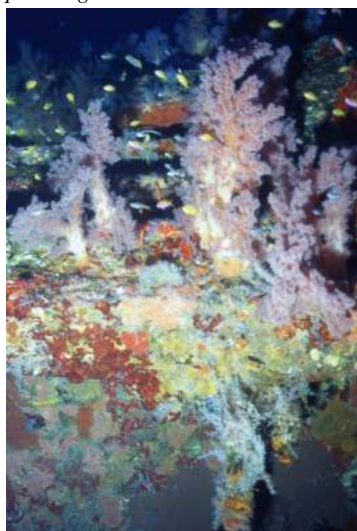
THE SEARCH FOR THE MAIDAN

One of the main targets of the early BSAC expeditions to Southern Egypt was the Maiden. She was well documented but not located. Our first visits to Rocky Island failed to come up with any results and we resigned ourselves to the fact that she must be beyond sport diving limits. We also surveyed Zabagad where we found two lifeboats lying on a beach-excitement gathered- they were English pump action type-were they from the Maiden? On our return from examining the lifeboats we discovered a small coastal vessel near the shore-but the lifeboats were too big for her cradles-where were they from. There was no record of the Maidans crew rowing to Zabagad was there another wreck waiting to be found? (cf TAIWAN) .It was to be another 8 years before we were to solve the mystery

THE DISCOVERY

JUNE 6TH 2003. Tipped off by a report by the DM of Excel, Grant SEARANCKE, I organised a deep air dive to identify some wreckage at the base of the reef on the south side of Rocky. My buddy was to be none other than Mr John Womack, of Otter Dry suit fame, and no stranger to wreck discoveries himself, and Tom Fruhenhimer, Germany's answer to John Cleese. Our plunge down the reef face to 65mtrs found the tell tale sign that we were right on target. Hawse wires stretched across the reef base and out beyond lay huge I-beams cross members from a ships hold of immense size some 50ft across. Several lay strewn on the sea bed and a huge mast ran out into the shadowy gloom-and the shadow of a vessel beyond. With bottom time over in minutes we left with a certainty we had found the Maidan- no other vessel could fit these dimensions

The hull of the wreck, starting at 80 mtrs is covered in superb corals and reef fishes. A Nikon RSAF, the only SLR able to withstand these pressures were used to capture these unique images.



In October 2003 Grant Searancke made several solo dives armed with the information we had uncovered. At a depth of 80 mtrs Grant found the main body of the wreck, her stern upright with her hull

sloping into deeper water the bow hanging over a precipice the general depth of the wreck being in 100mtrs. Grants friend, Kimo Hagman joined Grant in a deep exploratory dive, taking some detailed photographs. He reported that the bridge and companionways had collapsed.

Some reports suggested that the wreck was not where we had claimed it was where we had claimed after the initial discovery. It was not until late 2004 an opportunity presented itself to return to Rocky to dive the wreck again. However after descending the wall we were able to locate the wreck directly out from the debris field. It would appear from the debris trail and the position of the wreck that she has struck the reef side on then tumbled down the reef to the base in 100mtrs, her bow now sticking out into the blue overhanging a sheer wall-upside down in 120 mtrs. Impacting with a large rock on the way. The stern section sits upright while the main body of the wreck lies over on her port side. The wreck is huge and ranks alongside the Numidia as one of the largest steamships to have sunk in the Red Sea. Her engine room, still complete with its 4-cylinder quadruple expansion engine can be entered bared open by a huge gape in the hull but at these great depths requires technical skills beyond sport diving.

With the main section of the ship torn from the bow and stern, the huge tears in her hull forward and aft have caused her cargo to spill out onto the seabed and also allowing access into her vast holds. The forward hold is full of jute gunnies-hessian sacks tied in bundles, and deeper down into the wreck are what appear to be the remains of bags of cement.



The Maidan at Liverpool docks.

The decks now vertical still bear all the usual fittings; winches, hatch covers ventilation tubes, mooring cleats and mast bases. A spare propeller still remains bolted onto the stern castle.

Although some of the wreck has collapsed due to the journey to her final resting place, many of the handrails and fittings, are adorned with corals, sponges and deep-water hard coral species. The bridge would appear to have separated from the main body of the wreck, along with her tall straight funnel. There is a large debris field and scattered around are winches, ventilation cowls, hatch covers, hawse wires and mast sections. There are many hatchways enticing the unwary and many more dives must be carried out before her attitude is fully understood

The wreck is covered in a very healthy growth of soft corals as vibrant as a reef in shallow water, with the deep water white whip corals everywhere.

THE BELL

Located by rebreather diver Andy Aberly, the bell was raised by Grant, after he had witnessed a group of Italian divers pillaging the wreck of the Zealot on Daedalus. Fearing they would target the Maidan next the bell was cleaned, photographed and it is hoped it will find its pride of place in the Liverpool-Scottish Museum. A fitting memorial to a great ship and the brave men who lost their lives in the Great war. The current location of the bell is unknown to the author

THE WRECK OF THE S.S. TAIWAN



While searching for the Maidan during those early expeditions we dived extensively around Zabagad Island. Noting potential dive sites. During an encounter with a school of Hammer heads we noticed a cargo ship in 70 mtrs below us. She was a four hold vessel appeared upright and fairly intact. She was well beyond our reach. We surmised, wrongly that she must be the Maidan. Following the positive id of the Maidan we have another mystery wreck to identify.

Built in Germany in 1924 by Duetshe Werft AG. Hamgurghs for the North African Austrian Line (Wilhelm Wilhermsen,Tonsberg,Norway the 5500 TONS,426 ft long general cargo vessel was on a voyage from Basra to Gothenburgh, when she struck Rocky Island, she was refloated , but later abandoned and sunk close to shore on Zabagad Island on 14 march 1950.



The wreck is broken in two, starting at a depth of 60 mtrs down to 90 mtrs very close to shore and is ideal an trimix or rebreather dive. The location offers sheltered conditions for such an advanced dive.

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WRECK OF THE “MOMA” CLASS SURVEILANCE GATHERER AKA THE RUSSAIN WRECK



A diver hovers over the stern of the Moma class Surveillance vessel at Zabagad Island .The damage from the explosion can clearly be seen in the starboard hull.On the aft deck are the winches for towing the sonar arrays.

THE DISCOVERY

During the early BSAC expeditions to Southern Egypt, one of our main targets was to locate the wreck of the MAIDAN, as well as exploring the undived sites of the south. Cruising around Zabagad we found two lifeboats lying on the shore. We thought they might be from the Maidan and spent the next day diving the outer reefs of St John's or Zabagad island. Encountering a school of hammerheads we noticed a large freighter in deep water (70mtrs) below us. Beyond our remit, we could only speculate that this might be the Maidan, indeed we now know she is likely to be the TAIWAN.

We decided to check out 2 lifeboats-English pump action type- lying on the shore and in doing so stumbled across a cargo ship-her radio and comms mast just below the surface. At first we thought the lifeboats were from this ship, but again we were to be proved wrong.

The initial dive was a hurried one –the last day of that years expedition. The initial appearance of the ship was that she was simply a small cargo vessel which had run aground- quite recently- not much coral and indeed a painted emblem on her funnel.

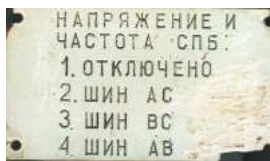
Electronic equipment lay all around the ship- much more than the usual array of masts coils and cables. Russian lettering on notice plates were everywhere, her compass originating from Denmark. An intact helm and bridge provided a fascinating dive- if anyone had been here before they had left her undisturbed.

As we sailed away we were all excited at the find and speculated over the two wrecks with lots of unanswered questions. My suggestion that this little cargo ship was indeed a Russian spy ship was met with ridicule –I was told I watched too many Bond films. My instincts wouldn't let go.

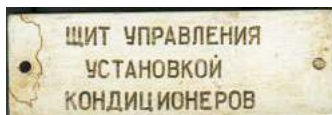
I returned to the wreck whenever our schedule allowed. The more I dived her, the more convinced I was about my theory. On 8th June of 2003, the day after John Womack (OtterWater Sports) and myself found the Maidan, I took an electronics expert deep into the Russian wreck-showing him the racks of batteries-and the schematics at the end of each row. Although I couldn't understand his technical jargon through his mouthpiece I got the gist of what he was getting at. All these batteries could only mean one thing. The ship needed a clean power source for her purpose. Her usual generators would give off radiated and transmitted noise-batteries wouldn't. He traced the cables-some ended where a piece of equipment had been removed through an access panel in the hull. Other cables ran forward and we were not to discover their destination for another year. David you see is "rotund" and couldn't quite squeeze through the ducting! We eventually had to drag him away from "all that electronic stuff" I became an expert in electronic jargon after that dive; "switch mode", "multi phase", "dirty" and "clean" power. Another convert for my theory.



SYNCHRONIZATION
1 TYRES 1G
2 TYRES 3G
3 ELECTRICAL CUT OUT
4 SS TYRES 2G



TENSION & FREQUENCY S.P.B
1 ELECTRICAL CUT OUT
2 TY
RE AS
3TYRE VS
4TYRE AB



INSTALLATION & MAINTAINANCE

THE UNDENIABLE CLUES.

Throughout the ship we found evidence of electronic surveillance equipment. One room, located below and behind the bridge was a communications centre. Desks packed with electronic gauges, dials, knobs and switches-desks for 6 -10 personnel. The switches were all labelled in Russian-some examples on the left with their translations.

The word TYRE has 3 meanings in Russia- a car tyre, a surgical splint and an electric buss-or distribution board sometimes known as a buzz bar.

The battery room contained over 200 batteries in 4 sections each with a schematic at each end. The cables traced back into the communications room.

The HT lead running ashore was armoured and multi cored-leading to a solid base- on the island-no doubt for a fixed array.

The Comms mast had huge multcore cables running through it-far more than a coastal vessel or a trawler would need. Several directional finding antenna were also located close by.

FOR NAVIGATION SHIELD



The plate opposite was located on the winch-and when translated revealed some crucial evidence.

Machinery Code (pos. index) 6-4
Anchor Cable 31mm
works no. 155
date of manufacture 1973
actual weight 3200 kg
(OTK) mechanical control

Astrakhan SSZ im. 10-iy God. Oktyabrskoy Revolyutsii, Astrakhan



The 'Moma' class electronic surveillance ship (Project 861M)

The Moma (Project 861) was and is a coastal survey ship. They are also used as buoy tenders. The converted Moma (Project 861M) is an Electronic Intelligence (ELINT) gathering ship converted from Moma class survey ship/buoy tenders. These ships carry SSV (Communications Vessel) numbers on the bow

Specification

Russian Designation: SSV (Communications Ship)
Builder: Stocznia Polnocna, Gdansk (Poland)
Role: ELINT
Year adopted: 1967
Number in Class: 28 ships total (production from 1968 – 1974)
Operational Status: Russia: Still in active service
Displacement: 1,580 tons full load
Length: 73.3 meters. Draught: 3.8 meters. Beam: 10.8 meters
Crew: 41 – 120 Officers and Sailors (*depending on the mission*)

Engine: 2 x Zgoda/sulzer 6TD48 diesel engines delivering 3,600 hp
Max Speed: 17 Knots Range: 8,700 Nautical miles at 11 knots
Sensor Suite: 2 x Don-2 navigational radars
Sonar: Bronza arrays
Electronic Warfare: Intercept and DF arrays

THE WRECK TODAY

The wreck lies upright in 24 mtrs in the western bay of Zabagad Island. Her bow and small hold have broken off and lie over to port, full of the obligatory glassfish. There is no evidence of any cargo. She is otherwise intact, with a stern superstructure and engine room. Access to her bridge, complete with instruments, engine room and galley along with companionway swim-throughs is easy and exciting.



Engine room hatch covers deliberately removed, Divers swim past the entrance to the pump room. The bridge is just in front of her funnel. Her radio mast almost breaking the surface.

Her instrument panel and helm are located in the bridge behind which is a navigation room and stairs down into the accommodation and galley areas. Evidence of beds, tool boxes and every day items are scattered throughout the interior. Large diameter corrugated hoses lie in her stern and her single forward hold. All her deck fittings are visible, and intact including the empty lifeboat davits, stern winch, cable drums for the towed arrays and "toadstool" ventilator tops. Her central comms mast almost breaks the surface. Compass posts sit at each side of the flying bridge. Access to the engine room and her accommodation area can be gained from doors situated on the rear deck. The rear section of the ship can also be explored from the large holes in her hull. It is possible with care to enter the engine room this way and then exit via the rear doorways or her skylights. In front of the wheelhouse is a control room for what appears to be

pipng and valves for liquid fuel. The lack of depth (max 24 mtrs) means the wreck is usually bathed in strong sunlight, the clearer water being the upper levels as the sandy bed often becomes cloudy if a swell is present. The stern sitting bolt upright is an impressive sight and is very photogenic.

The bow section lies over to starboard, the bow itself hard into the reef, and the central raised walkway having broken off from the main section by the deckhouse. Near the winch is an upright structure possibly a crane of some kind and access to the hold is open or though one of two service hatches on the deck or for the less adventurous through a he gash in her starboard side. From the walkway a forward comms mast runs out almost horizontal and is home to many small reef fishes and soft corals.



The bow section lies over to port and has broken off from the main section of the ship(LEFT) The aft deck has many fittings relating to the vessels purpose.(RIGHT)

Small coral growths have now established themselves on the wreck and antheas adorn the funnel along with several lionfish patrolling the perimeter.

The surrounding area is littered with DF masts and several antenna, and radio sets lie off towards the shore amongst the corals- all distinctly Russian.



The lack of depth allows for strong natural light over the wreck. The bridge and comms mast are only a few meters below the surface.

THE ENIGMA

It is clear from all of the evidence that this vessel was used as an “intelligence gatherer”, but what was she doing tucked away in a bay in a quite corner of Egypt near the Sudanese border? Some time between 1974 and 1985 –the cold war period

Had she simply put in for repairs and the ensuing explosion sunk her? If so why had all the watertight doors been cut at the hinges, preventing them from being refitted



Why the HT cables and fuel pipes running ashore? The Russians were operating out of the Dallak Islands (Eritria) during the cold war. She may be one such vessel. They also had strong connections with the Egyptians and there are several Russian built Egyptian shipwrecks from the Arab conflicts. However there is nothing on the ship to suggest she was an Egyptian vessel or indeed have an Egyptian crew. Was she watching shipping for both Russia and Egypt? Perhaps the clouded past of the cold war will keep her full story a secret.

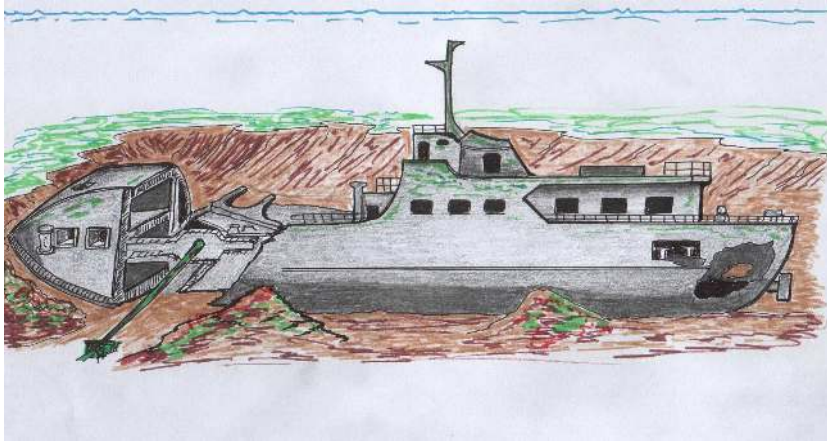
One final enigma is this sign-the only one found in English



The bridge complete with telegraph, radar and controls can be accessed from both port and starboard doorways(above & below left).The engine room is accessible from the skylights above(below right)







Intact hard corals are now well established on the wreck, The forward comms mast has fallen over and has turned into a living reef.

left; Aerial view of the bow section. The shallower water offers the clearest visibility.
Right: full stern shot of the wreck



Diverse TRAVEL



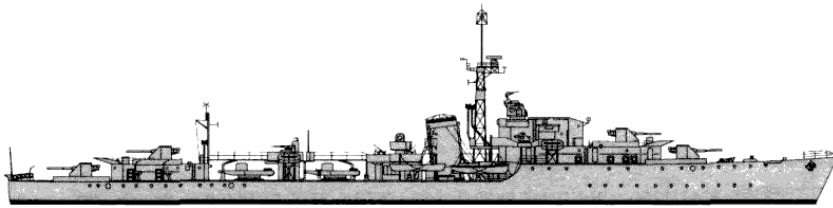
THE WRECK OF EL QAHER (ex HMS MYNGS)



The border port of Port Berenice, sheltered by the long curving nose of Ras Banas, must have seen some nautical comings and going over the last 2000 years. The bones of many ships will no doubt lie seep in the sand-The scant remains of the stern of the Altas seem to diminish as the years go by. Several other wrecks lie here too, but diving them is very difficult and heavily restricted.

