

27 February 2012
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Maritime memories

Our seas have been home to many adventures over the years. Ships have sailed far and wide from our ports for centuries, and others have ventured through our waters with tragic consequences.



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Stormy weather
The great storm of 1859 left a trail of devastation along the coast.



The Royal Charter
She survived Cape Horn and storms, only to founder off Moelfre.



Thetis disaster
John Griffiths on Holyhead's role after this submarine disaster.



U-Boat defeat
The story of how the deadly German U-boats were defeated.



HMS Conway
Rugby and rigging - recalling schooldays with a difference.



Nafsiporos rescue
David Evans recounts a famous Moelfre lifeboat operation.



Hall of Fame
Local heroes Titanic officer **Harold Lowe** and lifeboatman **Dick Evans**.



Three Peaks Race
Colin Walker tells us about the history of this land and sea challenge.



Around the world
Holyhead seafarer Sandy Balfour recounts tales from his life on ship.



The SS Pamela
Ken looks for help find out what happened to his father's ship.



The Welsh Navy
Old hands recall the days of the Blue Funnel Line.



The Nafsiporos
The part the Holyhead lifeboat played in the dramatic rescue.



In Pictures
Archive photos showing RNLI crews in action and famous wrecked ships.



Slate cargo
A US shipwreck reveals links to Porthmadog and Blaenau Ffestiniog.



Shipwreck survivors
Read the amazing tale of the Cricieth Castle in the South Atlantic.



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your comments

Annette Edwards Wrexham

On the picturesque St Cwfans island, on Anglesey, `Church in the bay` there is a gravestone for Frank Morley Gurney who drowned in July 1869. I've often visited this lovely place and always wondered about this young man, who was he; what about his family, and more importantly are there any relations around now that probably don't even know that he existed? With a little research I have managed to discover the event that happened all those years ago, and a little

LLEOL I MI  **Gogledd Orllewin**
NEWYDDION LLEOL



- Sardinia: Cymry yn 'ddiogel'
- Pontio: Dim prif weithredwr

more about the young man and his family.

The North Wales Chronicle August 7th 1869 Wreck of a Vessel and Loss of Life. "During a gale on Friday the Iron Barque Dalton (Capt. Towill) bound from Valparasio to Liverpool with a cargo of wheat, copper ore, honey etc was driven out of her course and struck between 12 and 1 o'clock on the rocks near Trecastell in Anglesey. In getting to the boat to save themselves one of the crew was thrown into the water and drowned, and another received very serious injuries from falling to the deck while trying to reef the sails. The ship".

Wed Jun 24 12:26:30 2009

Graham Vine from Woking, Surrey

I read Mary Owens report of the grief felt by her family when HMS Conway broke up. I recall my own sadness when I heard the news although I cannot claim as intimate a knowledge of her as Mary's kin. Conway featured prominently in the view from my bedroom window, on the top floor at 14 Menai View Terrace, and one of her officers was the father of my friend Alistair Wood who lived further along the terrace. During one, wartime, school holiday, it was arranged for several of us boys - all members of the 3rd City of Bangor Sea Scouts - to be given a conducted tour of Conway by Alistair's dad whilst all the cadets were away.

We all met on Bangor pier-head and boarded Conway's tender for the ship. The tender's crew were quite fearsome to behold. They were all Chinese and none of them were clothed from the waist up. This displayed, in their full glory, the numerous bodily mutilations they had sustained during their earlier careers - prior to capture by the Royal Navy! - as pirates on the China Seas ! Huge scars, missing fingers, ears and noses were everywhere. None of them seemed to have escaped the effects of fighting with cutlasses. Despite their fearsome appearance, they were very friendly and treated us boys like little princes whilst we were aboard.

For most of us it was the first time we had ever trod the decks of a man of war and it was, altogether, a most fascinating visit, quite eclipsing my own later visit to HMS Victory. So Conway will always have a very special place for me.

Web team: Read more memories of HMS Conway from the [Old Conways reunion](#).

Wed Feb 18 10:44:52 2009

Mary Owens from Bangor

My grandfather Harry Butler was the "chippy" on H.M.S. Conway and, with my father, watched broken hearted as she broke up. My family have pictures taken by my father of that sad day.

Tue Aug 5 14:09:21 2008

Gill Hughes, Sheffield

Does anyone have any stories about my great grandfather Captain Daniel Mc Neil from Aberdaron and his family? He was from Glasgow, a Master Mariner and married Jane Williams, the then blacksmith's daughter. They raised a family and built and lived in Bell Field (now Henfaes). He

died in 1900.

Wed Mar 7 15:00:18 2007

Jonathan Varcoe from Brockenhurst

Does anyone know anything about Capt David Jenkins of the schooner Heart of Oak from, I think, Bangor, around 1848. He wrote love letters to an ancestor of mine in Pentewan, Cornwall. These letters were found hidden (from her father) in the upholstery of an old chair quite by chance. They are very well written and quite romantic. No long term relationship ensued, as he was unable to get return cargoes to Cornwall before he heard a rumour that someone else was stealing her heart!

Thu Jan 11 09:39:46 2007

Prof. Peter Barrar from Conwy

I was with Blue Funnel in the 1960s, having joined Alfred Holts as an Engineer Cadet. I went to Birkenhead Tech, worked at Odyssey Works and I sailed aboard the Neleus to Australia, the Peleus to Japan and Autolyclus to Borneo. I knew lots of others from North Wales, from HMS Conway and from Maesgerchen, Bangor. We called it the Welsh Navy back then and listening to your first programme brought lots of memories back. My eldest son who is 37 now heard former shipmates talking about places I have told him about over the years - but he never believed, including Boogie Street, now sadly gone. I will look forward to programme 2 and will forward the web address to old friends from my apprenticeship.

Mon Dec 26 18:59:41 2005

Haydn Evans from Criccieth

In answer to Iorweth from Blaenau, my grandfather Gruffudd John Ellis was also on the Miss Morris that day. There was a programme made for television about him. Could anyone help me in finding a copy of this programme?

Wed Dec 7 11:23:37 2005

Dave Percival. Llanyghenedl

The last big parade and service to the memory of the loss of the Thetis was the 60th in 1999. It was attended by as many of the relatives as could be contacted and a wreath was laid on the site by the Moelfre Lifeboat. The service was never anything to do with councillors and myself and other members of the Ynys Mon ex Submariners and organised the ceremony. The consensus of the relatives was that the 60th should be the final one. Despite this the ceremony is still marked every year alternatly in Holyhead and Birkenhead. The Maritime Museum in Holyhead has a large collection of photos etc as does the RNA I have a large collection myself and anyone interest can give me a call.

