



**Old Conways &
The Battle of Jutland 31st May 1916 v8
(by Alfie Windsor (64-68))**

Old Conways' Roll of Honour

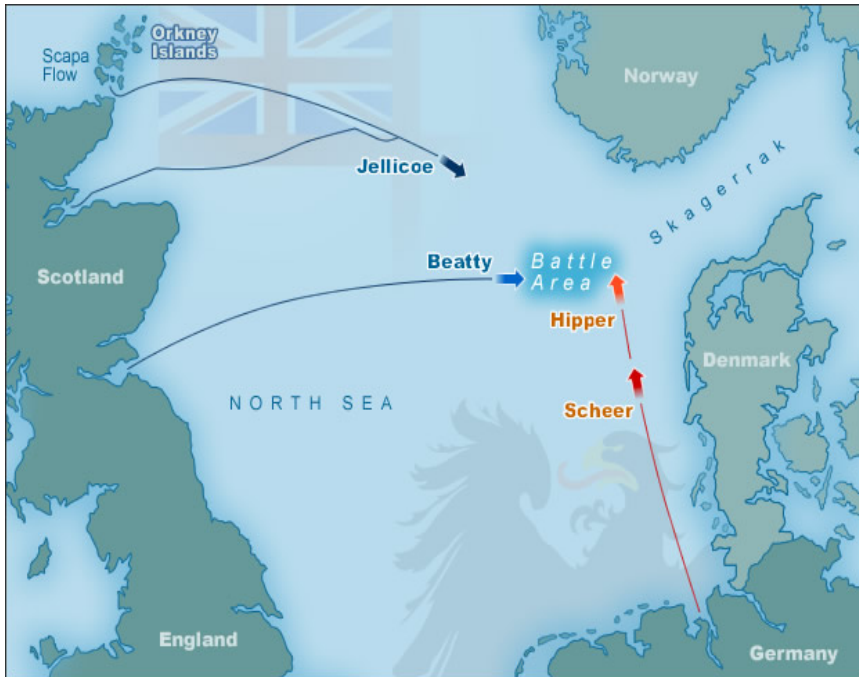
The following old Conways are known to have been killed in action at Jutland:

Midshipman Eric James **Davis** RNR (14-15) aged 16
Harold Victor **Guest** RN (14-15) aged 16
Midshipman Paul, George **Hopcraft** RN (13-14)
Sub Lt Derrick **Jauncey** RNR (10-12)
Sub Lt George **Patterson** RAN (10-12)
Sub Lt Francis Thomas **Phipps** RN (12-13)
Sub Lt George Robinson **Renshaw** RNR (1893-95)
Lt Neville **Seymour** RN (11-13)
Midshipman Thomas **Smith** RN (11-13) aged 19
Lt A N **Swainson** RN (1870-73)

Other Old Conways At The Battle of Jutland

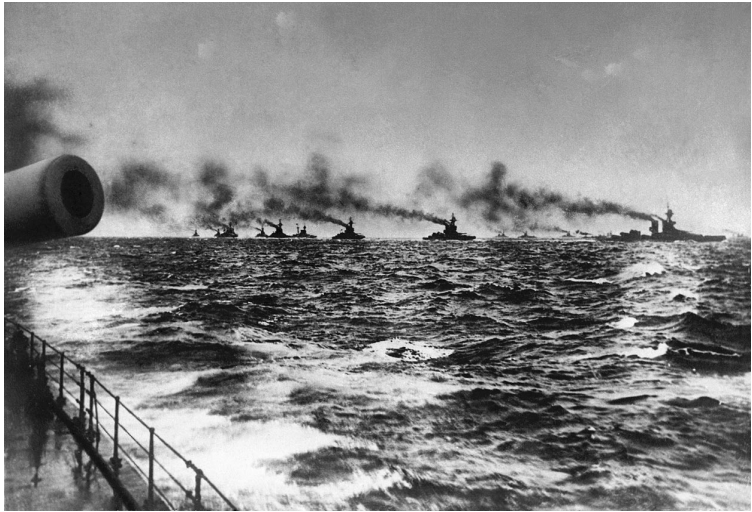
Midshipman Reginald G. **Arnot**, RNR (11-14).
Sub-Lieutenant L **Barradell** RNR (08-10)
Sub Lt E S **Brand** OBE RN (09-10)
Midshipman Shaw Brook **Butler** (11-13)
Herbert Joseph **Giles** OBE RD RNR (1888-89)
Midshipman F C **Harding** RN (08-10)
Cdr Henry **Hughes** (1892-94)
Sir R. **Irving** OBE RD RNR (1892-93)
Lt D **Jones** (06-07) RN
Lt D M **Kelly** RN (00-01)
Lt W G **Lalor** RNR (06-08)
Sub Lt C V **Marsden** RN (10-12)
Midshipman B R **Mordaunt-Smith** RNR (12-15)
G **Overton** (09-11)