In 1955 the Royal Navy decommissioned several of its "Z"(ZAMBESI) class destroyers. These were fast (35knot) vessels, sleek and manoeuvrable and designed primarily as sub chasers. While many of the vessels were scrapped 4 were sold on-Two to Egypt-HMS MYNGS (to become the AL QAHER), H.M.S.ZENITH (to become the AL FATHA) and two to ISRAEL, HMS ZEALOUS and HMS ZODIAC(to be renamed ELATH and YAFFA respectively) ELATH IS FEATURED IN CHAPTER 10.

Built by Vickers Armstrong, on the Tyne and launched in 1943, HMS MYNGS(R06) saw action off the Norwegian coast. She was fitted with turbine engines and drum boilers, capable of some 35 knots, they had a displacement of 1710 tons, and were 360ft long, similar in many ways to the successful "C" CLASS. Her armament included; 4x114mm guns (4x1-DP) 3 40mm cannon, 20 40mm pom pom, and 8 torpedo tubes



Sold to Egypt in 1955 and renamed the EL QAHER, serving in the Egyptian Navy she went through a major refit in 1969-70, with upgraded electronics (Russian) and had returned to her base at Port Berenice to continue her duties. This was the period of the "phoney war"-between the 6 day war and Yom Kippur wars.



Emblems of the Israeli air force during Operation Keshet Avira



In MAY 1970 12 F4 Phantoms of 201 squadron based in Hattor and 69 Squadron (The Hammers) armed with MK117 bombs attacked the vessel in Operation Keshet Avira (Ariel bow) while it was at anchor. Bristling with anti aircraft guns and a new firing tracking system held off several attacks despite being hit by sidewinder missiles and countless rounds from the planes in wing cannons. With a range of 800 miles the aircraft could sustain a prolonged attack over the target. With a still decimated air force the Israelis carried on the relentless attack un hindered from the air. Fires spread throughout the vessel and internal explosions raked the ship. Eventually the 300 ft destroyer settled by the stern, her entire superstructure ablaze.

As she sank she swung round on her anchor and grounded on a coral shelf ripping her bow plates open-her draught only 3 mtrs. Thus leaving her fore- section and superstructure above water.



The wreck sits perched on a large rock, her bow and fore guns sticking out of the water. It is possible to swim under her aft keel and view the twin props and rudders adorned with soft corals - maximum depth 27 metres. Endless dives can be made swimming through her accommodation area, control rooms and view the twin torpedo tubes and stern guns, submerged, complete with shells in the breech, barrels pointed skyward... she went down fighting.



Scattered all around the seabed, are parts of the ship blow off during the attack. The sea bed off the wreck's port side suggests the missiles came in from the south—the radio room, firing solution tower and anti aircraft guns are all blown off the ship and lie on the sandy plateau.

LEFT. The sleek lines of the destroyer can be seen in this shot of her knife edged bow—which helped her cut through the water at 35 knots.

BELOW LEFT; Part of her superstructure, thought to be the firing ranging and solution centre lying on the seabed.

BELOW RIGHT. A high voltage warning sign, still visible, indicates that this structure was her radio room and comms mast, perhaps the first target for the incoming fighter planes.



Many area's of the ships interior can be explored, revealing a living museum of war. Caught off guard, all the water tight doors are open, and everyday equipment litters the wreck-ear defenders radios, telephone hand sets, side arms and many spent rounds.

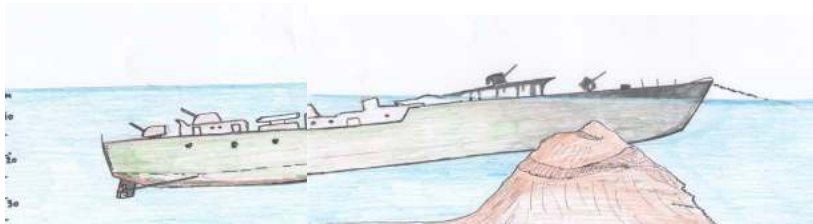
ABOVE; Narrow by definition of her sleek hull the interior is well lit but demands great buoyancy skills-especially as the floor slopes upwards drawing the diver in to shallow water.

LEFT Toilets, wash hand, basins and a shower block, all reminders of everyday life on board ship.

BELOW; Hanging over the seabed the keel drapes with soft corals and sponges, her twin shafts terminating in 3 bladed propellers



Perched on a huge rock and held by its anchor chain. The keel is suspended above the sea bed and it is possible to swim under her twin rudders and propellers. The keel is covered in a heavy growth of soft corals.



A site worth diving for; Left One of the stern guns still points skyward defiant to the last. A diver hovers over one of the anti aircraft guns. Unused ordinance sits on top of gun

THE WRECK OF THE TRAWLER ABU SIAMMA



A TYPICAL FISHING TRAWLER, SIMILAR TO THE ABU SAIMMA WHICH NOW LIES AT THE BASE OF THE REEF AT MIKALAWA ISLAND.

The sandy Island of Mikalawa or Saranaka as it is sometimes known lies to the south of Ras Banas and is an ideal overnight stop over. It also provides us with a sheltered deep dive close to shore. The island also has an interesting selection of birds.

When first dived a few years ago this small wreck of a fishing trawler was perched in 30 mtrs, now she is slowly sliding down the slope into deeper water, with her bow now in 55 mtrs. Little is known about the wreck, local information tells that she had engine trouble, put into the lagoon for repairs, struck the reef and sank. although it is clear that an aborted salvage operation took place. She lies very close to the reef, down a steep slope with her stern in 30 mtrs. Nets festoon the prop and rudder, and the keel has now dug into the seabed with the bow her deepest point. The bow is quite dramatic and the clear water allows for a great view of the trawler towering above. Although the wheelhouse is starting to collapse, it is possible to explore the engine room and her holds, as well as companionways and accommodation areas. The wood is now beginning to deteriorate and holes are appearing in the decking and superstructure. The deck fittings are still in place and a resident family of batfish patrol the vessels gantries. By taking advantage of the wrecks attitude, divers can enjoy a deep dive with a slow ascent up the slope to the reef. Most, if not all of the captains I work with have fishing backgrounds and the name ABU SAIMMA has been offered but so far is unconfirmed

The reef base starts at 15 mtrs and offers an ideal off gas after exploring the wreck. Sometimes called the Saranaka wreck. The sandy Island of Mikalawa or Saranaka as it is sometimes known lies to the south of Ras Banas and is an ideal overnight stop over. It also provides us with a sheltered deep dive close to shore. The island also has an interesting selection of birds.



When first dived a few years ago this small wreck of a fishing trawler was perched in 30 mtrs, now she is slowly sliding down the slope into deeper water, with her bow now in 50 mtrs. Little is known about the wreck, local information tells that she had engine trouble, put into the lagoon for repairs, struck the reef and sank. Although it is clear that an aborted salvage operation took place. She lies very close to the reef, down a steep slope with her stern in 30 mtrs. Nets festoon the prop and rudder, and the keel has now dug into the seabed with the bow her deepest point. The bow is quite dramatic and the clear water allows for a great view of the trawler towering above.

Although the wheelhouse has collapsed, it is possible to explore the engine room and her holds, as well as companionways and accommodation areas. Entrance to the stern hold is through a covered doorway and the entire enclosed area is full of glass fish. The



wood is now beginning to deteriorate and holes are appearing in the decking and superstructure. This allows light to penetrate down through the floor.

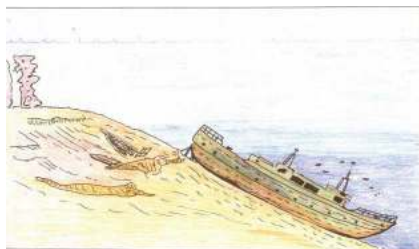
The clarity of the water allows for some great wreck shots. My buddy Dave Bletcher caught as he leaves the wreck-natural light at 30 mtrs

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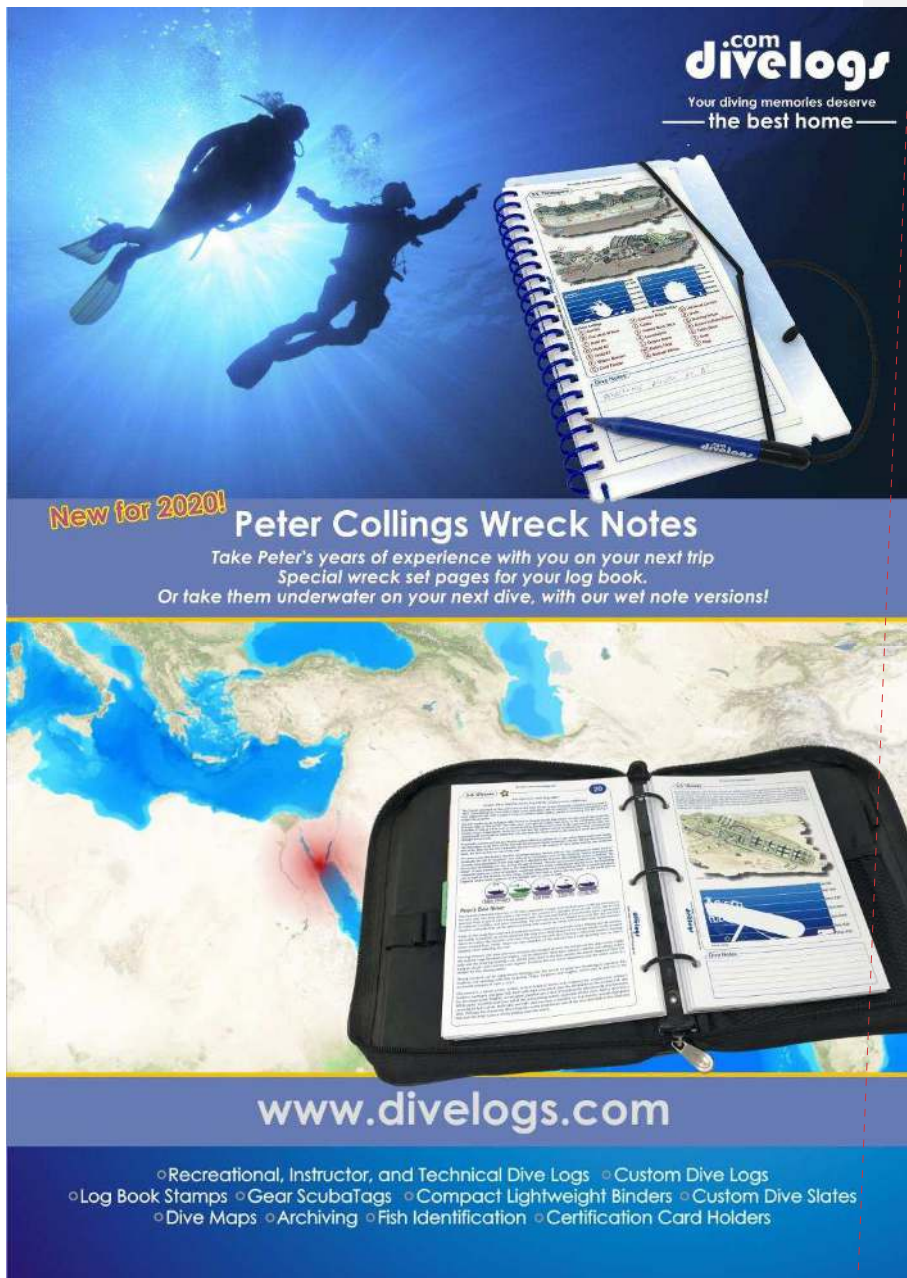


On top of the reef are a series of tall coral towers with some excellent sun lit caverns to swim through. These offer an alternative dive or indeed an ideal opportunity to off-gass after a deep dive. The reef is alive with many species of red sea fishes and invertebrates. The caves and overhangs plus the sandy bottom offer many different habitats.

In Less than 20 mtrs this plateau offers a very safe long dive, and snorkelling opportunities.



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THE WRECK OF THE S.S.TURBO

THE SHIP

Built at Sunderland in 1912 by J.D.LAING for the Anglo Saxon Petroleum Co. the 4900 ton, 374 ft "contemporary plated, fitted for carrying liquid fuel in bulk, machinery aft". The records also show her engine specification, built by DICKINSONS at the



Deptford Yard as "3 cylinder triple expansion engine", with cylinder dimensions of 26",44",72" and out-fittings by R. CRAGGS of HARTLEPOOL. She was a typical Centre Island vessel with sealed holds for and aft of the Island. Her engine room was situated at the stern of the ship. The indicated horse power was

2100, nominal being 443nhp. Surviving the 1st world war she continued her trade until 1940 when she was put under Admiralty service. Her weather deck, above the steering quadrant was adapted into a gun deck. She was armed with a 4" gun and 4 Hotchiss. She carried out numerous missions between Port Said, Haifa, Piraeus, Aden and Istanbul



The ships engine plate, which was to help disprove our earlier Identification of the wreck. In all 3 different plates of this type were recovered. The other two bore the names of her builder and her outfitters- JD LAING and RC CRAGGS. These are unique pieces of evidence and overrule any speculative conclusions.

THE ATTACK

On August 20th 1941 she was attacked by German aircraft while en route from Haifa to Alexandria with a cargo of 7500 tons of Admiralty fuel. The crew including 3 naval and 7 military gunners numbers 52. The ship had left Haifa just before dark on the 19th August 1942

Captain J.B.JONES

"Weather on the afternoon of the 20th was fine with light air and we steamed at 7 1/2 knots steering a westerly course, zigzagging on no. 10. At 1745 A.T.S 35 miles from Damietta, we sighted two twin engine bombers heading towards us from the west out

of the sun, which was then 2 points of our port bow .They were light blue, 50 ft above the water and flying one behind the other.

When they were in range we commenced firing with the Hotchiss, two of which were fixed on the bridge ,one forward and one on the f'o'csle head. We could not bring the 4" to bear at this stage.

The first plane when about ¾ mile off the starboard bow, dropped a torpedo which I saw approaching and I swung the ship hard a'starboard. The vessel answered the helm and the torpedo ran harmlessly along the starboard side.

Meanwhile the second aircraft made a wider circle round the starboard side until he was ¾ mile on our starboard quarter, when he released his torpedo. The ship was still swinging to starboard. I saw the white wake and a second later it struck the vessel halfway between the bow and stern on the starboard side. There was a terrific explosion, a cloud of black smoke and a column of water was thrown at least 95ft, but there was no flame. There was a strong smell of cordite"

"We could now bring the 4" to bear and were able to get off one round as the plane flew off .We continued to fire the Hotchiss guns using all our ammunition except for 25 rounds. The planes continued to circle at a distance of 2 miles then flew off. 10 minutes later two of our own fighter appeared. The planes were Italian S79 type Bombers adapted to carry Torpedoes" SAVAOIA MARCHETTI S79TORPEDO BOMBER



"The ship rocked so badly after the explosion that I thought the ship was going to break in two, so I stopped the engines .The pump room and nos 3,4 and 5 holds were flooded, the deck was buckled on the starboard side between 3 and 4 tanks and there was a large hole in the ships side some 40ft fore and aft. There were cracks in the starboard side running from the main shear strake down to the bilge keel

THE Turbo had survived the attack, at slow speed they continued the voyage, and the captain found that by increasing her speed to 6 knots she stopped rocking, and they safely arrived at Port Said on the 21st August. Here part of her cargo was discharged and she continued through the Canal to discharge her remaining cargo.

Her armament was removed and she left Suez on April 1st 1942 for Karachi in tow of the GLADYS MOLLER (sister-ship of the Rosalie Moller) destined to be used as a fuel storage hulk.