Sun Dec 4 19:49:42 2005

Peter Roberts, Morpeth

I am searching for information on, pictures of, the Amwlch built PEARL which was once owned/skippered by my Great-grandfather Joseph Hughes of Connah's Quay in the 1890s. I believe she was wrecked at Red Wharf Bay.

Thu Nov 3 15:53:03 2005

Jean Baker, Menai Bridge

Prosiect Menai is a Community Heritage Trust working towards opening a bridges and local history heritage centre/museum on the waterfront in Menai Bridge. We are looking for personal stories/contacts with families connected with a) building Telford's Menai Suspension Bridge (1826) and Stephenson's Britannia Bridge (1852), also families of the seamen who sailed in the Davies family ships from Menai Bridge - grain was exported, wood and guano were imported and people emigrated from Menai Bridge in these ships to Ellis Island and Canada. Some of the ships were also built in Canada. The family shipping business activities dated from 1824 to 1870s-90s. Latterly they shipped coal from Swansea.

Fri Sep 23 08:05:27 2005

Leslie Roberts, Silver Spgs FL & Gananoque Ontari

Two worthy publications are (1) Anglesey and Llyn Shipwrecks by Ian Skidmore Published by Christopher Davies Swansea and (2) Ships and Seamen of Anglesey by Aled Eames first published by The Anglesey Antiquarian Society then the National Maritime Museum.

Mon Jul 4 21:32:18 2005

Iorwerth r Ap Selwyn from Blaenau Ffestiniog

My maternal grandfather Rowland Williams ran away to sea as a sixteen year old (1906). He set sail from Porthmadog in a three masted schooner named Miss Morris. Miss Morris was sunk by a German U boat (U35) off the coast of Spain in 1916, and my grandfather was on board at the time of the sinking. A model of Miss Morris can be seen at the maritime museum, Porthmadog. There is also a video of its sinking at the martime museum.

Wed Jul 30 15:39:26 2003

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The Welsh Navy

Last updated: 31 March 2009

In the sixties and seventies, many young men from north Wales went to sea. Some worked on deck, others were groomed to move up the ranks and become sub-lieutenants or captains.



A new BBC Radio Cymru two-part series features tales of how young men joined the Blue Funnel Line.

The company, based in Birkenhead, attracted so many Welsh recruits in the fifties and sixties that it was renamed the Welsh Navy. Siân Pari Huws presents the stories of numerous Welshmen, many of whom joined the company at 16.

"I always wanted to go to sea," says Dylan Parry, originally from Waunfawr, now living in Felinheli. "A cousin of mine came down from Liverpool, singing the praises of the Blue Funnel Line and how many Welsh lads sailed with them. I went to Birkenhead, to the Odyssey Works, and the first man to greet me was a Welshman called Mr Griffiths, and everyone headed towards him to get a good ship."

Gareth Jones from Caergeiliog has a similar story. "I joined in Birkenhead, and found that there were lots of Welshmen there... from Bangor, Pwllheli and Amlwch."

And for many, who'd hardly ever ventured further than their home patch, the journeys awaiting them were long and wonderful, taking them to places which they could only have dreamt of before, as Tony Jones from Rhiw, Llyn, explains.

"Leave Birkenhead for Curacao, for a bunker - water and oil - through the Panama Canal, over the Pacific Ocean and to three ports in Japan - Yokohama, Nagoya and Kobe. Then Pusan in Korea, Taiwan... and then Hong Kong, the jewel of the east and my favourite port in the far east, then Singapore, Port Sweatnam and Ceylon to finish loading the ship with tea, in chests - tea was light and went on top - Cape Town or Durban then for a bunker and arrive back, docking in Liverpool."

The work was often hard, with the young Welsh lads painting, scraping, cleaning, scrubbing and loading the decks. But they also played hard, as many of the stories reveal. It could sometimes even turn dangerous, as Michael Hughes from Porthmadog found out when he was tied up at gunpoint by pirates stealing cargo from the ship.

There were many Welshmen among the higher echelons as well, with many a Welsh ship captain. Presenter Siân Pari



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Tai Hanesyddol

O blastai crand i ffermydd gwledig, camwch dros drothwy rhai o dai mwyaf hanesyddol yr ardal

Huws' late father, Gwyn Pari Huws, was himself a captain. Trained on HMS Conway and once-member of the Welsh Navy, he was a Marine Superintendent when Siân was growing up in Birkenhead.

Her passion for the sea is something she inherited from him. "It was in his blood," says Siân, who has sailed across the Atlantic on the Tall Ships. "And we were raised on boats. We still keep his boat in Caernarfon harbour and sail it regularly. I'm very comfortable on boats, maybe because it brings me closer to my father. It's an escape isn't it - the freedom and adventure?"

Gwilym Owen, from Llyn, like many others, joined the Welsh Navy because of the close ties many of the ship owners had with the area. Many would then be sent to Aberdyfi to be trained.

"There were two small sailing boats there," says Gwilym. "About a dozen of us would get seven days in Cardigan Bay. I went there for a month and then I was called up to Liverpool."

After a few years Gwilym Owen became a captain with the Welsh Navy.

Meirion Pugh Jones was originally an engineer from Llanbedr, Meirionnydd. He went to sea to avoid joining the forces as part of his National Service.

"I wrote about 20 letters and in the end I got work in Bristol," he says. "When National Service ended, I went from a company that wasn't big to the Blue Funnel company in Liverpool, which was huge."

But how did the Welsh sailors fare on deck? "They were hard workers," says John Maldwyn Hughes, originally from Llanrwst, who was a shipmate with the company. "The sea was their thing. They were lads with the sea in their blood. They understood the work. You could depend on them."

The programme also hears from Captain John Meurig Jones from Llanbedrog; engineer Roberts Arfon Jones from Llangefni; shipmate Gareth Jones from Caergeiliog; Captain Glynn Pritchard who followed his father and brother into the company, and Eleanor Owen, whose husband Gwilym was a captain, who talks about being a sea captain's wife, left behind for months at a time.

- **The programme will be broadcast in English on Radio Wales early in 2006.**
- **[More from Meirion Pugh Jones.](#)**

your comments

Clive Burrows Brisbane Australia

I was delighted to read Chris Keefe (now Powell) from Birkenhead remembered me from 1970 when I was on the Patroclus. I was fortunate to join Blue Flue in Sydney Aus(1969) on the Jason, and spent 3 years UK to Far East on the Talthybius (ex Salina Victory), Patroclus, Perseus, Ulysses, with study time in Glasgow before returning back to Australia in 1971. I would like to catch up with guys I sailed with from UK. Many fond memories of the hard times and fun times.