“They’re Out!”



In 1916 the British Grand Fleet under Admiral Sir John Jellicoe and the Germany’s High Seas Fleet under Vice-Admiral Reinhard Scheer were the most powerful fleets in the world. A major naval battle seemed inevitable yet both sides were reluctant to commit. Scheer knew they were unlikely to beat the much larger British Grand Fleet, whilst Jellicoe realised that destruction of the German fleet would not harm her war effort, while British defeat would cause Britain to lose the war. Jellicoe could contain Scheer simply by sitting in port and maintaining “*The Fleet In Being*”. However if Scheer ventured out then Jellicoe had to engage and, at least, not loose the battle .

Scheer's only route to success was a major engagement that would at least inflict heavy losses on the Jellicoe. The initiative lay with Scheer and his plan was to lure



parts of the Grand Fleet into action and destroy them piecemeal. He decided to lead the whole of the German High Seas Fleet out into the North Sea in order to attack Admiral Beatty's battle cruisers based in Rosyth. However his communications were picked up, word spread quickly "They're out!". Every sailor from the Admiral to the youngest ship's boy knew that a major engagement was imminent, the result could even decide the outcome of the war. The whole British Grand Fleet put to sea to intercept the German High Seas Fleet. The British steamed eastwards across the North Sea in two groups - the battle cruiser fleet from Rosyth to the south commanded by Beatty scouting in advance, and Jellicoe's main battle fleet from Scapa Flow moving south and east to intercept. The Germans sailed north from Wilhelmshaven in a similar formation, with Hipper's fast battle cruisers steaming ahead of Scheer's main fleet. At some point the battle cruisers should meet and draw the two fleets of battleships together.

*Above: The Grand Fleet Sails South
Below: The High Sea Fleet Sails North*



Contact

At 1415 hrs the British destroyer *Galatea* signaled Beatty: "Two cruisers, probably hostile, in sight..." At 14:32 Beatty ordered a course change to south-southeast to investigate with *Barham* in the lead. By 1520 Beatty and Hipper had made strong visual contact and the Battle of Jutland (German: Skagerrakschlacht) commenced; the largest battle in naval warfare history in terms of the numbers of battleships and battle cruisers engaged and the only full-scale clash of battleships in World War I. Old *Conways* (OCs) were in the thick of the fighting.

The Run To The South

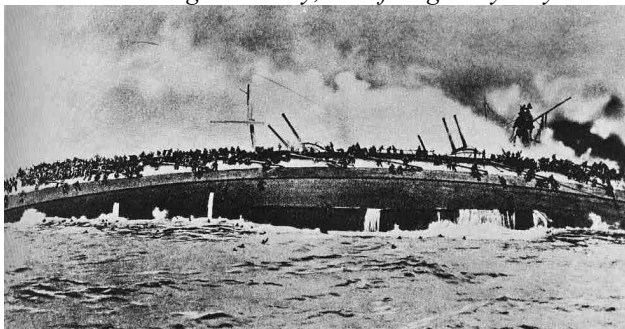
In accordance with the German plan when Hipper encountered Beatty he turned south to draw the British battle cruisers onto the main German fleet. At 1548 hrs, with their ships roughly parallel and approximately 18,000 yds apart Hipper opened fire, followed by the British. *Indefatigable* was at the rear of the line opposite *Von Der Tann*. At 1602 hrs, a hit on her fore turret penetrated the *Indefatigable*'s magazine, blowing the ship in half. She sank in three minutes with a loss of 1,017 crew leaving just two survivors. Included in the losses were *Conway* term mates Midshipmen Eric James **Davis** RNR (14-15) and Harold Victor **Guest** RN (14-15) both aged just 16.