On the 4th April as they neared Ras Banas (reported position puts them approximately 15 miles north) the ship broke in two, presumably from the damage sustained in the bombing, and

“cast adrift because of heavy weather. forepart sunk as it was a danger to navigation. Afterpart is presumed to have foundered”. Lloyds war losses

“While proceeding towards Aden, as a hulk, SS TURBO broke her back in a heavy sea Gladys Moller stood by, stern could not be boarded during the night of the 5th all contact with the stern was lost and the bow section sunk by gunfire on the night of the 5th by an unknown vessel under instruction from the Admiralty at Port Sudan”BT381/1919

Credit for the discovery of this wreck goes to the Skipper of Lady M. They called it the half wreck because it consisted of a stern and superstructure and one very large hold. At first we thought this was the Hadia, which had been described as a tanker in some records, but entering her engine room revealed a large single triple expansion steam engine, not a diesel as in the HADIA. Inside the engine room a plate with R.C. CRAGGS embossed and a works number would if fact prove to be something of a red herring in her identification., but without this knowledge to hand we set about looking for the missing section of the ship; the other half in fact. We were to search in vain...the bow lies in deep water somewhere to the north.

The stern lies in 27 mtrs on sandy seabed and in good conditions affords a spectacular view of this WW2 shipwreck. The hull lies close to the shore, where it presumably struck after drifting away from its tow.

The hull now lies on a sandy Bed in 28 mtrs very close to the reef face on its Port side.



The starboard side is in about 18 mtrs while the port side almost touches the sand. The stern faces northwest. The break in the hull is from the rear of the centre island which sank with the fore section. The raised walkway runs aft to the engine room and accommodation island and the cross members are covered in corals and home to multitude of fish. The helm direction indicator is intact and stands proud on her aft deck and although her rudder was removed the prop can still be seen partially buried in the sand

The engine room is huge, easy to explore and totally intact. It is possible to explore three floors down into the heart of the ship. Gauges, valves piping, dials notices, (one reads "water 1/3 above combustion when show in glass in all engines") gratings and



handrails are all intact. There are many storerooms off to the sides with tools and other equipment, much of which is concreted into place. and a workshop complete with lathe, even oilcans and watering cans! The engine room is very atmospheric with good light filtering through the skylights, although the angle at which she lies can be somewhat dis-orientating. Her repeater telegraph still hangs waiting for the next command. Forward of the engine room is her boiler room and the funnel casing, again all her fittings, gauges and valves are in situ. The stern area under the weather deck is an area of great interest with more store rooms, wheel barrows, spare ventilation cowls and

some great swim throughs. A raised walkway supporting the vessels piping is home to a multitude of life forms from



sponges to lionfish and the cross bracings make a great swim through and photo backdrop. The deck is an intricate latticework of pipes valves and fittings, used to transfer the bulk liquid fuel to her tanks in a delicate balancing act. The view inside the



engine room is spectacular. The huge cavity above the chambers is illuminated from the open skylight ventilators from above. 3 flights of stairs run down into the workshops. These are quite narrow but accessible with care training and the right equipment. There are several store rooms where everyday items of life on board can be found, each with their story to tell.

Over the years a coat of golden concretion has covered most of the metal surfaces and the colour is revealed under artificial light. This makes the scenes very photogenic but a delicate balance of strobe light is required to get the right colour temperature of the concretion.



In the lower levels there are work benches-check out the vice-,the repeater telegraph, machinery and access ladders to valving. The intactness of the entire engine room is staggering, evidence that salvage divers have not raped the wreck.

Care needs to be exercised with many overhead pipes, flywheels and cables. A good torch is essential despite the strong, ambient light.



There is so much to explore in the engine room and although the attitude of the wreck can be dis-orientating the large dimensions of the ship and the kind depths make it great to explore for those adequately equipped and trained

The stern lies listing to port partially buried into the sand, The gun mounts are still visible on the gun deck-sadly the guns were removed pre sinking, one central and the other offset to starboard. The direction indicator still sits in its binnacle. The photo shows the attitude of the wreck. Below the gun or weather deck, are the remains of store rooms and crews accommodation, the bulkheads of wood long since gone. Access hatches run down into the stoke hold where an old wheelbarrow sits waiting for its next load



The pipe bridge runs from the aft superstructure right to the break in the hull and like the many valves on the deck are covered in encrusting life and invertebrates. Lifeboat davits, handrails and stairwells provide alternative backdrops for photography.



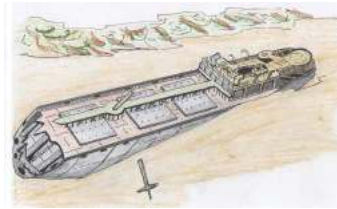
Fascinating marine life including vast numbers of the Pixie Hawkish, a rare sighting anywhere else but here the Major Dominus of the wreck. Swimming along the pipebridge leads to the abrupt end of the wreck-where she broke in two and its easy to make out the construction and layout of the wreck where she is literally sliced in half. The sections of her tanks can easily be seen. It took us years of research to solve the mystery

of the half wreck.



Although the visibility is less than stunning, the encrusting, macro and fish life and general intactness are a great incentive to dive her more than once. Sadly the aft mast which used to reach up close to the surface has been snapped in two due to thoughtless mooring by dive masters Fortunately this wreck is not visited very often most say it doesn't exist

presumably because can't find the wreck. Perhaps that is what makes the wreck so very special. Darwinism at work!



MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Over a 3 year period we not only searched for the other half of the wreck, but for an identity. The first clue was a plaque with RC CRAGGS on stamped on in- and indeed a yard number. Only one vessel built by Craggs and indeed a tanker which was recorded as sinking in the Red Sea was the ATLAS (her name at the time of sinking).

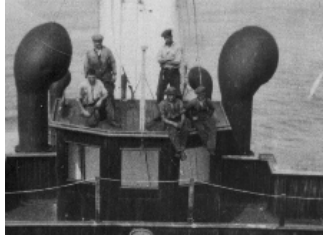


Further I research into the ATLAS listed her as a British built, 4000ton 345 ft long steam tanker, under Greek registration at the time of her sinking. Built in 1909 by R C CRAGGS, Smiths Dock, Middlesborough, she was torpedoed on Sept 6th 1940. by the Italian submarine

Guglielmotti off the Yemen. So how could her stern section be 400 miles north? The answer lay in part with another tanker-the Inverlane –She had been mined off Sunderland, where her stern still lies, but her bow section was repaired and towed over 400miles of the North Sea to end up in Scapa Flow- and I knew the man responsible for that amazing feat!-Jim Develyn- I had interviewed Jim many years earlier as he lived locally and had also been involved in salving many north east England wrecks, during and after WW2.

When I went back to question Jim about the Atlas his first comment was “I wondered when some one would get round to that one.” Jim recalled how the ensuing explosion broke the ships back and as she settled by the bow she broke in two. With war materials at a premium a daring salvage attempt was made and Jim was the man for the job. The stern section made watertight and the long journey to north to Alexandria began using

the two tugs which Jim described as “liberated rusting tubs” were christened Hercules and Golliath.”. (Hercules was eventually to find her back in north eastern waters where she ended up sinking off the Tyne), and it would seem they were borrowed or as Jim put it “requisitioned for the greater good of the war effort.” Where they came from Jim would never elaborate, but I suspect that tale would make a great story!



Amongst Jims' papers was this mono of the salvage team preparing the stern of the Atlas for the long journey north. "Saving half a ship was better than none. The oil was a bonus and helped her stay afloat We had done a similar job on the S.S.Inverlane in the North Sea, taking her from Blyth to Scapa Flow. This should have been easy"

Jim went on to recall that the project went well until in Jims' words “they reached RAS BANAS” .At this point the prevailing winds whipped up the sea from the north and the ungainly hull was caught a –beam of the waves the towage was broken and the stern section foundered and sank after drifting for several hours.

Jim's account plus the ships plate we had found seemed to confirm the wrecks identity. Indeed we were so sure of the facts we went to press with the belief we had identified the “Half wreck”. Then, while exploring the “half wreck” we found another manufacturers plate this one was inscribed “JOHN DICKINSON LTD, SUNDERLAND” 1912 and inscribed with a yard number-conflicting evidence indeed. After Jims' death I was given an insight into more details of the salvage. Jims' diary stated that the foundering took place “AS THEY NEARED RAS BANAS”. His notes and diaries were to be a great help in filling in some of the missing questions about the Atlas

After many years of searching, tracing lost records and the invaluable help of the TYNE/WEAR ARCHIVES and the GUILDHALL LIBRARY the “half wreck” has now been positively identified .But what of the Atlas?

THE WRECK OF THE S.S ALTAS

THE VESSEL

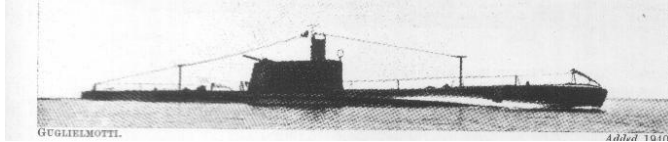
The Atlas began life as the Conrad Mohr, built in 1909 on the River Tees at Middlesbrough by R.C Craggs and Sons. She was 345 ft long, with a 48ft beam and 28ft draught. Described as a 4000ton steam tanker, fitted for bulk liquid fuel Her triple expansion engine was built by North East Marine Engineering Company and records show her cylinders as 25”,41” & 67.”,325nhp. In 1935 she was renamed the Irini, then finally the Altas, owned by the Soc. Anov. Hellenique Maritime Transpetrol.

FINAL VOYAGE

Sailing under the Greek flag the Atlas had left Abadan bound for Suez with a cargo of fuel oil.

LLOYDS WAR LOSSES SEPT 6TH 1940 page 122.

“Atlas torpedoed by Italian submarine Guglielmotti, 14 miles north of Jebel Tier. Crew landed at Aden”



The Italian submarine Guglielmotti, which torpedoed the Atlas. She Was a Brin class diesel electric boat, built in 1938. She was 1247 tons, 2228ft long, had a maximum diving depth of 60 fathoms and carried a 3.9inch gun+13mm A.A.. She had 8-21inch tubes

Having eliminated the ATLAS as the “half wreck” at Sataya El Bara, we set about locating the ATLAS herself. Referring back to Jims diaries, his notes stated that the hulk was cast adrift as it began to founder as they neared Ras Banas described as a “sandy headland surrounded by coral reefs”. “Our attempt to make Port Berenice to make repairs failed and the hulk was cast adrift until it grounded in a sandy bay, her engine house still above water”

There is a further reference in Jims diaries that the superstructure was subsequently removed to the waterline and “the hull left totally flooded and deemed lost as more pressing matters were at hand”.

A rough sketch in Jims diary showed us the rough area in which the hull has sank- in 12mtrs of water in a sandy bay within the restricted area of the Port Berenice. Initial brief dives (unauthorised!) have shown the hull complete with central walkway, pipes running the length of the hull to the break, valves and other deck fittings still in place. The superstructure has gone and what was not salvaged seems to have fallen into the engine room. There is evidence of debris buried in the sand and the visibility seems very reduced, due mainly to the lack of coral and presence of sand.



The shallow sections of the walkway with its vertical supports and cross beams are covered in sponges and sea squirts as opposed to corals, again presumably due the amount of sand and are home to a vast number of shoaling fish and many rays were seen on the surrounding seabed.

I intend to return at least once to the wreck – to place a memorial to a very remarkable man –Jim Delyln, salvage diver extraordinaire!

Once again fate has shown truth is often stranger than fiction –two tankers built 30 miles and 3 years apart end up only a few miles apart within 2 years of each other, and then only their stern sections!

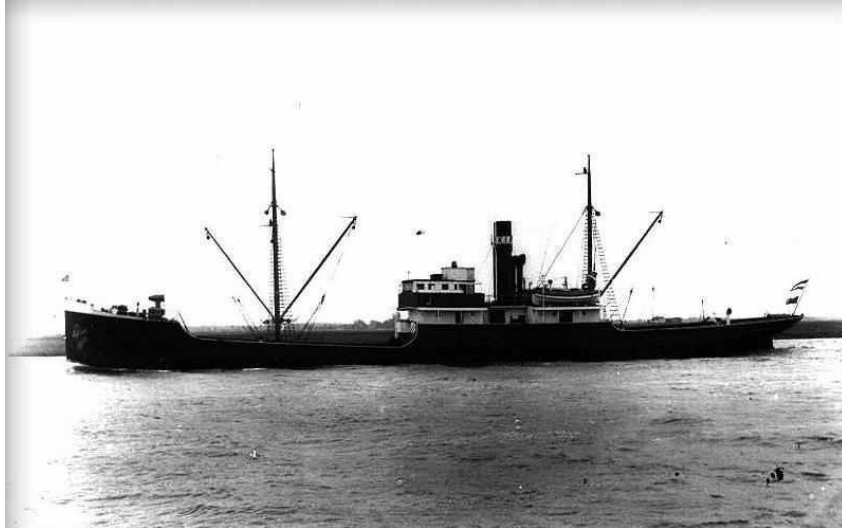
A combination of the initial evidence had lead to the mis-identification of the “half wreck” not only Jim Devlyns verbal report but the plate from R.C CRAGGS. Another tanker belonging to the Anglo Petroleum Company was also wrecked in the Red Sea, far to the north at Ras Gharib in the Gulf of Suez. This too had outfittings by R.C.GRAGGS of Hartlepool. The similarity between the two vessels didn’t help either The Turbo was a mere 29ft longer and had an addition tonnage of 900 tons-built 3 years and 30 miles apart considering we only had half a wreck to deal with it is easy to see how we were deceived!

ABU GALAWA, FURY SHOALS

Abu Galawa (*Father of the pools*) is a series of several reef patches, lying within the FURY SHOALS, a vast expanse of reef systems just to the north of Ras Banas. There are several picturesque wrecks within the area, and although not deep each of the wrecks has a special quality- and all are surrounded by stunning hard coral formations, and the wrecks themselves are in sheltered positions.

Attention in this area has always centred on reefs and not wrecks, and to this day many operators still claim “the south has no wrecks”. With the recent explosion in hotel development in the south there are now day boats operating the area, so as the coastline becomes more familiar perhaps some new discoveries will be made. For instance

THE WRECK OF THE ADAMANTIA K



She ran aground on the north side of Gotta Abu Galawa on 25th January 1958 while in ballast from Port Sudan to Piraeus. Her bottom ripped out she quickly filled with water and was deemed a total constructive loss. Over the years she has broken up and is now well dispersed into the surrounding reefs.



Built in 1919 as the Marienburg, this 844ton freighter was fitted with 3 cylinder triple expansion engine by Stettiner oderwerke. In 1947 she became the Koholyt a year later the Kastoria, with one more name change as the Teti Nomicos. She finally became the Adamantia K owned by Dimitrios Kopsastis in 1953

The steam engine stands up above the wreck, almost to the surface

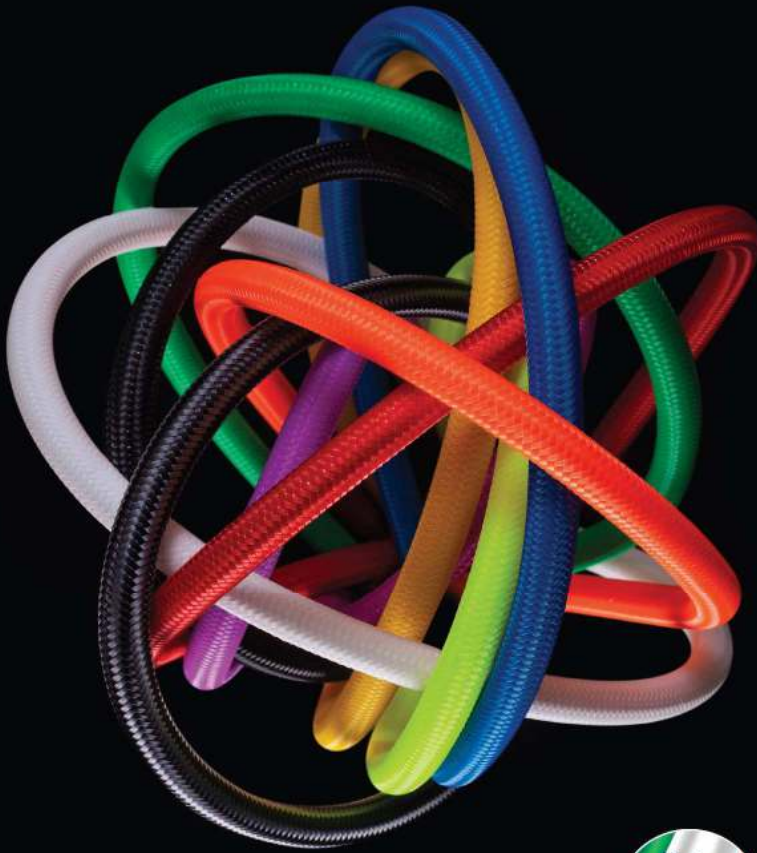
The bow lies hanging over the reef flat, where her anchor chain can still be found. The foc's'le is home to a school of sweepers. From here what was once the forward holds is merely flattened plates, on top of which is her boilers and then the single triple expansion engine standing proud to within a few meters of the surface. The anatomy of which is easy to see. The prop shaft can be traced aft to the stern where the steering quadrant, rudder and prop are to be found. Masts and fittings spill off from the shallows into the sandy amphitheatre below.