Mon May 11 10:04:02 2009

Lisa Galley

I am looking for some pictures as a birthday present for my father in law who served on the Patroclus and Perseus, amongst others. His name is John Morgan. Can anyone help me get hold of pictures?

Tue Apr 21 11:44:01 2009

Graham Sawyer now Perthshire then Liverpool

Started out on Patroclus (coast) then Demodocus deep sea, Perseus and Achilles, then Diomed with Menethus in there somewhere. Clearway (car transporter to Lagos) before Glenbeg - Hamburg and paying off. Remember lots of Welsh lads, bosun called Willie Thomas and a steward called Gwynn from Llanfairfechan. Also another steward called Trefor from over Pwhelli way.

Mon Dec 8 09:41:23 2008

Alan English

I joined the Blue Funnel line May 1960 as a deck boy. I remember Jackie Clark steward very well. Unfortunately I broke both my arms outward bound and I was sent home d.b.s from Hong Kong. Jackie was very kind to me. Several years later I met him again whilst sailing on the Newfoundland and then several years later he served me in the Netherton pub. After my accident I continued sailing with Blue Funnel for several years on Autolytus, Anchises, Cyclops and Patroclus. I loved every minute of it.

Fri Dec 5 14:44:11 2008

Paul Everitt from Liverpool

I joined SS Theseus in August 1944 from the Worcester as a Blue Funnel midshipman. I did 3 trips from Durban to Karachi with a full load of mules, donkeys and sheep destined for the 14th Army in Burma.

Thu Nov 27 08:54:19 2008

Des Cooper from Bedford

I joined Blue Funnel Line in 1957. Mr Greenwood, was the man I saw in Odyssey works. He sent me to Aberdovey for 6 weeks. Then I spent 4 weeks with Bosen O'brian in Odyssey works. My first ship was SS Jason, then the Alcinous. The bosen was Bob Parsons. A fine man, and a great bosen to work with. The lamp trimmer was Vic Blower. I had some great days with the Blue Funnel Line. Its a great shame its not there now. Good Luck to all

Mon Sep 8 09:54:12 2008

mike murphy willaston wirral

I went to sea with Blue Flue as a deck boy in 1951. My first

ship the Anchises. We collided with a bamboo raft outside Penang cutting it in half - all survived. On the Ixion we stopped in the Red Sea to give medical assistance to a chief engineer from an Italian tramp steamer unfortunately he died in our lifeboat. I came ashore in 1960 but I would not have missed that experience for anything.s

Mon Sep 8 09:53:19 2008

Don Ratcliffe from Somerset

I went to Aspinal School in Manchester, from 1935 until 1942. At the beginning of the war, we adopted the SS Helenus, the skipper being a Captain Savery, who came to visit the school. we used to send books and knitted articles for the support of the seamen. I was called to the headmaster's study one day and was given an envelope which had come from Durban, [it had a large orange stamp on it]. The envelope contained my father's HP payment book for the radio he had bought on the never-never. What a kind thought! I believe that the Helenus was sunk later on in the war, and Capt. Savery had another ship.

Thu Aug 28 16:26:49 2008

Bob Hughes Newcastle upon Tyne, fathers side Welsh

Is it true that Blue funnel ships would sail really close to the coast of Anglesey, so that family members could wave to their loved ones on the ship? I've also heard that the ships would also sail between the "mouses" and the land. Any comments. If true it must have been a wonderful sight!

Fri Jun 20 09:44:01 2008

Gel Brown from Banchory, near Aberdeen Scotland

I joined Blue Flu in 1965 after serving my apprenticeship with Hall Russells in Aberdeen, first few trips on Denbighshire, then various others including Atreus, Elpenor, Diomed / Glenbeg etc, Left in 1973. First 2/e I sailed under was a Welshman Keith Rowlands from whom I learned a lot, although we may not have seen eye to eye. Happy, happy days and this site has certainly taken me back.

Wed May 7 09:37:36 2008

Menna Lloyd Williams, Aberystwyth

My late brother, Gwyn Lloyd Williams of Anglesey sailed on the Blue Funnel from 1950 to the mid 1960's. Sailed on the Antiochus, Agapenor, Ixion and the Helenus. I have great photographs of these voyages

Mon Apr 7 10:09:18 2008

Chris Powell (nee Keefe) Birkenhead

One of my sisters went out with an engineer from Blue Flu. His name was Clive Burrows. He was Australian and we all remained friends for three or four years until he met his wife Sylvia from Glasgow and they returned to Australia and we have sadly lost touch. I had a sister who was a nurse in the QAs stationed in Hong Kong at the time. It was New Year and Clive's ship had docked in Hong Kong harbour, he took a taxi and found my sister just before midnight. He told her "I've come to wish you a Happy New Year from your Mum". What a lovely man.

Fri Nov 2 09:46:33 2007

Margaret ex-Kremlin

I was brought up in a Blue Flue family - my grandfather served his time with them as an engineer, then owned R M Telfer on Corporation Road, opposite Victoria Dock. Before Odyssey Works was built, Telfers did most of the Blue Flue engine repairs in Birkenhead, and even when Odyssey was in full swing, Telfers picked up the 'rush jobs'. I worked in the Kremlin (India Buildings) for five years, then briefly at Odyssey before my marriage. I remember hand-delivering sailing instructions to a disgruntled captain in Four Crosses on the Lleyn! He was needed urgently, and I happened to be spending the weekend in Aberdaron, so it was on my way. I remember the dockers' strike, when shore staff helped to winch ships out of both Victoria and Albert Docks. I also remember the postal strike, when various members of the Kremlin staff performed a vital daily 'shipping postal service' between Liverpool and London. With my [then] boyfriend I was also present at Lime Street when the relief crew for the 'Agalampus' left on the midnight sleeper. We had spent the evening entertaining the officers with a meal and drinks - all on the company. That was the happiest period in my working life, and I remain a Bluey through and through, even though all trace of the company has apparently disappeared. A David Shepherd print of the Helenus in the Mersy hangs proudly on my dining room wall. Thanks for this page - it's brought back so many happy memories.

Mon Sep 24 12:24:35 2007

John D. Rogers, Nantymoel

Joined in 1960 as a middy on Denbighshire, went to Menelaus, Theseus, Glenshiel and 2 trips on Diomed before going to university to get my BA, then sailing as EDH/AB and switched from teaching English to sailing before the mast - an odd but pleasing mix! A fantastic company, memorable experiences, and no publisher will take my memoirs (well, I have faith in them!).