Indefatigable Sinking

Midshipman F C **Harding** RN (08-10) was in *Indomitable* serving in the after conning tower and "saw everything from the beginning to the end. It was a very fine sight to see our battle cruisers chasing the enemy, both fring away very hard at each other."

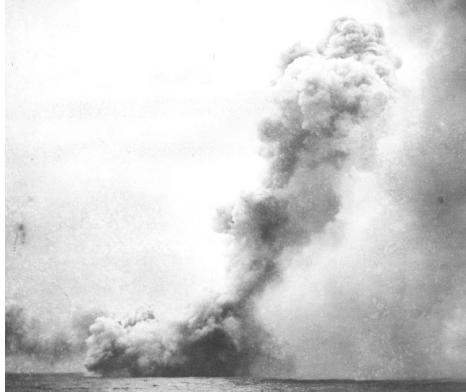
Blucher, last in the German line had disabled Betty's flagship *Lion* but suffered severe damage herself. *Indomitable* engaged *Blucher* and helped to sink her.



Blucher Sinking

The 5th Battle Squadron "*fired with extraordinary rapidity and accuracy*" (according to Scheer), damaging the battle cruisers Lützow and Seydlitz and a number of other German warships. Three of the British cruisers were hit. Lt A N **Swainson** RN (1870-73) was lost in the destroyer *Hydra* (1st Destroyer Flotilla), while fighting as part of the screen for the squadron.

Fire intensified as more ships engaged. *Queen Mary*, the second ship in the British line, had engaged with *Seydlitz* and knocked out one gun but had been hit twice in return. At 1616 hrs she was also engaged by *Derfflinger* whose first shot hit the face of 'Q' turret knocking out the right-hand gun. The two squadrons were gradually edging closer to each other and by at 1625 hrs the range had reduced to 14,400 yards. Beatty wanted to slow the German 'retreat' towards Scheer so he could avoid a full



Queen Mary Blowing Up

scale encounter until Jellicoe and the main fleet arrived so at 1625 hrs he ordered his ships to alter course to broaden the gap between him and the Germans. Around 1626 hrs, as the British altered course, *Derfflinger* hit *Queen Mary* twice more. One shell hit forward and detonated one or both of the forward magazines, which broke the ship in two near the foremast. A further explosion, possibly from shells breaking loose, shook the aft end of the ship as she began to roll over and sink. 1,266 crewmen were lost including Midshipmen Paul, George **Hopcraft** (13-14) and Neville **Seymour** (11-13).

The Run To The North

At 1630 hrs Beatty's ships sighted the main German fleet so they turned and raced north at top speed in order to draw the Germans onto the Grand Fleet. A running battle ensued.

As the fleets converged Hood's 3rd Battlecruiser Squadron entered the fray. A chaotic destroyer action ensued, enveloped in mist and smoke, as German torpedo boats attempted to blunt the arrival of this new formation, but Hood's battle cruisers managed to dodge all the torpedoes fired at them. In this action, after leading a torpedo counter-attack, the British destroyer *Shark* came under intense fire. A shell hit her bridge, putting her steering gear out of order, and very shortly

afterwards another shell disabled the main engines, leaving the vessel helpless. Her after gun was hit, and its crew killed. Finally *Shark* was struck by a torpedo and went down with her ensign flying and one gun still firing. Midshipman Thomas **Smith** RN (11-13) aged 19 was one of those lost. By a sad co-incidence he had written to *Conway's* Captain



Shark Pre War

Superintendent on 19th May paying his years' subscription to the *Conway Club* and complaining "*everything here is just the same, rather monotonous ... but still not tired of waiting for the Hun. They may arrive some day – I hope they will*".