Portholes still remain covered in a thick coating of coral and steam gauges can still be seen in the stern. Although not a substantial wreck, she is a great rummage dive and the surrounding seascape. The remains of the wreck have become a playground for all types of Red Sea fishes, and given the shallow depths (max 12 mtrs) and clear water it is an ideal spot for photography. There are several fields of anemones complete with colonies of domino fishes living in harmony with the clown fish



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THE WRECK OF THE TUGBOAT

Very little is known about the history of this tug boat. The engine room has failed to give any clues in terms of her identity. There is strong evidence that she was converted from coal burning to oil, and that a pair of barges lying off Siyul Island and local skippers claim they were her charge. She has been connected with the Admiralty tug Tienstin, however the tyres used as fenders date back to the 60's some twenty years after the Tienstin sank.



Resting on the edge of the reef, her keel in the sand at 14 mtrs this small wreck is great for photography, but large groups can hinder the experience. The natural light at this depth is superb and with a wide lens the entire shipwreck can be captured. Note the "cave" under the keel, picture right.

The tug boat serves as a great 3rd dive after a day's diving on the deeper S.S. TURBO. She lies propped up against a circular reef riddled with caves, her bow just awash, and her stern lying on the sandy floor some 14 mtrs below. The keel forms a nice haven for batfish and an ideal location for a cleaning station. The wreck has a slight lean over to



starboard and is totally intact. The wreck is totally covered in a coating of both hard and soft corals. All of her wooden decking has rotted away and this allows access into her small aft hold and hull. Forward of this is the engine room and then another small forward hold leading to the

fo'c'sle. The engine room is compact but it is possible to explore two floors down with care.. The engine room has the added bonus of a school of glassfish.



The engine room is totally intact, complete with walkways, gauges, valves and stairwells connecting the 2 floors. And there is access forward to the small hold in front of the superstructure.



The forward hold has lost all its decking, leaving a skeletal framework which lends to some great images, which light shining through from above. Access into the interior can be gained from here with care.



The aft hold is also accessible with all the Deck structure missing, and the natural light offers some great photo opportunities.

THE S.S. CHARICIA.

A steamship built in 1944 this 199ton vessel sank in the Fury Shoals on the 3rd Feb 1954. She has not, to date been located.

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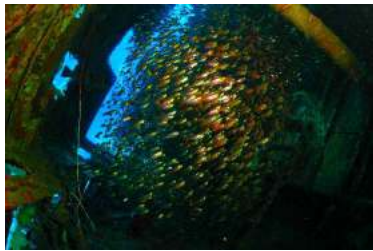
THE WRECK OF THE M.Y.ENDYMION

About 1 mile to the north of the tugboat is the wreck of a small sailing yacht, lying on its starboard side in 18 mtrs of water, in a sandy channel between the reefs of Abu



Galawa North. The history of the vessel is as yet not known, but the coral growth would indicate she is only a few years old. Given that the wreck is only 30 mtrs long it does not take very long to explore. The hull is intact and the wreck at the base of a reef over to starboard. Coral is beginning to colonise the wreck the interior is full of sweepers and hatchets, with the obligatory red mouthed groupers patrolling the shoal.

The wreck can be fully explored in 10 minutes, however her elegant lines and attitude do provide the photographer with some great material.



A shoal of glassy sweepers fill the interior of the wreck, which can be explored with care. These fish swirl and engulf the diver, and provide endless photo opportunities.



What makes this a special dive is the scenery lying behind the wreck. By entering a canyon 50 mtrs from the bow flanked on either side by huge hard corals, and following the natural course the diver is lead to a huge sandy bowl where white tips rest. The surrounding scenery is of huge hard coral formations-some of the best in the Red Sea. The scenery is quite staggering and several routes through valleys can be taken, returning back to the yacht with a maximum depth of 18 mtrs.

Back on the coast at Abu Gosoon is a fascinating wreck just south of the phosphate port-Our base for 6 weeks back in 1995. According to one local divemaster he discovered this wreck the "Abu Gosoon" in 2012....

THE WRECK OF THE M.V.HAMADA

The M.V HAMADA was a small cargo ship of 654 GRT built at John Lewis & Sons Ltd.(Yard No. 347), Aberdeen, UK for the P & O subsidiary company General Steam Navigation Co., Ltd. The ship was launched on 15 March 1965 as the Avocet (Registry



No. 651078) and was completed on 12 June of that same year with a length of 65.10 meters, beam of 11.07 meters, and draught of 4.05 meters. Propulsion was provided by a single 1,470 bhp MN17 type diesel manufactured by British Polar Engine Ltd., Glasgow, Scotland, and a single propeller for a speed of 12.5 knots.

From the time of her launching in 1965 until late 1971, the Avocet was operated in the coastal waters of the UK by the General Steam Navigation Co. On 01 October 1971 management and operation of the ship was transferred to another P & O subsidiary company call P & O Short Sea Shipping Ltd. Then, on 01 December 1972, ownership of the ship was transferred to General Steam Navigation (Trading) Ltd. Management and operation were transferred once again on 31 March 1975 to the P & O Ferry Line until 16 June 1976 when ownership was transferred to P & O Ferry's General European Ltd.

On 22 June of that same year the ship was sold to Stavros Elias Liakos Maritime Ltd., Cyprus, and renamed the Afroditi H, and then was resold to the Euromaster Navigation Co. Ltd., Cyprus.

In 1982 the ship was renamed Samarah and then was sold to Leghorn Shipping Co. Ltd., Cyprus in 1983 where she operated for nearly two years before being sold yet again.

In 1985, the ship was sold to the Chaldean Shipping Co. Ltd., Cyprus and renamed Hamada. A year later, in 1986, the Hamada was sold to the Phemios Shipping Co., Valetta, Malta.

There are different versions of the **Hamada's** loss. One report indicates that she caught fire and sank in deep water. The P & O file states that the ship struck an "submerged object" in heavy weather at position 24.42N/35.25E off of Ras Banas while enroute on 28 June 1993 from Jeddah to Suez and subsequently foundered



THE DISCOVERY

Discovered by the author on 2/8/95 during the BSAC southern expeditions. I was urged on by my skipper's incessant mumblings about a "drowned ship". his English far better than my Arabic. I scanned the coastline and found a cigar shaped reef which looked strangely out of place... this was my drowned ship. Hitting the water at a run before the safari boat had stopped, I slipped below the waves and the stern of a ship appeared ahead H-A-M-A-AD-A spelt out her identity. Nothing is more exciting! Heading for the bridge was a short journey passed her engine room



Entering the wheel house it was apparent that no one had been here before-the helm, radar, and telegraph (albeit not the traditional style) were all still in place. A telephone sat in its cradle and the chart draw still contained the navigation maps.

We noted later a charred mattress and burned wood lying in a pile which had amassed as the ship capsized. Evidence of a deliberate fire in the wheelhouse!

THE ENIGMA.

The Hamada was a small coastal general cargo vessel, which was carrying a cargo of plastic graduals, out of Yambo Saudi Arabia. The official report stated that she caught fire and sank in deep water. However another report states "*No.2 hold was flooded as bottom shell plating came into contact with submerged object.*"- ***So why the charred mattress?*** Her cargo doors were wide open and all personal effects and tools had gone.....

THE WRECK TODAY

Lying in only 12 mtrs of water half a mile south of the phosphate terminal of Abu Gosoon, the wreck is now broken in two with her holds facing the reef a few meters away. The holds are beginning to collapse. The stern section, complete with



superstructure has slipped further away from the reef. The interior can be penetrated and it is possible to explore the mess room, accommodation and the engine room, although the latter needs great care.

Over the years soft corals have taken hold and the port companionway is smothered in lush soft corals of purple, red and orange. These in turn support a healthy mixture of reef fishes and invertebrates-

seven species of nudibranchs were noted by one bug hunter.



Her port side is awash at low tide and the water can be as much as 31 degrees above her hull in summer. Some of her cargo, bagged polythene granules, a by product of the petro-chemical industry, remains in the hold, in an eternal struggle to reach the surface. The bow section has broken away from the aft section and lies slightly further down the reef from its original position is quite impressive complete with anchors and the



fo'c'sle contains a forklift truck as well as the anchor windlass and winches.

Another wheeled but tyre-less vehicle lies upside down in the sand, between the wreck and the reef. It appears to be another type of fork lift truck. The masts lie resting in the reef slope complete with cables and pulleys. Marine life is slowly moving into the

wreck, hard corals having established themselves in the hull, masts and deck, visibility can be down after strong winds, due to the sandy, shallow bottom and the site is subject to swell. It is however an excellent dive when the right conditions apply..

Despite the high temperatures of the water, soft corals have thrived and totally colonised the wreck, no more so that the upper companionways, stairways and hatches. It is a living reef and highly populated with many species of reef fishes and visiting hunters. Being so shallow the colour are vibrant, and the entire wreck is simply a photo studio. The visibility can be reduced



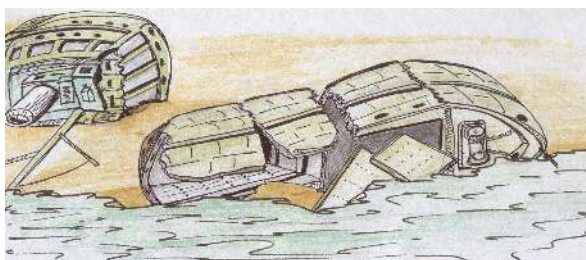
during windy conditions due to the sandy sea bed. However the conditions are usually favourable, and afford wide angle opportunities. With the emergence of shore based dive centres, the wreck attracts less qualified divers, often diving the wreck from the shore. It tends to be the final dive in our wreck safari before the long barren drag back to Port Galib



The stern appears just as it did back in 1995, while the fore section has broken off and slipped down the slope slightly. It is a magnificent sight, bathed in strong natural light 10.5mm lens is a must!



Sketch of the wreck, looking from the shore.



CHAPTER 2 DAEDALUS AND THE BROTHERS



Off shore there are several islands other than Zabagad and Rocky, these are Daedalus and The Brother Islands, part of the National park. They are renowned for their stunning walls of coral and shark activity. Visited only by liveaboards, they offer some world class diving with very deep water all around. Both sport light houses which are worth a visit, and are testimony to the wrecks which

have occurred over the centuries. There are several wrecks of note

WRECK OF THE S.S DACCA



THE VESSEL

Built at Pointhouse in 1882 by A&J INGLIS of Glasgow the 3909 ton brigg rigged steel hull steamship was 390 ft long, 43 ft in the beam and had a 27 ft draught. fitted with twin-inverted compound steam engines delivering 500 nhp, she had 6 bulkheads. She was designed mainly as a passenger ship, but also had an emigration certificate often carrying immigrants as far as Australia, as well as the usual spice run to Bombay and Calcutta- an "East Indiaman". Owned by the British Indian Associated Steamship Co., and managed by ES Dawes of London. Her original cost was £90,000 and insured for £36,000. She had eight boats, one of which was a steam launch and also a life raft. She was fitted with three compasses. She was under the command of W Burkitt (Master)

THE FINAL VOYAGE

After an eight year service under the command of Mr Dugard Stewart (master, RNR), and Chief officer James Tait (RNR), she left London on the 29th April, bound for Queensland, Australia. She had a crew of 91 all told including the master, 5 officers and 5 engineers with 464 passengers. She left Gravesend on the 30th. After a stop at Naples, she had safely navigated her way in to the Egyptian Red Sea via and the Suez Canal, leaving Suez at 0020 on the 15th May, 13 hrs later she entered the red sea proper, making steady progress south in the good conditions, passing close to Shadwan Island, marking the end of the narrow Gulf of Suez, opening into the much wider Red Sea. and by 2200 she was approaching the Brother islands – which was used to get an accurate position fix. Her new course “S34E by standard compass” south should have taken her well clear of Deadalus Shoal, the captain expecting currents to push the ship westwards and clear of the shoal. However in the early hours of the next morning as dawn broke the Daealus light was spotted dead ahead. The reef shelf extends almost half a mile north of the lighthouse and with no wind or swell the surf line would be none existent. The first action to steer away from the reef was in effective and by the time action was taken to steer the ship clear, the Dacca ran aground at full speed onto the reef to the west of the lighthouse. The glancing blow caused a break in the hull and the vessel began to take on water. The captain manoeuvred the vessel until her bow once again was over the reef. Using the lifeboats, the assistance of a passing ship, the ROSARIO and with some jumping directly onto the reef all of the passengers and crew were saved along with most of their possessions. 5 hours after she struck the reef the Dacca was seen to “go down in very deep water”. The passengers were transferred to the PALAMCOTTA, owned by the same company, while the crew stayed on board the ROSARIO and taken to Port Said.

At the court of enquiry on the 3rd July 1890 Judge Marsham declared

“the chief officer is alone in default and the court suspends his certificate of competency as master for 12 months”

THE WRECK TODAY

On the northern tip of Daedalus at around 40 mtrs the remains of the wreck tumble down into 60 trs, fused and well dispersed into the reef wall. The wreckage is quite substantial, with large sections of plating and pipework. More wreckage exists deeper down the reef, the existence of which lead to some confusion as to the location of the next wreck. The currents here can be very strong as they split

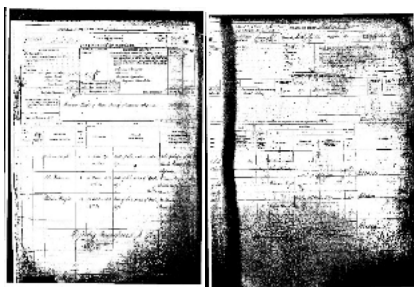


Found away from the wreckage of the Zealot a debris field starting at 45 mtrs tumbles down into the depths –right where the Dacca grounded.

WRECK OF THE S.S ZEALOT

During the BSAC expeditions of the early 90's we came across wreckage in 40 mtrs on the north east side of Daedalus. Initial research suggested this could be the wreck of a Dutch East Indiamen, the Dacca. Exploring down to the limits of sport diving only revealed long lengths of iron piping. We were certain a wreck existed but never got the chance to dive any deeper. Then in September 2004 I received an SMS from the staff on board M.Y. HURRICANE. A German diver had found some crockery with the words "Helme Park South Shields".

When the SMS came in I was on my way to the local archives, and within an hour Carolyn Durkin had produced a bill of sale for the vessel from Readheads to the owner William Wright, and then a bill of sale to the second owners John Glynn and Sons of Liverpool. From this documentation, the entire story of the wreck was in my possession-before Markus Lohr, who found the plate had disembarked Hurricane!



From the name lifted from the piece of crockery, Carolyn Durkin was able to produce the actual bill of sale when the ship was handed over to her owners.

The Zealot began life as the HELME PARK, a 1328 ton 243 ft long "spar decked double skinned iron hull screw steamship", built in 1873 by John Readhead and Co at the Pilot street works in South Shields, ship # 91. She was fitted with a 2 compound I.D.A. 120hp steam engine, which could deliver 12 knots. William Wright had commissioned the ship to modernise his renowned fleet of sailing vessels. Her master was H. Breham. Wright sold her a year later to J Glynn & Co of Liverpool, who changed her name to *Zealot*.

THE FINAL VOYAGE

The final voyage began on 26th September, 1887 bound for Bombay. The *Zealot* was captained by J A Best and was carrying cargo worth £24,700 described as general, 790 cotton bales, 91 cases, and 100 tons of iron" She had a crew of 53, mainly Lascars and two passengers on board.