Wed May 23 09:04:52 2007

Cliff Hand Vancouver Island Canada

When I came out of the Royal Navy in 1948, I joined Alfred Holt's Blue Funnel line as a Junior engineer, first sailing on the new steam ship Perseus, after a couple of trips on that I joined the Diomed the old coal burner where 60 Chinese fireman shovelled 100 ton of coal a day into 18 fires on three Scotch boilers. It was a 9 month trip to Australia via South Africa, and a great old ship and happy crew it was. Next came several trips on the Liberty ships Troilus and Tantalus, and when a 2nd Class ticket came along I joined the Victory ship Memnon, to Java and many ports in that area. After that I was sent to the Glen line and sailed as 2nd Engr on Liberty ship Flintshire for 3 trips to the Far East. I took my 1st Class ticket, and then did some Motor ship time on the Glenshiel, Glengarry, and the Glenroy. Left the company in 1956 immigrated to Canada in 1957. I have happy memories of the time I spent with Blue Funnel it was a great company to work for and they treated us well. I have a book called Ships of the Blue Funnel Line, by H.M.LeFleming. If it is still available. I'd recommend you get a copy.

Thu Feb 22 10:07:37 2007

Sid Davies, Bramhall, Cheshire

In 1944 I was an apprentice on the Brocklebank ship MAIHAR. We loaded coal at Lorenzo Marques in Portuguese East Africa - ending up in Sicily and Italy during the fighting). The blue Funnel ship SARPEDON was there and a fellow ex-Conway boy Parry Williams was on board as an apprentice. As they believed they were bound for the UK I gave him a letter to post from Liverpool to my parents in N Wales telling them of my adventures to date. When I got home 9 months later I asked my mother if she had had a letter from Liverpool and she vaguely remembered an envelope with strips of paper in it with my writing. The postal censor must have got hold of it and cut out all reference to where I had been. Happy days

Tue Jun 20 09:55:39 2006

Lloyd Jones, Llanfairfechan

I am a friend of Victor Brookes, who now lives in Llanfairfechan - he was with the Blue Funnel Line for years, starting as a boy. The Pyrrhus and the Petroculus are two of the ships he recalls. Anyone remember him?

Wed Mar 1 14:24:29 2006

Dave J Evans Penrhyndeudraeth.

I joined the Welsh Navy in 1969 at 15 and a half; I trained at Odyssey works, I then sailed on the Jason which was my first voyage. Taking her to scrap in Taiwan 3 years later, she was a good ship and had many Welsh sailors on board. On one voyage we had 13 out of 52 crew Welsh speakers including the skipper, a Captain Pound, I think he came from Porth Dinorwig. I then joined the Patroclus which also eventually went to scrap. Hence the slow demise of the Welsh navy. It was a good life for us young single lads.

Sun Feb 19 00:43:01 2006

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Rescues at sea

Last updated: 31 March 2006

David Evans from Holyhead was quartermaster at the port for many years. He recalls the day he happened to be home with his father, Moelfre coxswain **Dick Evans**, when the call came in to go to the rescue of a stricken ship.



"I happened to be staying in my parents' house in Moelfre that day. My wife and I were moving from Liverpool to Holyhead a week later and I'd come up to make arrangements. As usual, if the call went out for the Moelfre lifeboat and I was there, I went out with the crew.

We'd just reached the boathouse and changed into dry clothes after a long day's duty on the lifeboat when the call came from the coastguard to go to the assistance of the Holyhead boat. We had to get back into our wet sailing clothes, get back into the boat and sail back round Anglesey towards the Skerries, where a Greek ship, the Nafsiporos, was in difficulties.

There was a hurricane blowing and the lifeboat was like a cork in the water. My father, as coxswain, always said that it was his duty to go to anyone's rescue, but also to keep his crew safe in the process. He was easing the boat over the huge waves when an air vent broke off and fell clean through the deck, leaving a big hole in it. The sea was seeping through and something had to be done before the boat got into serious trouble. So Murley Francis and me, the two youngest members of the crew, crawled out onto the deck and stuffed a pair of oilskin trousers in the hole to plug it. It did the trick, thank goodness.

We reached the Nafsiporos at about 4:30pm. The waves were enormous, but father managed to get alongside the ship ten times so we could pull the crew onto our boat. The final time, our boat landed on the deck of the Nafsiporos, but another huge wave came and swept us off it.



My father received his second gold medal from the RNLI for this rescue, and a year later he was on This Is Your Life. It was one of the proudest moments of my life, and I've been told that it was one of the most popular editions of the programme. People like to

see normal people doing extraordinary things."



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Hall of Fame - Dick Evans.

your comments

Alan Williams, Conwy

I was mate with Capt Jeavons on C.P. Voyager a bit before he retired to Moelfre (I think). He told me he was proud to have been in Mr Evans' crew and that Dick was proud to say he had the captain of an Empress boat in his crew.

Tue Jan 22 15:53:05 2008

Hywel Jones, Port Dinorwic/Cardiff

To Peter Jeavons:- I sailed with your father on two Canadian Pacific ships. He was a special man for whom I had the greatest respect. I have been Captain myself for 30 years - and still at it.

Thu Dec 27 10:57:33 2007

Peter Jeavons

My father, Capt J David Jeavons, was in the crew for the Nafsiporos rescue. He never said too much about the events of the day but I know he felt enormous pride at having served with Coxwain Dick Evans. Ordinary men in extraordinary circumstances or just extraordinary men?

Wed Oct 3 15:49:36 2007

Graeme

My grandfather had a copy of Lifeboat VC which I now have somewhere in my study. It was one of my favourites, no the favourite book of my childhood. I admired Dick Evans' story so much and he was one of the most inspiring people of my childhood in the '80s. I had a mental picture of Moelfre and I was stunned to see how beautiful it was when I first visited in the late 90's. Even more stunned when I broke my leg fishing on the rocks by Moelfre island dreaming about the bit in Lifeboat VC where the boat rides the crest of a wave the length of the island into the lee of the wind.

Tue Feb 6 09:24:22 2007

Jonathan Williams

I am in some way distantly related to "Uncle Dick". We always used to call him Uncle, but in fact I think he was something like my 3rd (at least) cousin. We always used to visit Uncle Dick and Aunt Nansi when we went on holidays to Moelfre in the 90's as my Dad used to go out on the lifeboat with him in the 60s. Sadly, I don't remember all that much as last time I saw him was about 1990 I think.

There is a very good book about him called Lifeboat VC that is probably long out of print, but might be on Google somewhere???

Fri Sep 8 09:36:23 2006

John Thacker, Stoke on Trent

My wife, Children and I met Dick Evans on many

occasions when we visited Moelfre on holiday. What a man! When my elder son was 10, Dick invited us to his home and showed us his medals. My son is now 38, but still remembers that day when the great man treated a 10-year-old boy with such respect. To anyone who met Dick it came as no surprise that he risked his life to save others. To him everybody was equally important. The whole family will be at the unveiling of his memorial next year. He was a credit to his family, to the RNLI, to Moelfre and to humanity. I am very proud that I can say "I met a hero."
Tue Dec 30 20:09:11 2003

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Lives on the line

Last updated: 28 September 2006

Ray Kipling from Poole, former deputy director of the RNLi and author of *Never Turn Back: The RNLi since the Second World War* tells us how a visiting RNLi inspector found himself in the midst of a dramatic rescue on the Holyhead lifeboat.



Harold Harvey was an RNLi inspector for Wales. He'd come out of the navy as a young man and admitted himself that he thought he knew everything but he soon discovered that all the volunteers he was inspecting knew a great deal more than him.

He was only on the Holyhead lifeboat for the rescue that day because he happened to be there inspecting the boat when the shout went up.

The Nafsiporos, a Greek ship, had been monitored over three days as it drifted across the Irish Sea without power in a force 11 gale. The Douglas lifeboat from the Isle of Man was called out to track the ship at first but as it drifted towards Anglesey, Holyhead were called out. Holyhead lifeboat managed to intercept the Nafsiporos in horrendous conditions.

I found a quote from second coxswain Wil Jones from Holyhead who spoke of finding it quite comical that a Pacific liner captain kept on coming up to him, the volunteer, and asking if he knew what he was doing and where he was going. He had to ask him to pipe down - a lifeboat coxswain putting a sea captain in his place!

He also remembers the comedic aspect of the moment when one of the ropes holding the Nafsiporos's life boat snapped so it just swung around on one rope. They tried to tell the Greek crew to cut the other rope and let the lifeboat go but they didn't do it. Wil wasn't sure if it was because they couldn't hear them, or if they couldn't understand their strong Welsh accents!



The ship's lifeboat continued to swing around dangerously so Thomas Allcock, the Holyhead coxswain, gave the wheel over to Harold Harvey so that he could go up on deck. It's not clear whether Harvey took control or whether Allcock gave it up,



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thinking he could do better things on the foredeck - which he did. Allcock and Wil Jones, the other crew member, were amazingly brave on the deck right in the path of the ship's swinging lifeboat.

The ship's lifeboat did eventually crash down on the Holyhead boat, within a whisker of killing Allcock and Jones. Luckily, Harvey saw it in time and threw the boat into reverse so when the lifeboat hit the Holyhead boat it slid off into the sea. He remembers that the oars were sticking through the wheelhouse window.

They then withdrew and the Moelfre lifeboat came in to do a fantastic job in helping to rescue the survivors from the ship.

But even then the Holyhead boat's work wasn't done. The captain wouldn't abandon the Nafsiporos so they had to stay with her all night until a tug came to tow her back to Liverpool. They hadn't just had a very dangerous rescue, but a very long and arduous one too.

All members of both the Holyhead and Moelfre crews were given medals for their bravery - I don't think that's happened since. Harvey and Dic Evans, the coxswain of the Moelfre boat, were given gold medals, Thomas Allcock was given silver and everyone else received bronze.

Ray Kipling

your comments

Imogen Battey, Wareham, Dorset

Harold Harvey was my father. His actions that day certainly helped to save the crew of the Nafsiporos, a fact later recognised by the Greek government. He was humbled by the award of the RNLi gold medal, and instilled in his children a healthy respect for the sea. It is not a coincidence that in retirement I find myself living by it.

Fri Nov 2 09:33:17 2007

Joe Bloggs Anglesey

What, no mention of the HM Coastguard Auxilliaries who were on top of a cliff the whole night freezing in those conditions?

Tue Jun 26 10:09:55 2007

John Williams PA USA

Enjoyed reading the Holyhead great rescue work, As a member of the US Coastguard Auxiliary I can well appreciate what they must have gone through. Back in the nineties I had the good fortune to visit the Blackpool RNLi station and had the pleasure of presenting them with a plaque on behalf of the US Coastguard Auxiliary in recognition of the lives that have been saved by the RNLi. From its inception it has been one of the finest volunteer organisations known to seafarers the world over and has set the standard for others to follow.

Mon Oct 23 10:00:22 2006

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The life of Riley

Last updated: 14 October 2008

Meirion Pugh Jones from Dyffryn Ardudwy shares his experiences of life on board ship, from down in the engine room to trips ashore.



I went to sea by accident! I left my home in Llanbedr, Harlech to serve my apprenticeship in a drawing office in Coventry and it was never my ambition to go to sea.

But funnily enough, a lad who worked with me in the drawing office found his way into the Merchant Navy and I thought, what a great idea - better than 28 shillings a week doing National Service in the army.

So I went for a grading, which was necessary to enter the Merchant Navy. Obviously they preferred people who had done heavy engineering previously; stipulating that being able to run a vessel was desirable. My experience wasn't right for the work and I got a third grading which meant I was unsuitable.

But I didn't give up. I wrote about 40 letters to loads of companies and luckily enough I got an answer from one based in Bristol. They had 16 ships which sailed across the Atlantic to Canada in the summer and east coast America in the winter.

After being with them for two years, it was approaching the time when National Service was finishing, so all the qualified men in the navy who were there dodging national service were leaving in droves and it meant I could leave a smaller company for a larger one and chose Blue Funnel in Liverpool as it was nearer home.

Initially I joined a small boat, an American liberty boat and did a bit of sailing to various places round Indonesia. Then I was given a much better ship, one of the P boats. There were four P boats and I was on the Pelius, a passenger ship which carried cargo and 60 first class passengers. It started from Birkenhead and went round to Japan, taking three months and two days.

On the 5th of each month a P boat left Liverpool, crossing each other at various points round the world throughout the year.

The structure of the engine room was like this: you had the chief engineer, a career man, and then one, two and three engineers. I joined as a junior, assisting the senior engineers on watch. The senior engineers on our ship were Chinese,



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Tai Hanesyddol

O blastai crand i ffermydd gwledig, camwch dros drothwy rhai o dai mwyaf hanesyddol yr ardal

with mostly British crew on deck.

You were on watch at sea and on shifts of 12 hours when at dock to carry out maintenance work. We'd always eat in the saloon with the passengers so we'd always have to change out of our dirty overalls into our whites. We'd usually change into the whites near the Suez Canal when it got hotter, otherwise we'd wear blue uniforms with armbands.

But of course we had time ashore in many ports - Hong Kong, Manila, Singapore. It was very pleasant, an ideal life for a young, single man! I was with Blue Funnel for about three years and the quality of life was excellent. They looked after their men and the men were very loyal, company men.