The journey down through the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal took until the 12th October, and after successfully navigating the straits of Gobul she sailed south towards the Brothers (her best sighting of landfall) before altering to a course which would take

her close to Daedalus for another sighting, and then south intending to pass to the east of Zabagad on her journey southward..

As they closed towards Daedalus the light appeared dead ahead and not abeam, the inexperienced first mate Jonathan Russel reacted too slowly in taking action and the vessel struck a coral ridge ripping out her bottom and she quickly began to fill with water. The crew and passengers were put into the boats and the captain ran the bow onto the reef enabling the remaining crew to jump ashore. The vessel then settled and sank into deep water, rolling onto her side spilling out cargoes she tumbled down the reef. The Iron pipes, originally thought to have been rubbish from the building of the lighthouse are the first clue of what lies below in very deep water. The crew and passengers were taken aboard a passing ship bound for Suez.

At the board of trade enquiry the cause of loss was attributed to the first mates lack of navigation skills, but apportioned some of the blame towards the master. Captain Best's ticket was suspended for six months.

The wreck starts at 82 mtrs sloping down to 119 mtrs on the west side of the island. From an initial dive, she appears to be intact from amidships aft. However Grant Seacranke later found the bow section and describes it as "CARNATIC LIKE BUT FLATTENED". Judging from the reports the wreck is spread over a large area. As the Dacca sank in the same area, it is possible that both vessels lie together- both would be very similar vessels and sank only 10 years apart. Sadly a group of Italian divers found the wreck early in 2005 and pillaged many artefacts from the wreck, claiming they were looking for evidence to her identification. Vital clues may now never come to light and the Location of the Dacca never revealed. But who knows- the Zealot surprised us all!

THE S.S. INDIAN ENTERPRISE

THE SHIP. Built at Sunderland by the Shipbuilding Corp (Wear Branch) for the Ministry of Transport as the Empire Mombassa She was a single screw steamship, with triple expansion engines and was 7319 tons, 431 ft long and had a 56 ft beam. She has a speed of 11 knots. Her engines were amidships with 4 holds forward and two aft. Seven transverse bulkheads divided her to eight water tight compartments, and her double bottom divided into eight water tight tanks extended almost throughout the vessel. She had a crew of 72, her Captain was Peter Sinclair Cambell. She was owned by the India Steamship Company of Calcutta and managed by Stelp and Lieghtons of London.

THE FINAL VOYAGE

In May she loaded 3852 tons of general cargo at Bemen, 1825 tons at Antwerp and 2853 tons at the Royal Albert Dock. Special holds were fabricated for the rest of her cargo- a magazine- as the cargo was explosives included 2969 rocket motors (127tons) Q.F cartridges,, 21/2 tons of filled shell and 180 pounds of fuse and burster.

Signal flares, signal rockets and target rocket heads were also loaded in there special compartment under the fo'c'sle head. A case of smoke generators were loaded onto the fore deck with drums of acetic acid and ethychloride were stowed on deck, aft. As the rocket motors were loaded from a lighter rusty brown liquid was seen dripping from the crates. Despite this the vessel was issued a safety certificate and papers to proceed on her journey.

The Indian Enterprise sailed from Holehaven on the evening of 3rd June 1950. She called at Port Said on 17th June to take on 635 tons of coal. On the 18th she left Port Said passing through the canal and docking at Suez to off load a searchlight, leaving at 02.20.continuing her journey south.

THE SINKING

At about 2020 (GMT), midway between the Brother Islands and Daedalus light the M.V H. Westfal-larsen and the S.S. Lake Chilliwack both reported seeing the Indian Enterprise explode in a ball of flame. There recorded position was 23 30 N 35 27 E. Both ships immediately began to search for survivors, joined later by other vessels and aircraft. Only one person survived NUR HOSSAIN, a winch man on the Indian enterprise. At 0930 he came up on deck for a smoke and was talking to crew members sitting on the bollards on the starboard quarter. He heard the words "THE MAGAZINES ON FIRE" there was an explosion and he was thrown over board, when he awoke he was surrounded by floating burning debris and both sides of his body had bee badly burned .

At the court of enquiry at the Law Courts in London on the 18th Jan 1951, having rules out the possibility of sabotage and striking a mine, the court concluded that the cause of the sinking was instantaneous combustion.



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THE BROTHER ISLANDS



The Brother Islands are a pair of isolated barren rocks rising from the depths of the Red Sea. Evidence of their volcanic origin can be seen on the beaches. They are surrounded by some of the best coral walls in the Red Sea and the shark population of Little Brother is renowned. Big Brother plays host to arguably one of the best wrecks in the world...the Numidia, or train wreck as she was labelled before her identification.

THE WRECK OF THE S.S. NUMIDIA.



THE VESSEL. A British cargo ship, built in Glasgow in 1901 by the Henderson Co. who operated her under the Anchor Line Shipping Company. At 6399 tons and 140 metres long she was a large vessel, powered by a 3-cylinder triple expansion steam engine. This gave her top speed of 10 Knots. On 28th February 1901 the Numidia left her homeport on her Maiden voyage, an uneventful return trip to Calcutta. This was to be her only completed voyage

FINAL VOYAGE

On 6th July 1901, She set out from Liverpool carrying a general cargo of 7,000 tons and a crew of 97, under the command of Mr John Craig, bound for Calcutta. By the early hours of 19 July she had cleared Suez, passing Shadwan Island that evening



around 1900 hrs. Just before dawn next day Big Brothers Island was sighted off the port bow. The Captain altered course thinking it would take the ship over one mile to the west of the Island. He then left the Bridge leaving instructions to be called when the Light was abeam. At about 2.10am the ship ran aground on Big Brothers Island – north of the Lighthouse!

After two hours of trying to get off the rocks the engines were stopped. By this time the ship was taking on considerable water, but the situation was getting worse although the pumps were coping. By now the sea was building. At 7.30am the S.S. Rhipens came in answer of the Numidia's distress call, followed by other vessels in an attempt to salvage the ship. abandoned the vessel and although other ships arrived to help refloat the Numidia, she was beyond help. For the next 7 weeks most of the cargo was removed, John Craig supervising the operation, before the Numidia finally sank.

DIVING THE WRECK

The vessel lies on a very steep slope at the very north of the Big Brother plateau, starting at 10 metres and plummeting down out of reach of sports divers- her keel digging deep into a rocky ledge, preventing her from slipping away into the depths below. Strong currents often sweep the wreck but there is always shelter within the wreck in which to observe the patrolling Grey reef and hammerhead sharks.



A diver hovers over the pressure chambers of the Numidia's huge triple expansion steam engine. Intact and bathed in an eerie blue light, the engine room plummets down to 46 mtrs. Evidence of her working life is everywhere; tools, gauges valves and switches. This downward pointing shot belies the steep angle of the wreck

The intact hull offers protection from the currents and it is possible to enter the starboard side companionways, adorned with soft corals. Portholes are barely discernable due to the carpets of coral. Descending down through these corridors to the aft of the bridge superstructure is often halted by the wrecks resident lionfish, which reluctantly move to allow the decent to continue. The open deck ahead marks the safe limit of diving depths although holds and deck fittings below beckon the unwary. Snapper, jacks and Travellies hover in the company of barracuda and the aforementioned sharks patrol the perimeter. Antheas add a haze of orange, hovering over every coral covered structure such as the haunting empty lifeboat davits .



At this point (40mtrs) the return journey to the surface begins; it is possible to enter the engine room, blue light filtering through the skylights above, illuminating an intact and fascinating engine room. The steam cylinders sloping ever upward, as if still driving the ship ashore! Stairs beckon down into her lower engine room adorned in an eerie light where gauges still remain in place and doors lead of in several directions, some leading back to the companionways others to accommodation areas and eventually the bridge.



Overhead a large shoal of glassy sweepers are disturbed by ascending bubbles.

At the deepest point of the engine room a doorway allowing for an easy exit point and overhead the galley straddles the width of the superstructure. The range still holds pot and pans!

Most of the wooden floors have long been eaten by marine worms allowing more access and light into the interior as the tour continues ever upward, out through the funnels port at 20mtrs and back into the brilliant sunlight, an amazing contrast to the engine room's relative gloom. The colours and formations of soft corals are rivalled nowhere else in the Red Sea, save for the neighbouring



wreck of the Aida. The metal structures of her framework, at such a steep angle offer some unique photo opportunities and there are always local inhabitants to fill the frame!

The engine room is huge and can be confusing due to the angle of the wreck-There are many rooms running off the main section and at least 4 levels to explore. Although natural light percolates through a good torch is essential to reveal many of the engine rooms features. A dive in its own right.



The wreck ends abruptly at 14 mtrs, exiting out onto a superb coral plateau fused with wreckage, covered in soft corals and many fish, Strong currents flow over these shallows.



THE CARGO. For 7 weeks the cargo was removed from the ship until she final slipped down the reef. All that now remains are iron rails-minus their sleepers, which have slid down into the stern, and several replacement boilers, scattered on the reef some in 60 mtrs next to her starboard hull.



The iconic image of the coral covered bogies graced the reef top for many years, until a moronic divemaster decided to tie onto it, dragging it off, snapping the mooring and the artefact plummeting into the depths

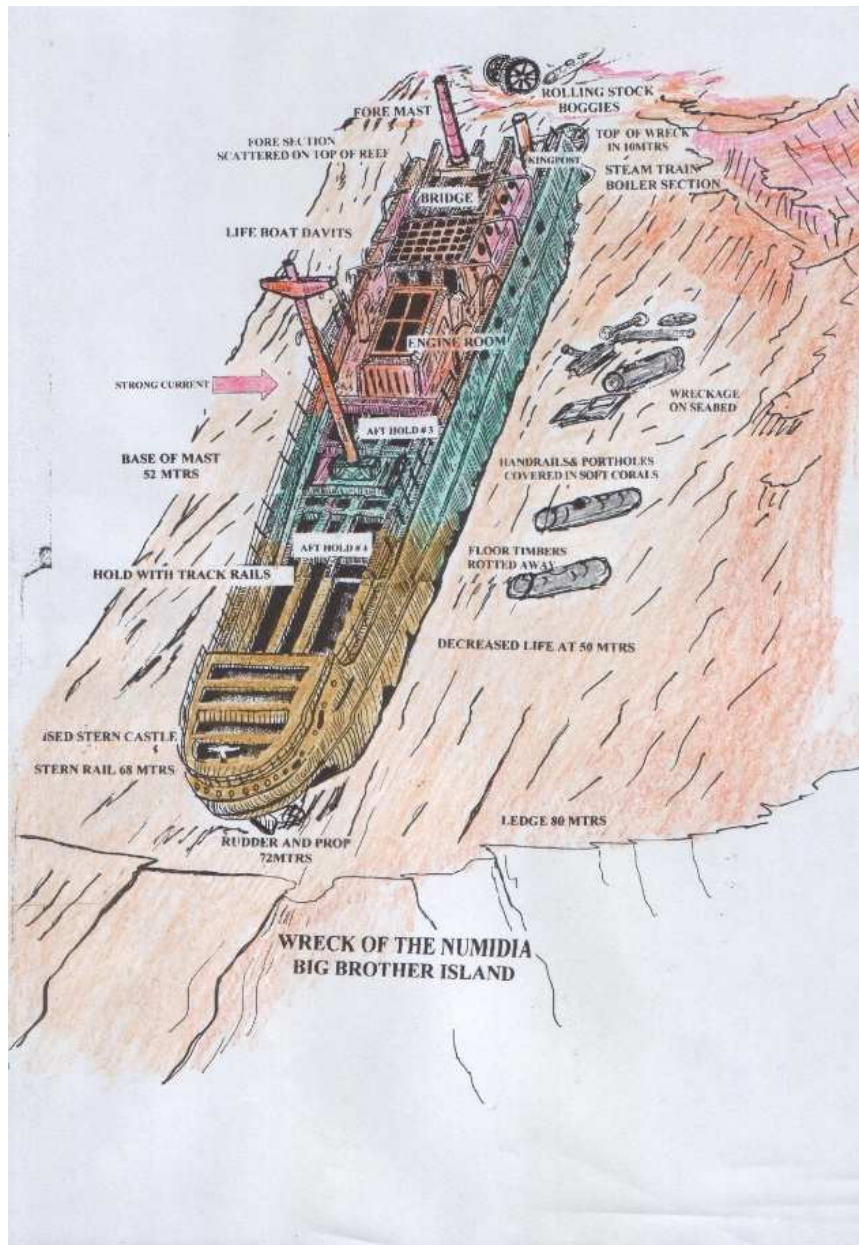


Superb hard coral trees line the reef. By swimming with the reef on the left the route brings the diver into calm waters for pick up. Enroute is a journey through an aquarium of Red Sea life



The reef has many overhangs and caves- and groupers like this one are common place. Many grow to massive proportions

The surrounding reef is a vibrant high energy world thriving in the strong currents and alive with every reef fish, corals and invertebrates. Golden anthias swim like bees, and predators such as Jacks, travelies and tuna hunt the reef.



THE WRECK OF THE S.S. AIDA



HISTORY

The Aida was built in France by A & Ch de la Loire, Nantes and launched in 1911. She was a much smaller vessel than the Numidia, 246 ft long, with a 31 ft beam and 13 ft draught, displacing 1,428 gross tonnes and was powered by a single 3 Cylinder triple expansion engine providing a top speed of 10 Knots. She had a complement of 63. Originally intended for the Egyptian Ports and Lighthouses Administration, she was later transferred to Egyptian Marina and used to ferry troops. Her first sinking occurred during world war two when she was bombed by Heinkel 111, however she was salvaged and put back into service, and this is one possible reason she is often called AIDA 11

Lloyds Losses "S.S.AIDA was sunk at Zafarana Anchorage by HE.111 which crashed at the same time after hitting Aida's mast. Aida can be salvaged"

THE SINKING

On the south-east facing coast of Big Brothers Island, is an old jetty used by the Egyptians stationed on the island for up to two months at a time. Naturally, they require a constant supply of provisions in addition to a changeover of personnel. On 15 September 1957, during heavy seas the Aida attempted to unload her cargo on the jetty and in doing so struck the rocks and quickly began to sink and the Captain had little option but to abandon ship. A Tugboat responded quickly and took off 77 personnel, the Aida drifted a few hundred meters northwest before her bows finally embedded themselves into the reef. As the stern sank, it came to rest at an extremely steep angle on the reef, the bow section breaking off and eventually breaking up on the reef top. Part of her engine also ended up on the reef.



The day the Numidia got her "twin sister." Aida strikes Big Brother. Hopes dashed for those expecting to leave the rock after a 3 month stint

DIVING THE WRECK

Although smaller than the Numidia, this wreck is more difficult to dive, not because of currents but because it starts at 28 mtrs and goes down to her stern and prop in 62 meters. However currents are milder and the site-200mtrs north of the jetty is more sheltered. Again this wreck lies at a very steep angle and it is amazing that it hasn't slid any further down the reef, out of reach of normal sport divers. At times you could be forgiven for thinking you were back on the Numidia

The first sight of the wreck is that she has sheered off at her foc'sle back as far as her superstructure. It's like looking at a cross sectional plan. This gives easy access to her engine room with its large shoal of glassy sweepers. Cobalt blue light filters down through her 4 skylights, once providing light and air, now a great backdrop for some amazing photo images. The engine room is cavernous- because her engine is missing! Gauges, valves and pipe work are still in place, and her grating-walkways plummet down to 40 mtrs where access to her rear cargo hold is gained. Deck beams criss-cross the hold and again light filters through. The beams are covered in soft coral growth and form a frill around the edges





LEFT .At 52 mtrs the steering windlass stands out against the shadow of the wreck above.



*RIGHT
.The superstructure is totally enveloped in a rich grown of soft corals*

Emerging at the stern the handrails and flagstaff are smothered in red orange and purple trees of soft corals. Over the rails and under her fan tailed stern is the reason she's still there a ledge sticking out, with her keel dug well in is the amazing sight of the steering binnacle covered in marine growth, yet still clearly discernible. Lionfish glide effortlessly by, complementing the staggering vista above as the true beauty of the wreck comes into view. Her entire metal frame structure is adorned in lush soft coral growths of reds, purples and every hue between. Anthea's add a splash of orange to the scene as the ascending route leads to companionways flanking the ship. Doorways beckon, often blocked by the wreck's resident groupers, unperturbed by visiting divers. The accommodation area and bridge above are easily accessible ~ portholes still in place, albeit covered in soft corals. With all the wooden structures gone, again only the steel framework remains affording easy access and an ideal substrate for marine growths which seem to increase in density in the shallower regions of the wreck. The wreck abruptly ends where her fore section should be.



Even a deck winch becomes a photo subject.



Alan Monk, a member of our great research team descends on a photographic mission



The triple expansion engine rest on top of the reef in shallow water covered in coral. The Starboard side off the ship is starting to collapse in towards the engine room casing, exposing bare rusting metal- no doubt this will be covered over in due course.

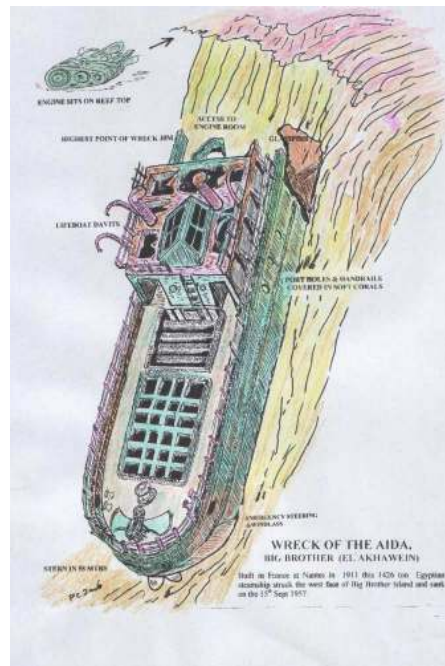
The companionways point the way to the surface covered in soft corals they make a spectacular backdrop for an accent. Leaving the wreck at 28 mtrs does not signify the end of the dive as a superb reef;

running under the pier awaits the diver. An ideal place to off-gas and let the computers do their work





The reef is riddled with caves, smothered in coral and pulsating with fish life



CHAPTER 3 SAFAGA

This chapter deals with the busy areas of Safaga, the Red Sea's main port for pilgrim ships and cruise liners,

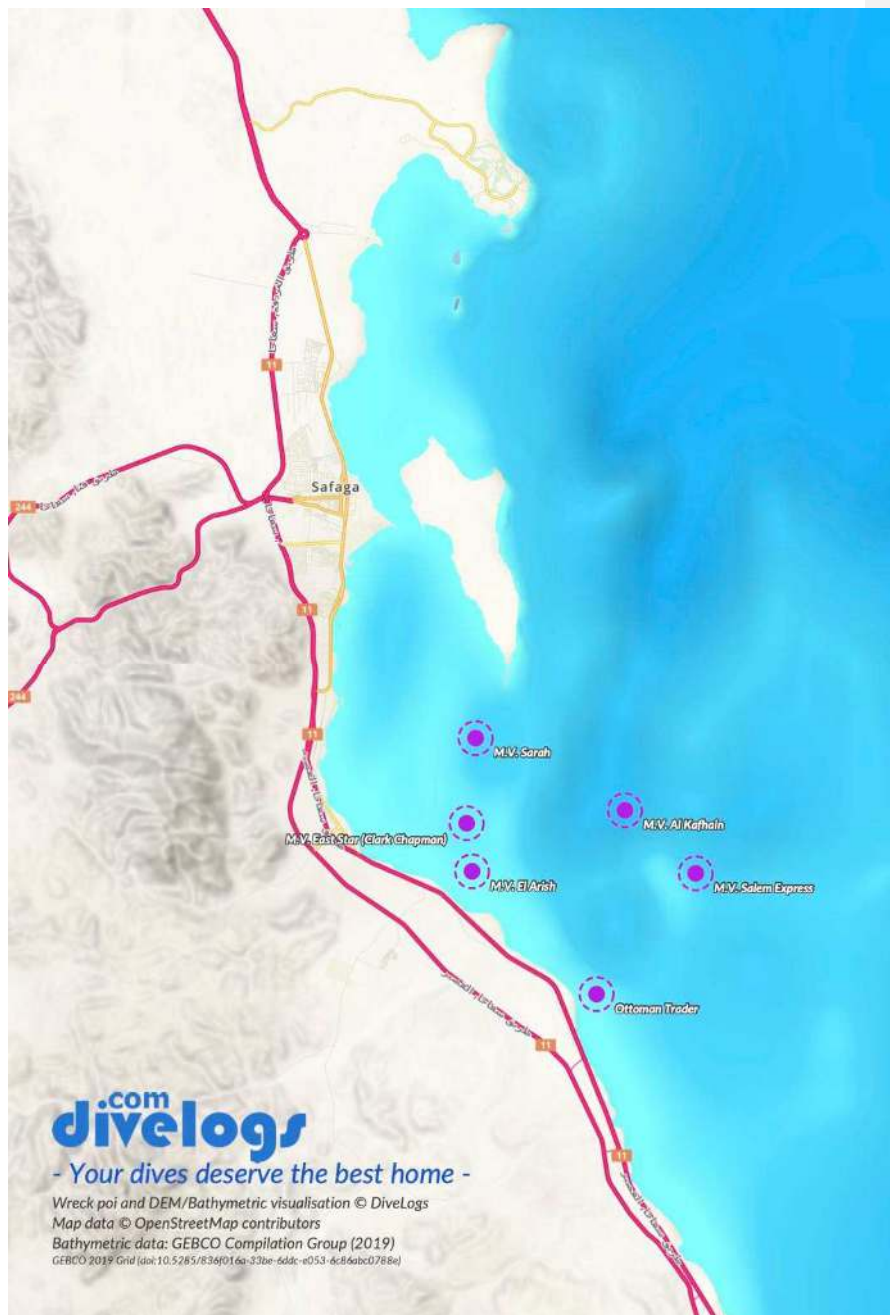
The port of Safaga was founded between 282 BC and 268BC and was originally called Philotera by the Greek Egyptian Pharaoh Ptolemy 11 Philadelphus, who named the town in the honour of his dead sister.

Safaga is the major Egyptian seaport on the Red Sea, a naval base, ferry and cruise ship terminal. It is also a phosphate terminal and major port for pilgrims bound for Mecca.

A tremendous amount of traffic moves between Safaga and Saudi Arabia carrying pilgrims. It is inevitable that some of these have become shipwrecks. More than *some*. After a life working in the North and Irish Seas, many ferries then spend their later years cruising the Mediterranean and Aegean seas. Well passed their sell by date they end up as pilgrim carriers, adapted to carry more passengers, often top heavy, with no commercial vehicles in the lower decks. Add to this old and failing electrics and you have an accident waiting to happen. Nine and counting....

Within this guide there are several such stories, and others outside our geographical scope- and depth. The Pride of AL Salam (discovered by the author) an AL Qamar (aka the Hospital ship). There are other several cases of "unexplained" sinkings. We have in fact found no less than three wrecks in "Scuttle Alley" as our team tag it. An old Russian bulk carrier has grounded twice, and is now a wreck sadly in deep water while the Yamak 11 has settled in shallow water (what a waste of a good wreck !)

The area is not recognised for its wrecks but its system of reefs lying close off shore. Indeed while recently training a group of Royal Marines to dive, we asked a local dive centre to take us to a wreck. We were told it didn't exist. Where have I heard that before? Read about it in these pages.



IBN BATAOTA (OFF SAFAGA)



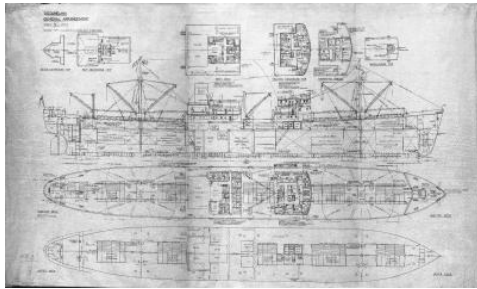
Built in 1973, a general cargo vessel of 4932 tons carrying a cargo of 5900 tons of silica sand, sank after a collision with the OXL SULTAN 24/3/09 while 35 miles out from Safaga, bound for the UAE.

AL-LOLOA (ALLOLOA)

A Panamanian RO-RO Ferry, 2593 tons, 92 x 14 mtrs, bound for Jeddah from Suez to collect pilgrims, caught fire and sank, 13.07/94, 6 miles north of Safaga. USS Briscoe attempted to contain the fire while USS Conolly rescued the crew.

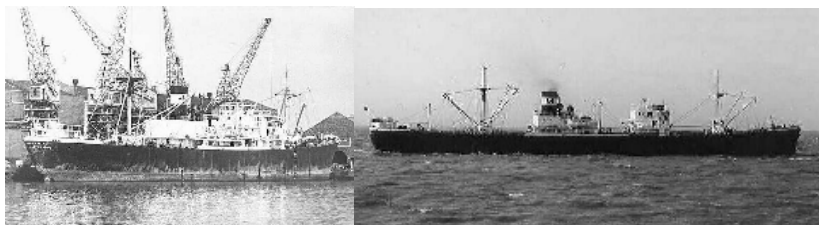
S.S. MALDIVE TRANSPORT

A British Steamship built at W Gray & Co Ltd Hartlepool in 1952 for Maldives Investments (London Ltd) she was 429ft long 56 ft beam, 36 ft draught., 4097 tons



The Maldive Transport left Bangkok with 2605 tons of raw jute for Safaga and 1000 tons of maize for Aquaba Jordan. On the 29th April 1972 fire broke out in no. 3 hold and spread to the engine room and superstructure. The ship was beached and abandoned 3 miles

south of Safaga. The vessel then drifted 2 miles further south coming ashore again completely gutted



M.V KAREN VATIS

A Greek bulk carrier motor vessel, built in 1973 by the Geogi Dimitrov Shiyard, Varna. 22114 tons, 210mtrs long, 28 mtrs beam, 15.6 mtrs draught. Owned by Vages Compania Maritima. Hull and machinery valued at £4.2m

FINAL VOYAGE

Her final voyage was from Liverpool to Kandla, north west India. She passed through the Suez canal on the 14th November 1985. Two days later she began to take on water into her double bottom tanks, and then her engine room, while near MARSAZEBARA, RAS EGELA, south of Safaga. The 27 crew were rescued by Egyptian naval vessels after putting into the lifeboats, and landed at Port Berenice.

THE WRECK OF THE MV AL KHAFAIN



In 1967, three new car ferries were delivered to Coast Lines to update their Irish Sea



Lion took over the Ardrossan-Belfast day service of Burns & Laird. Coast Lines were purchased by P&O in 1971, and the Liverpool boats appeared in P&O Ferries colours with pale blue funnels.

THE SHIP. Built by Camell Laird in 1967 at Birkenhead for the Belfast Steamship Co Ltd., working on the Belfast to Liverpool service. A 115mtr long 6000 ton Ro Ro passenger car ferry with 428 berths, comprising 4 deluxe double cabins, 288 first class and 140 2nd class berths. and 594 deck passenger capability, she was powered by 2 12cylinder Pielstick turbo charged diesel engines built by Crossley Brothers with 2 controllable pitched propellers. Her service speed was 17 knots.

services. The *Ulster Prince* and *Ulster Queen* replaced the pre-war motorships *Ulster Prince* and *Ulster Monarch* on the Liverpool-Belfast night service of the Belfast Steamship Co. and

From 1971, the service was marketed as P&O Ferries, although registered owners only changed to P&O in 1978. The Liverpool-Belfast service closed in 1981, and *Ulster Prince* was laid up at Oostende.



In 1982 she was sold to the Pangloss Shipping Co and sailed under three names (MED SEA, AL KHERA, AL EDDIN until 2000 when she was sold to the Hellenic Mediteranean Line sailing as the POSEINDONIA and LA PATRIA. In 2004

she once again became the POSEINONIA, under the Posedonia Shipping Co. flag. In May 2005 she came under Saudi Arabian ownership and was renamed the AL KAFHAIN, registered in Panama. After a make over she sailed to Safaga to pick up her first passengers under the new ownership Her first voyage was to take pilgrims to Mecca. The vessel was refused her safety papers and departed with only crew on board

FINAL VOYAGE

On the 2d nov 2005 the Al Khafain left Hurghada bound for Jeddah. Off Giftum Island Fire broke out in the engine room and swept through the superstructure. The 58 crew abandoned ship, some by life boats others by passing vessels. One crewman was injured. The ship was taken undertow but capsized due to the weight of water in her upper decks. The tow was lost and she drifted onto the northern side of Sha'ab Sheer near Port Safaga



*Divers inspect the bow section of the Al Kafhain.
Air trapped in her upturned hull caused her to rise*



*and fall in the swell.
Photo taken 2 days after
she sank.*



On Nov 7TH 2005 Peter Collings was in the area with members of Scarborough Sub Aqua Club and surveyed the wreck. The bow section-gleaming white in the strong sunlight seemed to be buoyant-possible because of trapped air, and could be seen rising



and falling in the swell-an incredible sight- 6000 tons of steel, this huge bow rising to the surface and falling back to the reef-pounding the coral. Both names "ULSTER QUEEN" and "AL KHAFAIN" were easy to read-even upside down! No one can dispute this identification! A helicopter pad could be seen just forward of the bridge a circled H painted on her foredeck. Amidships the gleaming

white hull gives way to a scorched superstructure-evidence of her fire-windowless and dangerously beckoning-it would have been foolhardy to enter with the ship in such an unstable condition-already there are signs of the superstructure collapsing the smooth walls folding inwards.

"The sound of the ship's death throws reminded me of the Giannis D's sinking back in 1983. The sound of metal twisting and grinding could be heard long before the wreck came into view. It's a sound you never forget-the last gasps of a once proud ship".



A diver hovers under the helicopter pad



The scorched bridge



The bridge interior .Her helm hangs down, Windows melted away with the intense heat



remains of a smashed life boat

Her funnel appears to be digging into the seabed and appears to be all that is preventing her from tumbling down the reef. Life boat davits are all swung out their pulley systems dangling down towards the seabed. Towards the stern are her registration details-Panama- and her IMO number. The stern section has so far avoided any damage, with her stairwells, handrails and steering gear still in place. Above the twin rudders and variable pitch props lie in shallow water, bathed in sunlight and provide a superb photo subject.



*Glynn & Dave, from Lowestoft BSAC
Inspect one of her props, framed by
The twin rudders*



The stern doors of the ferry



*The ship appears to be bedding into
The ledge at the base of the reef.*

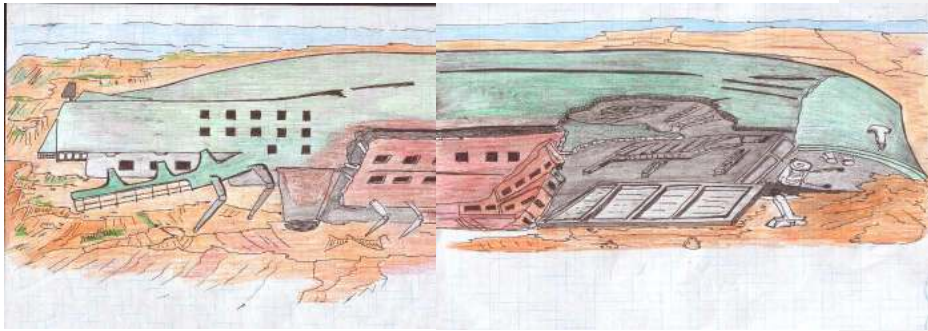
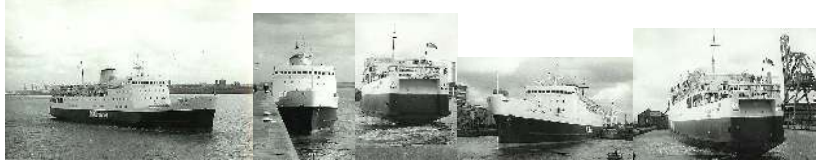


The aft steering helm



*The bridge, viewed from
the helicopter deck, totally
gutted by fire and devoid
of her new coat of paint*

As I write, the wreck continues to break up, the weight of the hull crushing down on the weakened structure, making penetration very dangerous. The wreck will continue to be pounded by the relentless seas which crash onto this reef



Sketch c 2017-the wreck continues to break up and collapse in on itself due to the constant pounding of waves onto the exposed reef-and indeed her own weight.