They operated quite differently to everyone else - they never insured the ships because it was cheaper to build a new ship in place of a damaged one. So we were always on double standby when sailing round the coast of north Wales back to Liverpool. We'd always pick up our own pilot in Holyhead to guide us home.

The ships were in an excellent state. They were steam ships so we didn't need to do an awful lot of maintenance - not like chaps on motor ships who had to overhaul the units in every port. When we'd meet up with them in Singapore all their uniforms would be filthy but we were always lily white!

I left when I was 26 because I wouldn't have made a senior engineer. I took up an operational job, dealing with turbines and boilers at Trawsfynydd nuclear power station, and stayed there for about 33 years.

But it was difficult to settle down because we had a very good standard of living on board ship, with plenty of money in our pockets. So most of us had very good clothes because of Hong Kong - you could get a suit measured in the morning, fitted in the afternoon and be ready to wear by the next day. Most of us had a Rolex watch too - it was a great life.

- [More on the Welsh Navy.](#)

your comments

Merfyn Jones, Liverpool

Very interesting, reading Meirion`s (Life of Riley), tonight. His mother was my Auntie Gwen. We were sorry to hear that he passed away earlier this year. I only got to see him once, at the Power Station. Our daughter Linda was friendly with his wife a long time ago.

Mon Nov 12 09:56:09 2007

Ronnie Foster Ex Liverpool

I sailed on the Peleus with Meirion Pugh Jones. I remember him with affection, singing us home with "Land of our

Fathers" as we approached the pilot station at Holyhead.
Tue Nov 28 10:01:06 2006

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Remembering Dick

Last updated: 28 September 2006

Ray Kipling, former deputy director of the RNLI and author of *Nver Turn Back*, had frequent encounters with gold medal-winning Dick Evans.



I used to be the deputy director of the RNLI and I knew Dick Evans quite well because he was such a great RNLI character and a great teller of tales. He was a great orator and could grasp an audience and reduce them to tears.

There was a wonderful episode when a portrait was commissioned, and we had a ceremony to unveil it in Beaumaris. The chair of the council had to give a speech - in English, which had obviously been written by some official and was a bit tedious. But then he said 'I'm now

going to speak in the language of angels', and launched off into what was obviously an amazing speech in Welsh. Even though we English people present couldn't understand the words we understood the sentiment and the effect it had on everyone - it reduced Dick to tears.

I've written a book about the RNLI - the rescues and the boats are important, but in writing about the actual people you expose the fact that they are just like everyone else. Dick Evans and others are regarded as heroes but they're just ordinary people.

They are all from ordinary backgrounds, doing ordinary things - as vulnerable, frail and open to sentiment as all of us.

Dick would say how worried he was for his family, about his boys who were on the crew with him and for the families of the rest of the lifeboatmen. But he and his fellow crewmen still did these remarkable things.

Dick would talk about a rescue going wrong, especially one where they weren't able to save a little girl and the pain of dealing with her weeping grandfather who came to the boathouse. Dick was very cut up about it - he wasn't a man without feeling. We tend to see lifeboat men as heroes and forget that there's a very human side to them.

Ray Kipling

your comments

No comments have been made on this subject



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What became of the Pamela?

Last updated: 31 March 2009

Ken Hughes from Derby, formerly Bangor, has some sketchy details of what became of his father's ship, SS Pamela, but would like your help to fill in the gaps.



"I don't remember a lot about the sinking of the SS Pamela as I was only three years old when she went down, the youngest of 13 kids living in Maesgeirchen.

I believe when the war started, the Pamela was changed from carrying slate to carrying grain or barley. She used to be based in Penrhyn port.



She left the port of Sharpness on the River Severn at Gloucester on 10 October 1944 carrying a load of barley bound for Liverpool, but she did not arrive.

My family were told she went down in the Channel with all crew lost, including my father, the Captain. Most of the men were from Bangor and I think two were from Holyhead.

The ship's crew included Owen Hughes (Master), H J Lines, R O Jones, S Jones, H E Hughes, W J Stretton and W Thomas.

Does anyone else have any more information about the crew of the Pamela, or what happened to her?"

your comments

Owen Jones from Connah's Quay, born in Amlwch

Sam Jones was my Grand Father. He was one of the crew on the SS Pamela when it sank.

Thu Aug 6 09:29:57 2009

Elizabeth Evans, Y Felinheli

My late uncle John Chubb (bottom left of picture) was a regular member of the crew of the Pamela, but before her last voyage he was persuaded by a local ship's master from Y Felinheli to jump ship and join his crew on the Pool Fisher. According to his certificate of discharge he left the Pamela at Runcorn.

Thu Aug 23 09:43:42 2007

Sandra Rowlands, Bethesda

My father is in this picture. His name was Evan Williams and

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lived in Maesgeirchen. Fortunately he was not on the Pamela when it sunk although he lost many friends. Another of his seafaring pals was John Chubb who also survived.

Mon Feb 26 10:14:27 2007

Glynne Parry -Perth W.Australia

R>O>Jones of the Pamela was my uncle, married to Kate my mother's sister. We lived at Llanfairpwll and as a boy, I can vividly remember the morning we got the news of the Pamela's sinking. Auntie Kate had four young children ,all of whom live on Anglesey. The eldest boy Robert McKenzie Jones and the eldest daughter, Prydwen Hughes still live in Llanfair. Bobby and I were both to join the Royal Navy when we grew up.

Wed Sep 13 13:32:55 2006

Sue Jones Talysarn

I was trying to find out more about my grandfather a first engineer on the ss Pamela William Williams I found a memorial in London with his name on it is the one in Tower Hill. The memorial is called the Debt of Honour memorial and he is on panel 130 he was 57 when he died I am sure that if you look on the net with your relations name you will find that he is on this memorial too.

Tue Dec 20 13:55:42 2005

Jon Shaw, Amlwch

I was one of the first divers to visit a ship wreck six miles north of Amlwch port some years ago. After several dives we identified the wreck as the Pamela of Bangor Port of Beaumaris. An old seaman friend George from Amlwch who has since passed away, told me of the Pamela history, and of once meeting the captain. If any one would like further information ,or even visit the site.

Bangor Port of Beaumaris, a book by M.ELIS-Williams has good photos and story in it.

Sun Dec 11 20:48:04 2005

Derick Thomas, Fleetwood

My grandfather was lost with the Pamela (see above W.Thomas). Bill's name appears on the War Memorial in the Memorial Park in Fleetwood. He was a fireman on the Pamela.

I've researched some aspects of her loss. I hope this info helps. Any other details would be greatly appreciated.