THE WRECK OF THE RORO SALEM EXPRESS



***Fred Scamaron
Nuits St. Georges***

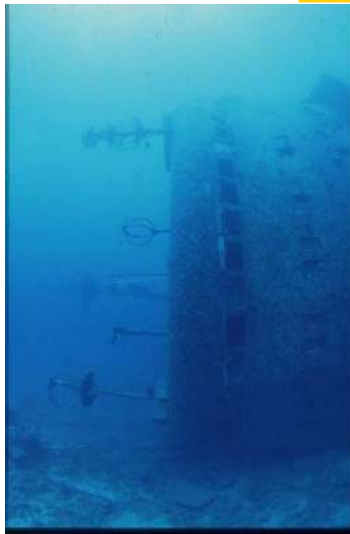


Salem Express



THE VESSEL

Built in 1964 at La Seyne in France as the FRED SCAMARON, by C.N.I.M. She was 4770 tons, 100mtrs long 18 mtr beam and 5 mtr draught., NUIITS ST. GEORGES, LORD SINAI and AL TARA . In 1988 She was registered to the SAMATOUR LINE and re named the Salem Eexpress. She was powered by four 8 cylinder "L'Atlantique" diesel engines.



The ship now lies on a barren sea Bed in 30mtrs. The windows in her bridge are large enough to gain access into the navigation deck .Much of the electrical instrumentation can still be seen- the helm, radar scope, radio transmitters and PA units.

THE FINAL VOYAGE

On December 15th 1991 one of the greatest maritime disasters of recent times occurred a few miles from the Port of Safaga on Hyndman Reef. The 100m long passenger ferry, SALEM EXPRESS was returning with her decks crowded with pilgrims from Mecca. Official numbers quote 690 passengers but there are reports that as many as 1600 people were on board. Her final voyage began at Jeddah, as normal her duties were to ferry passengers to and from Safaga. On this particular journey there were strong winds and rough seas. Approaching Safaga, the Captain decided to take a short cut to the south of Panarama reef leaving the safety of deep and open water for a shallow passage riddled with reefs.

The ship struck an unseen reef with a glancing blow, ripping a great hole in the forward section of the hull on her starboard side. The sudden in rush of water caused the outer bow door to burst open allowing more water to enter the already listing vessel. As the car deck filled with water she rolled over onto her starboard side and sank in 30 mtrs in less than 20 minutes . Many of those on deck were thrown into the water and died when the corrugated sheeting, used as an awning, fell on them. Only 180 survived, many by swimming ashore

DIVING THE WRECK.

At over 100mtrs long the wreck is certainly worth 2 dives, but even if there is only time for one dive there is still much to see and with the upper reaches of the wreck in only 12 mtrs and the use of nitrox (36% @1.5) good long dives are possible, even without decompression.

At the bow the outer door can be found – now almost closed again, and above and below are the two anchors- still in place. Swimming along the seabed passed the foredeck with its winches and anchors the bridge comes into view a few meters above. The large windows permit access, and a rear door allows the tour to continue, coming out at a haunting site.

A pair of lifeboats sit side by side, upright on the seabed. A serene reminder of the tragedy which befell those they were meant for. The seabed is still littered with suitcases, radios and sheets of corrugated roofing. Little or no coral grows here.



Reaching the stern the twin props come into view, and her stern door, still closed sways on its hinges, the rubber gasket now rotted away, allowing for movement in any swell. Here pipefish swim over a light growth of algae.

Ascending slowly forward over the aft deck several doors lead into the cafeteria running forward and taking up the entire beam of the deck. Piles of chairs have fallen into the depths, while tables stick out at right angles. Straight ahead is the service counter- and an exit door out to the companionway above (port side)

The port companion way still bears many of the seats positioned along its length, and florescent lights, recessed in the ceiling now stand vertical. Juvenile lionfish , scorpionfish and even a solitary frogfish shelter in the walkway.



Because of its history the wreck have provoked much debate over whether it should be dived or not. The sight of personal belongings on the seabed is very saddening, but if the wreck is dived with respect then it is no different to walking the battlefields of the World Wars. Some people make a holiday out of that.!



Along the deeper parts of the superstructure some large soft corals have developed recently. Their delicate colours standing out against a bland background. At 14 and 26 mtrs, the distinctive twin funnels reach out into open water. Hanging vertically between them is a gantry which supports the comms mast. The mast is covered with barrel sponge and there is a school of *Antheas* along its length. The intact handrails are also now showing signs of colonisation. Unlike other recent wrecks (*Giannis D*, *Million Hope*) the adoption of the wreck as a haven by marine organisms have been very slow. Indeed, considering her size she has a small fish population. There is a resident school of striped goatfish near the lifeboats, with an occasional visit of *Fusiliers*, jacks and *Travelies*. This is the only wreck in the Red Sea which does not have a shoal of glassfish!

Perhaps the metal of which the ship is made from has something to do with it, but an encrusting sea squirt would seem to be one of the more successful immigrants.

The funnels both bear the company emblem an S with laurel leaves, and the name of the ship in both English and Arabic can be spotted in several places on her hull and superstructure.



A diver investigates the steering helm One of several D.F. antennae on the wreck





Divers Swim under the bow towards the starboard anchor. Soft corals are now beginning to colonise the wreck. The wreck is home to many giant moray eels, and its



not unusual to be confronted by one free swimming.



One of the many swim throughs. The

main cafeteria can be accessed from the rear door. The chairs have all fallen into the lower section. The ceiling is to the left of the picture!



THE WRECK OF THE M.S EL ARISH

Imagine finding a wreck with lifeboats marked “El Arish”, a bell marked “El Tor” and embossed letters on the hull reading “EL ARISH EL TOR”...just another day at the office!

THE SHIP



MS El-Tor

Built 1981 A/S Bergens, Norway

Dimensions 105 x 17.3 x 4.12

12 Cyl Diesel - 6620 kW

19 Knots

1025 Passengers, 328 berths, 150 cars

IMO: 7719820

1981 - Delivered to Misr EDCO Shipping, Alexandria, Egypt

1991 - Renamed **EL-ARISH-EL-TOR**

1999 - Sold to Sayed Nasr Navigation Lines, Cairo, Egypt. renamed **EL-ARISH**



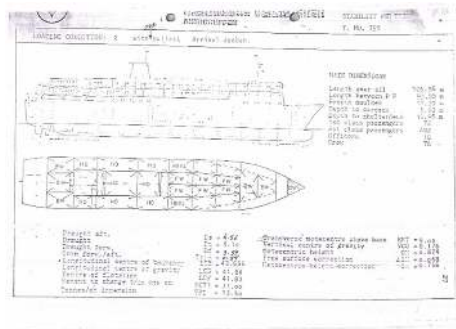
Her sister ship was originally called the EL ARISH, HISTORY AS FOLLOWS

MS El-Arish

Built 1980 A/S Bergens, Norway
Dimensions 105 x 17.3 x 4.13
12 Cyl diesel - 6714 kW
19 Knots
1350 Passengers, 328 berths, 150 cars
IMO: 7719818
1980 - Delivered to EDCO Shipping Company, Egypt
1991 - Renamed DANIA MARINE
1992 - Sold to Sicilia Regionale Marittima, Italy Renamed **VITTORE CARPACCIO**
2006 - Sold to Ustica Lines, Italy Renamed **GIANNI MORACE**
In service between Trapini - Switzerland
Sister ship to El-Tor

THE FINAL JOURNEY

“last voyage January 2001 from Jeddah to Savaga 24 Hours B4 Savaga Port Happened Fair Inside engine room electric cable automatically close the doors and turn off the fair during high technology in ship equipments and berthing ship to reparse the cable after reparse all the crew make arrest from January 2001 up to 27/11/2003 sunk arrested from the salary crew as my information throw the crew stolen the free shop The Goods Inside more than \$100,000 And some spear Parts”
Sayed Nasr, owner el arish



The Final voyage of the EL ARISH took her from Suez to Jeddah to pick up pilgrims destined for Safaga, above is her loading condition plan on arrival at Jeddah.

The gossip columns said I had invented this wreck-an “expert” novelist claimed it didn’t exist, and yet there she was a very real intact car ferry lying on her side 12 mtrs below the surface, undived untouched, bell

and compasses still in place right under the noses of several local dive centres!

The ship lay at anchor for several years, becoming a local landmark-passed by every day by local fishermen and charter boats. I remember seeing her in the old days when we had to travel to Marsa Alam by coach-often thinking to my self-“that would make a great wreck”

Then one morning she was gone. Did anybody notice, did anybody care? Most probably assumed she had sailed away.

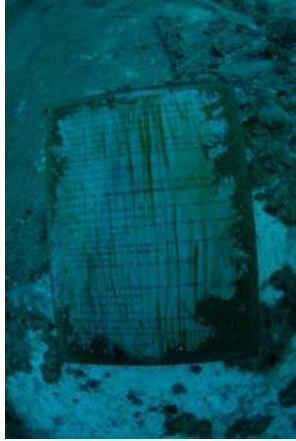
THE DISCOVERY



Three skippers three new wrecks in one day.....Every time I mentioned the wreck to a skipper the response was always the same "No we cant go there we'll get arrested .Until one day a willing skipper took me to where I thought she was(finding the "Clark Chapman wreck" on the way.). It was not difficult to find-105mts of ship lying on its side,12 mtrs below the surface.....



For whom the bell tolls; still in place, pretending to be a P.A Horn, her bell was located by Mike and Sue Rountree .An attempt to steal it later by a British cowboy diver was thwarted by a timely phone call to the authorities-(yes JC it was me who shopped you!!!)



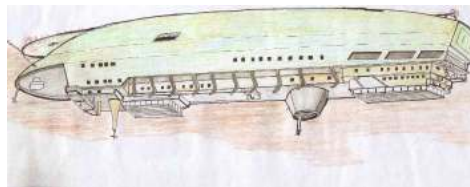
More clues to her identity; the ships registration papers in the bridge and the shipping companies logo on the funnel.

The wreck is totally intact, her gentle journey to the sea bed only crushed the port lifeboats as she rolled over onto her side and settled into the sandy bottom, 30 mtrs below the surface. Her huge bulbous nose, bow thrusters and stem are heavily covered in huge soft corals and point towards the shore, a gig full of images could not capture the scene. She makes no attempt to hide her identity-the bow adorns her name ,as do the lifeboats, life belts and her bell, albeit under a thin layer of



silt.

Her starboard anchor chain is draped over the bow thrusters, dropping down to the seabed and is also covered in a forest of oversized soft corals. Rounding the bow her flagstaff post and lamp precede a very short foc's'le, fitted as you would think with huge winches for her two forward anchors.





Further evidence to suggest our dives were the first on this great wreck; her wing navigation compasses one in its gimbal and the other hanging loose-sadly stolen in Jan 2007



.There are endless swimthroughs, along companionways corridors and promenades Huge corals drape the roof supports

The 4 story high superstructure reaches out with her coms mast and directional antenna disappearing into the gloom. What appears to be a PA horn sits central above the first row of windows, covered in algae, well at least most of us thought that-but not Mike and Sue. Inscribed with "EL TOR ALEXANDRIA 1981", the ship's bell was still in place-and still there when we left. Her navigation bridges both sported compasses, one hanging by its wire and the other still in its gimbal and entry into the navigation bridge, although restricted by an exercise bike, produced the ship's certifications, still in glass frames. Her electronic navigation equipment was still intact- a mere coating of thin silt obscuring the details. At the risk of repeating myself again," it would seem that no had been here before"

Swimming aft, along her lifeboat deck the boats still with their Day-Glo orange paint repeat her name, not the name on her bell but her third and final entry in the Lloyds register "EL ARISH"

Reaching the aft section, 105 mtrs from the bow, a complex arrangement of stairwells and rails linking 4 levels afford themselves to more growth and beyond is a magnificent sight-2 huge propellers and rudders covered in soft corals over 2 mtrs long-the biggest I have ever seen in any part of the Red Sea. Another gig full of memories. Photographic delights at both ends of the wreck!



At a convenient depth of 20 mtrs, the return journey to the start point can be made along her promenade deck, the lattice work of supports for the sunshade canopy are festooned in more soft corals and it is easy to examine her funnel and its shipping line emblem. Even plastic notices marking muster points still remain in place, as do fire hoses and lifebelts.

What a find-an intact 100mtrs wreck in 30mtrs,diveable in all conditions suitable for all levels of divers, guess I must have imagined it after all.

WRECK OF THE M.V EAST STAR (UN CONFIRMED) AKA THE CLARK CHAPMAN WRECK



Red herring-makers plate on one of the wrecks winches-they had been recycled and fitted to this wreck after the original vessel was scrapped.

I had heard a story about a cargo ship arriving at the port of Safaga full of luxury goods-video machines, and other electrical goods, inbound from Saudi Arabia. Customs immediately slapped a huge duty on the cargo and a dispute ensued. The ship lay at anchor while the disagreement over duty payments rolled on. Eventually word got out the ship was sitting at anchor un manned-the crew paid off as the dispute continued – easy pickings and a ready market for such sought after goods. Then one day she disappeared-rumours said she was scuttled by her owners to finally end the dispute. I asked my source of this highly probable tale for a name. He came up with EAST STAR.

MV EAST STAR.

Built in 174, and described as an Egyptian cargo vessel, The East Star did indeed visit Safaga in March 2000. She had put in with “severe engine problems” and official reports from Lloyds quote her as being towed to Alang where she was beached and scrapped in 2001

Only 300mtrs away from the EL ARISH we found a small cargo ship about 70 mtrs long, lying on its starboard side with much of its cargo spilled onto the muddy seafloor. Electrical goods, kettles, flasks, carpets lay every where. Our exploration also revealed her seacocks were open-she had been scuttled! This time we found no bell, no name on her bow or stern. Could it be the EAST STAR- were the official records wrong? Certainly the evidence backed up the story of the looted ship.

We needed a break-we needed some clue to help in her identification. Several dives produced only details of her encrusting species and inhabitants, and interesting as they were they didn't tell us anything! Then we found name plates on her winches, and next to the name plates serial numbers. The name on the plates read “CLARK CHAPMAN, GATESHEAD, ENGLAND”

Gateshead off course lies on the south side of the Tyne, and many supporting shipbuilding industries have flourished there. Returning back to the north east of England I contacted Clark Chapman-they had sold the marine division to Rolls Royce. Rolls Royce came up a name within an hour of seeing the serial number, The winches had been fitted to the

M.V UM SABER an Egyptian vessel built in Budapest, Se was 244ft long, with her machinery aft, 1266tons fitted with oil 4sa 8cylinder diesel engines, built by Laings for the Egyptian Navigation company of Alexandria. later in 1981, now ice strengthened she became the EL IMAN MOSLEM and owned by Hussien Said Fanaki. Officially scrapped in March 1986 at Brodaspas, Split Yugoslavia

It is not unusual for ships parts to be recycled-the winches from the Um Saber had obviously been reused on our "Clark Chapman wreck" but is it indeed the EAST STAR?

THE WRECK

Lying in 35 mtrs on her port side, she is an intact, stable wreck, with only some structural damage to her superstructure. All of her fittings are in place, there has not been an salvage to the wreck. With no cargo hatches visible, the cargo has spilled out of both holds, which are flanked by winch gear and tall masts running out horizontally. There are many areas of the wreck to explore including her foc's'le.

Given the depth it is possible to swim from the stern along through the holds to the bow, rising up a few mtrs and returning along her port (upper) gunwales. The wreck supports great fish and encrusting marine life, and needs several dives to fully explore her.

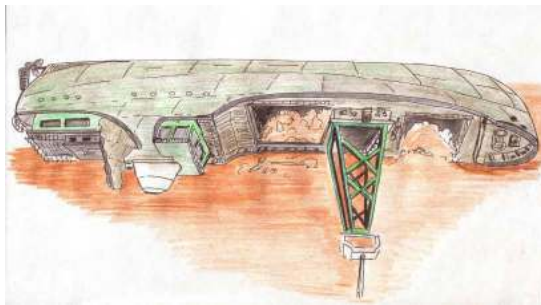
To date she has not given us any more clues to her identity and thus will remain known as the "CLARK CHAPMAN WRECK," until she tells us otherwise.



The winch gear gave is the only clue to her identity, but this proved to be a red herring "Clark Chapman, Gateshead England" was revealed on the makers plate



Appearing gloomy at first, the wreck is covered in an assortment of fan corals and sponges Cardinal fish play in the shelter of the wreck



WRECK OF THE M.V SARAH



"We noticed her last year while exploring the EL ARISH and the EAST STAR (aka CLARK CHAPMAN WRECK)-and took photos of her at anchor, jokingly predicting her as the next "new" wreck. She looked forlorn and destined to sink."

Built in 1956 as the TORFINN JARL by As.Trondhjems Mek.Verksted, Trondhjem.. She was an 80mtrs x 11 x4.2m, 963ton,ice strengthened motor refrigeration cargo ship (often referred to as a reefer).Her oil 4sa 6 cylinder MAN diesel engine had an output of 1260BHP.



In 1976 she was renamed the DOMA-T when she came under the ownership of the Orient Shipping & contracting (Greece). Eventually becoming the SARAH, she lay at anchor off Safaga Island in an

abandoned state until she sank on the 1st November 2007.

The wreck now lies on its starboard side in 14 mtrs of water, her portside awash and her davits breaking the surface.This 60 mtr cargo ship sat at anchor abandoned for over a year, before it capsized and sank close to Safaga Island. Remains of its last cargo- onions-could still be seen in the holds. Lying on its starboard side, the hull is covered in a glorious coat of soft corals, sponges and sea squirts-grown on the hull as it sat at anchor. There is little or no damage to the vessel, however it is evident that it was stripped of its instruments before it was abandoned. The compass binnacle sits on the navigation deck minus the compass and the electronics have all been removed. Her masts however still support many running lights- and the gyro compass is still in place- at the time of writing.

A thin film of sediment covers the wreck and a plaque on her crane reveals its maker-TALPR DUKTE,MOLDE , BRATTVAAG,NORWAY. Despite this film, the paintwork still looks fresh-she had only been down a few days when we dived her.



Crane makers plate



name on hull

There is no doubt as to her name at the time of sinking .SARAH is clearly visible on the hull and her lifebelts and life jackets. A set of fire plans was found on the seabed, showing her as the DOMA -T in 2000.



Diver hovers in front of the king post.



The bow



The prop is covered in soft corals, suggesting she has been at anchor for some time.



Superstructure



Comms mast



Gyroscope



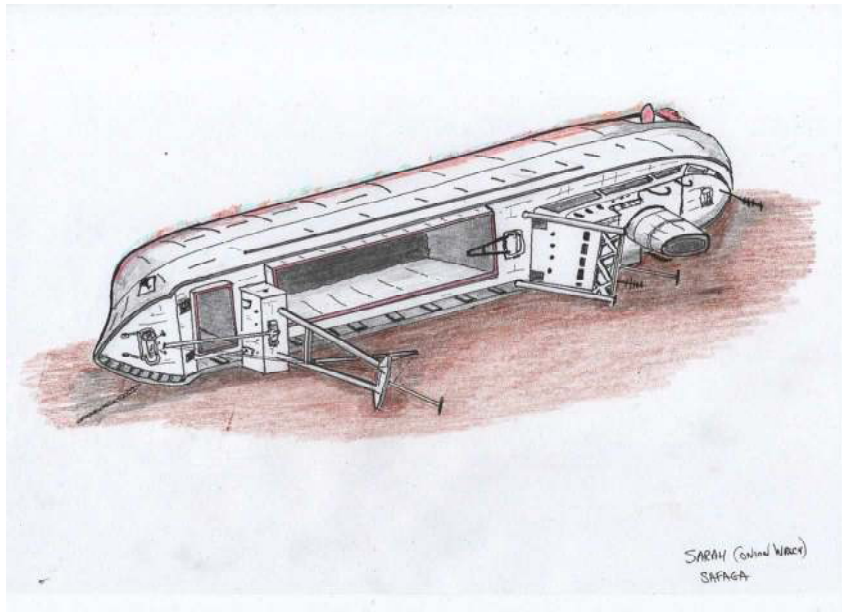
compass binnacle

DIVING THE WRECK

Lying on a sandy bottom in 14 mtrs, the superstructure is bathed in the morning sun and the wreck is totally intact. Her central crane and jib have swing downward and the makers plate is clear to see. Both masts run out horizontally and are at the time of writing adorned in all her navigation and running lights. Rigging and aerial cables are still in place. The holds are empty save for a few bags of onions, presumably her final cargo. The aft superstructure housing the navigation bridge, engine room and accommodation block is easy to locate and her binnacle, gyrocompass and even a telephone are all in place. Both the bow and stern are very impressive and the shallow depths give strong natural light ideal for photography. Although this is a very new wreck, her hull, propeller and rudder are covered in a very well established eco system of soft corals sponges and invertebrates-suggesting she had been at anchor for some time. This offers great potential for a night dive.



The foremast ,still featuring its floodlights running lights and rigging



MV TABA

For years this Russian transport ferry hung around Safaga, anchored above the Clark Chapman wreck in Scuttle alley. With no signs of life or movement she looked set to become another “accident” sinking at her moorings. She broke loose several times grounding on the sandbanks.



Then in July 2015 she was loaded with a cargo of containers and trailers bound for Saudi Arabia. On the 5th July she set sail with a crew of 35 on board. Shortly after leaving port she took on a heavy list to port and her cargo shifted, increasing the list.



The Egyptian navy were quickly on the scene, rescuing the entire crew before the vessel capsized and sank, sadly in deep water.

M.V. PATIA

Built in 1941 as the Kronprins Frederik by Helsingors Jernsk, She was 3947 tons, 114 mtrs long, 15 mtr beam. Her machinery consisted of 2 x 10 cylinder B&W diesels delivering 8400bhp. Due to World War 22 she was moved to Sydhamn, Copenhagen and her valuable fittings stripped for safe keeping. She did not commence her



operations with DFDS until 1946. She was employed as a North Sea ferry between Esbjerg and Harwich until 1964. In April 1953 she was ravaged by fire and capsized at Harwich quay, and with one third of her superstructure gutted, she was raised in August of that year and taken to Elsinmore and underwent 8 months of repairs. She completed no less than 1430 crossings. From 1964 she worked the

Newcastle Esbjerg route until 1976, undergoing a major refit in 1966 which included bow thrusters and stabilising tanks. Then she was sold to the Arab Navigators Co. of Egypt and became the Patra.

In December of that year, while engaged in the Jeddah to Suez run, the Patra left Jeddah on the 23rd with 353 passengers and 88 crew on board. Some time after departure fire broke out in the engine room and continued to rage through the superstructure for 13 hours. 12 vessels raced to the scene including the Russian motor tanker Lenino which

took 166 passengers and 40 crewmen onboard to Suez. Another Russian vessel picked up a further 24 survivors. Of the 102 lost 98 were pilgrims and 4 crew. The ship sank about midday on the 23rd. The Master claimed the passengers ignored his orders but many witnesses claimed the fire fighting equipment was unfit for use and there was not enough life jackets.

AL SALEM BOCCACCIO '98



The Al Salem Boccaccio 98 left Duba Saudi Arabia at 18.30 2nd Feb 2006, with 1400 passengers including 30 children and 100 crew. Amongst the passengers were many pilgrims, Palistinians, Syrians and 100 Saudi Arabians. She was due into the Egyptian port of Safaga at 02.30. There was also 22 cars, 14 trucks and one bus on

board. Contact with the vessel was lost at 5 hours out. Fire had broken out in the car deck. The captain turned the vessel in an attempt to control the fire but the manouvre only fanned the flames passengers rushed to one side of the boat and she began to roll. At the same time water started to fill the car deck, increasing the list. The vessel sank within 5 minutes of listing. The area was experiencing a violent electrical storm at the time of the tragedy

“When things got really bad the crew just went off in the lifeboats and left us on board”.

“The Captain was the first to leave we were surprised to see the boat sinking”

Khaled Hassan

6 year old Mohammed Hassan was rescued after being in the water for 30 hours. He lost his father, mother and sister. Less than 400 were rescued.

S.S. RONALDSHAY

The RONALDSHAY was a dredger owned by the Bengali Government working off Safaga Island in October(22nd) 1942 and was torpedoed by German aircraft with the loss of her captain and 52 crew. She was built by Simons & Co in 1922, had a displacement of 1023 tons. She was 258 ft long, and 45 ft in the beam. Fitted with triple expansion engines There is a un confirmed report of the vessel being salvaged in the mid eighties and only debris remains, but she is the subject of further research. The war diaries report she sank “off the deep water quay”

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THE WRECK OF THE OTTOMAN TRADER

Wreckies are a funny breed-sometimes what you expect to blow them away is met with an indifferent grunt and sometimes you take a chance- and wow them! This 1700c coastal trader falls into the later category-it certainly wowed me.

Up until now our oldest find in the northern Red Sea was a small “puffer” in 6 mtrs on Sha’ ab Ali’s west side-the “nail wreck” (dated by Durham University-thank you Andrew Yates –as 1850)

Any really old wrecks are usually smothered in coral, beneath sand or the wood has simply rotted away-so to see the hull of a 400 year old ship IS something special.



At its height, the Ottoman empire was at the centre of trade between the east and west, and spanned 6 centuries and three continents, extending to the southern limits of the Red Sea. With Constantinople (today known as Istanbul) as its capital, the Ottoman Empire was in many respects an Islamic successor to earlier Mediterranean empires — namely the Roman and Byzantine empires.



A selection of the beautiful artefacts recovered from the first official survey of the wreck.

The cargo has been identified as Turkish from around the 1700, and it is thought the vessel was on a south bound journey, having stopped at this ancient seaport on the Egyptian red Sea coast to re-provision.

Lying in sand in 40 mtrs at the base of a reef, the entire outline of this old ship can be seen as you descend-the 2 grey area's clear into her holds ,full of pottery ranging from Ali Baba style Amphora to small hand held jugs. The peripheral is a field of huge wine vessels some with pointed bases, others with flat bases, half buried in the sand. There are no less than seven huge anchors,



suggesting this was an enormous vessel. The ribs of the ship stand proud of the sea bed by a couple of mtrs, and although partly covered in sand, it is easy to work out the fore and aft sections of the vessel. The blandness of the scene is broken by vivid red sponges, sea squirts and soft corals clinging on to the curved ribs



A diver explores the ribs sticking out of the sand, outlining the length and size of this ancient trading ship



A total of 7 huge iron anchors were found-indicating that this was indeed a huge vessel. The anchors evocative shape are now further enhanced with red sponge.

The sloping sand bank allows for parts of her keel be revealed, thick timbers running longitudinally through the site, but also indicates that more of the wreck remains undisturbed beneath the sand.

This is strictly a "look don't touch" dive , but never the less the scene is an amazing window into the past. What must she have looked like? where had she been? where was

she going? How did she sink? What treasures still lie beneath the sand? We can only look on and wonder.



Much of the cargo still remains scattered around the remains of the shipwreck, from huge vases to small hand held jugs.



Dive Egypts Shipwrecks

VOLUME 2; HURGHADA, GOBUL, SINAI, TIRAN
VOLUME 3 GULF OF SUEZ
VOLUME 4 MEDITERANEAN PT1
VOLUME 5 MEDITERANEAN PT 2

E BOOK CONCEPT

The idea of the E BOOK series came about after seeing so many incorrect publications quoting the wrong identity of the Tile Wreck at Abu Nuhas in the Red Sea. Despite a plethora of undeniable facts presented by myself and members of the Red Sea Wreck Academy, self-proclaiming experts still, for reasons known only to themselves, continued to quote the MARCUS as the CHRISOULA K. It was archive photographs from Howard Rosenstien and the location of the ships bell, which added weight to Stephan Jablonski's accounts of the sinkings'. This new material gave us enough to produce the first E book in 2008.

Being free from restrictions it soon found its way around the world and was passed on from diver to diver. It had the desired effect-Now more and more reports carry the correct identity.

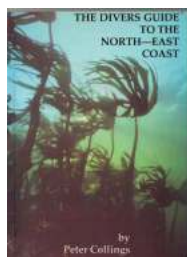
Its success lead to more titles being produced and published .Initially with an Egyptian theme, the Thistlegorm, Rosalie Moller and the Russian warranted a volume to themselves. Tourist authorities have noticed the importance of their assets. Wrecks are living underwater museums, and commissions have flooded in from Leros, Egypt, Truk, Palau, Sri Lanka Subic Bay, and Busuanga, to name but a few.

Promoting tourism through shipwrecks” has become our mission statement, and by the end of 2017 we will have completed 27 titles in the series. We intend to update the guides annually-all free in readable format (72dpi) and in hi res, printable versions from the deeplens website for a small fee. So now we have a total of 23 titles available, (and more on the way), yours to enjoy and pass on-to anyone who may be interested- with my compliments and don't forget we run regular expeditions and safaris to all these featured Wrecks...The project has only just begun....

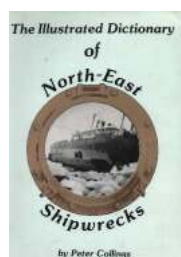
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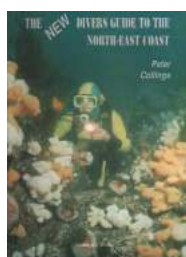
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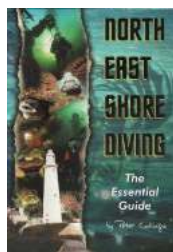
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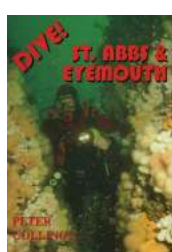
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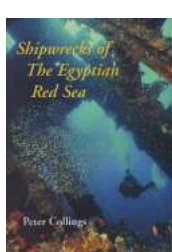
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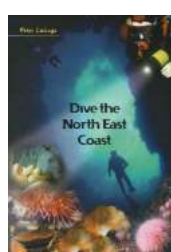
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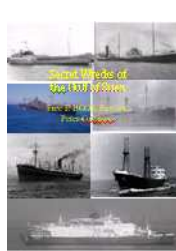
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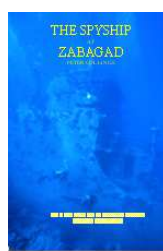
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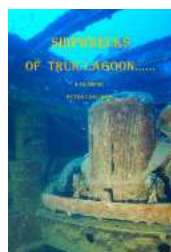
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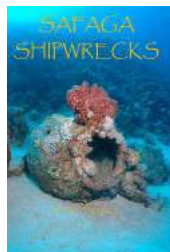
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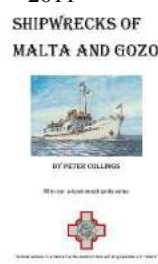
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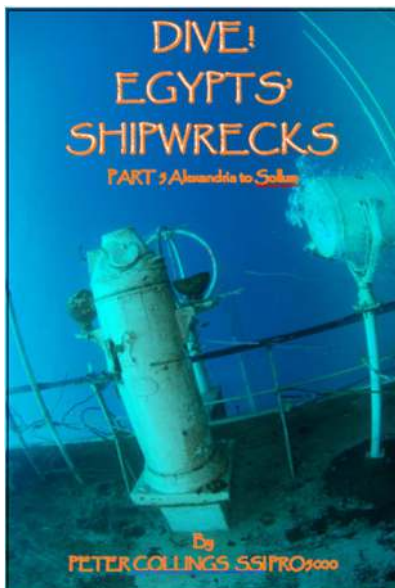
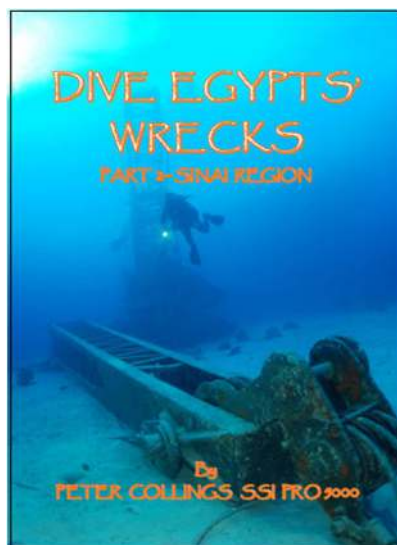


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OUT NOW



30 YEARS OF PUBLISHING

PETER COLLINGS.

Peter began diving in 1970. In 1983 he wrote the first of 12 diving related books and has won several international awards for his publications and underwater photography. His articles and photographs have appeared consistently through the international diving press, including SCUBA WORLD, DIVER, DIVE, SPORT DIVER, SCOTTISH DIVER, H2O, TAUCHEN DYKE & OCTOPUS

A BSAC Advanced instructor, (*Red Sea Wreck Academy*) SSI PRO 5000 DIVER and TDI Advance Trimix diver, Peter has led over 500 wreck and photo safaris around the world, logging over 6700 dives, and along with his regular team of experts has located and identified many of the shipwrecks in Egyptian waters. To date Peter has written and published 33 diving related guide books.



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