Here is an extract from the Met Office archives for 10/11 October 1944 in the area; "We have hourly wind reports from Holyhead and here is a brief summary: During the early hours of the 11th there was a Fresh wind (Beaufort Force 5) from the SSE. By 6:00 a.m. it had fallen Light, but then during the afternoon increased to a Fresh wind from the NE to SE. Suddenly during the evening it veered to the WSW and increased to fale or even Severe Gale (Force 8/9) for a few hours before moderating to Strong (Force 6) before midnight. "

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency kindly provided the following ... "Built 1921, steel hulled steam vessel, British

flagged, 408 gross tons, single-hatched coaster. Built for Baron Penrhyn of Penrhyn Slate Quarries for the transportation of roofing slates. Ownership past to Anglesey Shipping Co. in 1938. On 10th October 1944 the vessel left Sharpness bound for Liverpool with a cargo of 350 tons of barley, 8 crew and 2 gunners. The vessel left Barry Roads in the afternoon of the same day but never arrived at its destination. A Ministry of Transport Enquiry into the loss was unable to establish a cause. Joint Arbitration Committee consider lost by marine causes. Missing Ship Committee consider lost on 11th Oct 1944 - info from Lloyds War Losses Vol II.

You can get a picture of the Pamela from "Cambrian Coasters" by Roy Fenton. The wreck of the Pamela was located and identified by divers in the late 1990s. It is relatively intact and sits upright on a sandy bottom in 51m of water.

Sat Sep 24 18:06:14 2005

Sue Jones, Talysarn

I have since learned that the Pamela was found approximately 4/5 miles north of Lynas (north coast of Anglesey). The diver had, I have been told, got the ships bell.

Wed May 25 14:19:28 2005

Sue Jones, Talysarn

My grandfather William Williams was the engineer on board the Pamela. She did sail for the Mersey But rough weather overtook her and she sank.

A short while ago some diver diving on a wreck off the north coast of Anglesey claimed to have found her. My son was friendly with them and they said when they'd got some concrete evidence then they would be in contact.

It was mentioned when I was a girl that the Pamela had hatch boards and then canvas secured over this with wedges. Other ships I have known in bad weather, especially grain carriers have had their cargo shift and swell when they got wet. This is the possible answer to her disappearance.

At that time grain was mainly loaded loose into the hold then bags of the same grain packed in to make the cargo more stable. It did not always work.

Fri May 13 11:54:34 2005

Robert Dafydd Cadwalader ex Criccieth

One theory was that she struck a mine. She probably carried slates throughout. The grain would likely to have been a return cargo to get her back to the North Wales area ready to load more slate. If she was converted to grain then a new bulkhead would have been built to lessen the cubic capacity of the hold. Occasional cargoes would entail shifting boards or bagging a layer of grain to lay on the stow to stop it shifting. If this was not done (to save time/money) then a shift of the grain in bad weather could have caused the ship to flounder.

Fri Mar 4 11:42:13 2005

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The Thetis submarine disaster

Last updated: 31 March 2006

John Griffiths is formerly from Holyhead, but now lives in Oxford. He reminds us of the part Holyhead had to play in the Thetis submarine disaster of 1939.

"The Thetis story always fails to mention the fact that the submarine, after beaching at Traeth Bychan, was towed to Holyhead dry dock, where the remaining bodies were removed by volunteers. The old Pontoon House (now demolished) became a make shift mortuary until the bodies were interred at Maeshyfyrd Cemetery.

My mother (now deceased) remembers seeing the bodies being taken along the Turkeyshore Road, whilst my father recalls that the smell of the dead hung over the area for weeks.

The Thetis tragedy always mentions Traeth Bychan - never Holyhead. It is a significant fact many historians ignore - yet one that is a part of the whole story."

your comments

Paul Willson, Victoria BC Canada

The Thetis marker is near my grandparents' plot in Maeshyfyrd cemetery. One person mentioned that the USN rescued a crew in an accident like Thetis. Yes it was USS Squalus, but she lost half her complement due to flooding. The rescue of the remainder was largely due to their proximity to the USN sub base at New London Conn. Allowed a quick response, and it was way too long for the crew.

Tue Apr 14 10:00:54 2009

Dave Griffiths, Holyhead

There is a new book out called Thetis - Slow Death of a Submarine, with a foreword by Len Deighton. It goes into more detail of what happened before, during and after the disaster. Many photos included that I have never seen before. A good companion book to the two others The Admiralty Regrets & Secrets and Scandal. The second is an insight into what happened to the money from the disaster fund and how it was distributed.

Mon Dec 29 10:25:27 2008

Sue Aspinall, West Midlands

My maternal grandfather died on The Thetis and my Mum was the second youngest of 5 girls, she was aged 5 when her Father died and my Nan was left to bring 5 girls up on her own and never remarried. I have never really known



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much about the disaster but I am trying to learn more for My Mum has it had a profound effect on her life not to have a Daddy when growing up.

Tue Nov 11 15:42:27 2008

Tina Cleaver, Birkenhead

My grandfather Robert Kipling was killed on the Thetis. My mum was 6 months old when he died, my nan was left to bring up 4 children on her own, holding down 3 jobs to make ends meet. There were thousands of pounds in a trust fund for these people but my nan told me that if she needed anything you had to go and beg the solicitor in Hamilton Square and you never got much, only half of what you really needed. So many women gave up and struggled on and brought their children up alone. The money disappeared. It's in a bank somewhere, but nobody knows where. I feel that not enough was done to save these men and we should have an inquest into the deaths now and we may see that there was a big cover up and someone should pay for leaving these women to bring all the children up in poverty.

Mon Nov 10 09:41:05 2008

LUKE STEPHENSON

I was at university with the nephew of one of the Lairds employees lost on the Thetis. He, the nephew and his father, were both extremely bitter around the failure of the government of the day to save the crew. There is a catalogue of incompetence and indecision in the whole sordid tale. What a lot of people don't realise is that the US navy saved a crew in much the same circumstances prior to the Thetis incident and, perhaps more sadly, that the renamed Thetis was torpedoed in the Med with the loss of all hands. There can't be many ships in history that have lost two crews! Surely a doomed vessel right from the start.

Fri Jul 18 09:16:50 2008

Cyril Richardson, Walsall

My memory of the Thetis was as a boy of ten who went for a walk up Tower Hill in Abergele with his Mum and Dad and wondered why all the ships were circling at sea in the distance. When I was about thirty I went up again, with my wife and two boys, enthusing about the view and the historic moment I had unwittingly witnessed from near the tower. The unfortunate thing was that we couldn't even see the sea because all the trees had grown much taller. I can tell you we were all puffed and I wasn't very popular.

Tue Apr 29 09:21:48 2008

Rosemary Smyth (Craig) - Australia

My father was stoker James Craig, who died on the Thetis. I was born on January 1st 1940, in Nr Ireland, my mother was two months pregnant with me when he was lost. I had a brother who was seven years older. My mother went home to Nr Ireland for most of the war and brought us back to Gosport just before the war ended. I remember going to the unveiling of the memorial, at the grave, as a young child, and still have the programme of events. My mother and I emigrated to Australia in 1956 and she re-married when I was 19. She has sadly passed away some years ago. I have never been back but my daughter visited the grave in about 1994. She also visited the museum at Gosport, and the

person on duty that day just happened to have been in the boat when they were trying to raise the Thetis, he was eighteen years old at that time. I am deeply moved when I read the comments and when I look up the Thetis website and see the pictures of the tragedy. I have many of these pictures that my mother saved.

Tue Jan 29 09:54:35 2008

Paul Cross, Hull

My Father was thomas George Cross who told me the story of the Thetis saying if things had been different that day I might never have been born. He had an invitation to go on board the Thetis that day from his Uncle who was in some way involved in the building of the submarine. However on the day his Uncle was taken ill and therefore my Father was unable to go on that fateful voyage. I wondered if anyone might have any details of the story and who his Uncle was. Apparently there were official invitations and I wondered if anywhere in the records a list of the invitees existed

Tue Nov 6 10:04:27 2007

David Kelly

My grandfather Frank Bresner who worked at Lairds died on the Thetis and what upset me was the way my Gran had to struggle the rest of her life with little or no assistance. She remained proud of her husband but ashamed of the admiralty and government. Please at least let us remember them all with pride and if any one can help me with dates for memorial services I would be most grateful.

Fri Sep 21 09:56:06 2007

sali, merseyside

there is a museum in Fort Perch Rock, New Brighton dedicated to the Thetis Museum which was put together by the family who live there, all very well presented and respectful, well worth a visit

Mon Jun 25 10:28:32 2007

Anita Bowden Berkshire

Whilst doing family history research I remembered my father telling me about his brother Ernest Mitchell who died in the Thetis disaster. I stumbled across the book The Admiralty Regrets and wow what a read! I swelled with pride reading about the heroics of my uncle, Petty officer Mitchell who I now know was the torpedo gunners mate. At the same time my heart broke to know just how close he came to escape as his was the first body out when they finally managed to open the escape hatch. Thanks to this site I now know about the memorial services and will try for 2009, the 60th anniversary of the tragedy. Some comfort though he may not have made it through WW2.

Fri Jun 22 10:43:33 2007

Elizabeth Mills from Oxford

My great uncle, Captain "Joe" Oram, was one of the very few survivors of the Thetis. He died in his 90s in 1986. His biography was published by Pen and Sword Books, "The Rogue's Yarn" by Wendy Harris. He took the burden of "survivor's guilt" to his grave.

Fri Feb 9 09:06:33 2007

Arthur Williams, Hereford

I was an apprentice fitter at Lairds when the Thetis was lost. I later worked on the refit. Terrible memories, I will never forget, I'm 85 this year.

Tue Feb 6 16:40:56 2007

Hilary Myatt

My Gran and Mum watched the failed attempts to save Thetis from the Great Orme in Llandudno, which overlooks Liverpool Bay, where they were on holiday at the time. My Gran lived in Wallasey, less the 5 miles from Cammell Lairds, was a shareholder in the shipyard and had been to Thetis's launch. My Mum remembered my Gran being very upset at what was going on and the trapped men. Gran also contributed the fund that was set up for the victims' families. My father worked for Lairds for many years, his last day being when the yard closed in 1993 and I often went to the yard with him and saw many vessels launched from the nuclear subs onwards.

Wed Jan 24 12:40:57 2007

Margaret Roberts Anglesey

I well remember the Thetis Disaster since I was a child of seven in Moelfre at the time. The slowness of the recovery ships reaching the sub has been well documented in The Admiralty Regrets, Having realised that no more than the four members of the crew could escape and that the boat had sunk below the surface it was decided to tow the sub along the bottom of the sea tightening the hawsers to lift it and move forward for beaching in Traeth Bychan a small cove between Moelfre and Benllech on the East coast of Anglesey.

I recall my mother pointing at the stern of the sub which surfaced first and then the bow. The first bodies to be recovered were brought ashore on the Moelfre Lifeboat, Coxwain John Mathews, they were carried to Holyhead and it was such an ordeal for the RNLI crew that no further victims would be carried up the slip way. it was therefore decided to beach the Thetis in Traeth Bychan and plug the holes in the damaged hull and then tow the boat to Holyhead.

The sinking of the Thetis was rather hushed up as we were about to go to war in 1939. The ashes of Commander Bolus of the Thetis were buried at sea. 99 men perished on the submarine and a diver working on the salvage lost his life bringing the total to 100 plus the crew which lost their lives in it%2! 0in the Mediterranean when renamed Thunderbolt !

Mon Dec 11 10:51:48 2006

Gerard Sullivan Birkenhead

I was nine years old when this tragedy took place. My abiding memory is the front page picture on the Liverpool Echo that evening. It showed hundreds of mothers and children outside the main gates of Cammell Lairds waiting for news. It is something I will never forget.

Thu Dec 7 16:01:57 2006

John Granter Earle Hastings Victoria Australia

My brother James served in the Royal Navy on Submarines from 1940-1946. Also as a young man I saw the Lloyds

Register with the photo of the piece of Bituminous Enamel that was jammed in the torpedo outer door. However, there was plenty of time to rescue the crew. The powers that be have a lot to answer for.

Mon Jul 10 09:52:09 2006

Haydon M Summerill

My mother (then Winifred Crouch) worked on the repairs to the Thetis but can't remember due to old age where it was docked - can anyone let me know

Thu Jun 29 09:41:10 2006

Sid Davies, Bramhall, Cheshire

I was in school in Llanudno when the maroon was fired to summon the lifeboatmen who launched the boat and went out to where the Thetis sank. Being curious we ran to the pier and the Liverpool tug which had accompanied the Thetis called at the pier and took a local GP out to the scene. I went on HMS Conway at Bangor in 1942 and the chap who was courting the Captain's daughter Rosemary was a Lieutenant Andrews who was eventually the 2nd in command of HMSThunderbolt - as the Thetis was renamed after being salvaged.

Tue Jun 20 09:55:56 2006

Gwyn Roberts of Holyhead

I would like to take this opportunity to let readers of this page know that there is a remembrance day for the lost crew of the Thetis on the first Sunday in June every year. My neighbour has attended the service at Maeshyfryd Cemetery for many years and then the get-together at the Naval club after, where a lot of descendants meet up. I'm sure if the Maritime Museum was contacted they could give some information about the event.

Mon Jun 5 09:43:38 2006

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