Shaw Brook **Butler** (11-13) was serving in the destroyer *Obedient* with the 12th Destroyer Flotilla along with Midshipman Reginald G. **Arnot**, RNR (11-14). They were approaching from the north providing a defensive screen for the main fleet. He reported "*We were steaming along with the main battle fleet when the signal came through that the battle cruisers were in action with the enemy's battle cruisers. Everyone then prepared for immediate action. Soon firing was heard ahead and a little later the battle cruisers hove in sight, firing hell for leather at the enemy which we could not yet see although we could see the splashes of their salvoes around the battle cruisers.*" The fleet deployed into line with the battle cruisers ahead of the battle ships. "*We were on the engaged side of the rear of the line and all the ships were now firing as rapidly as possible at the enemy who were plainly visible. Sometimes as many as 14 battle ships were visible at the same time but varied as the thickness of the haze did.*"

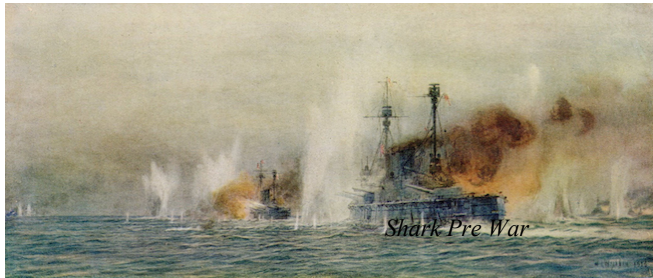
Meanwhile Sub Lt E S **Brand** OBE RN (09-10) was at his action station in the gun control tower of the battleship *Valiant* but despite coming under heavy fire he his ship escaped unharmed. He was recommended for promotion because "*He was of the very greatest assistance to the gunnery officer throughout the action*"



Valiant At Jutland

“Windy Corner”

More and more British ships were engaging. Admiral Arbuthnot in *Defence* signaled “I am engaging the German battle fleet”. **Butler** in *Obedient* observed that “Some of our cruisers who were

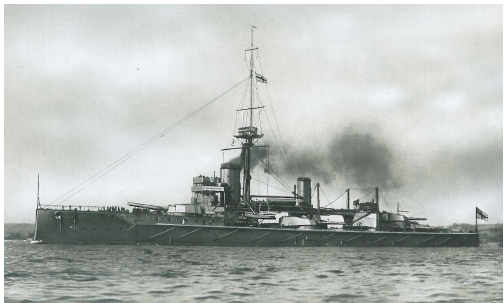


Defence followed by Warrior

caught between the lines were receiving the concentrated fire from a good many of the enemy's battleships”. Another observer in *Obedient* reported “Out of the mist there appeared the ill-fated 1st Cruiser Squadron led by the *Defence*. At first, she did not seem to be damaged, but she was being heavily engaged, and salvos were dropping all around her. She was hit her just abaft the after turret, and a big red flame flashed up, but died away again at once. The ship heeled to the blow but quickly righted herself and steamed on again. She was hit again between the fo'c'sle turret and the foremost funnel. At once, the ship was lost to sight in an enormous black cloud, which rose to a height of some hundred feet, and from which some dark object, possibly a boat or a funnel was hurled into space, twirling like some gigantic Catherine-wheel. The smoke quickly clearing, we could see no sign of a ship at all - *Defence* had gone. Mercifully this death, by which her 900 or so officers and men perished was an instantaneous one, causing them probably no suffering.”

Four OCs were lost in *Defence*; Sub Lts Derrick **Jauncey** RNR (10-12) George **Patterson** RAN (10-12), Francis Thomas **Phipps** RN (12-13) and George Robinson **Renshaw** RNR (1893-95).

Mordaunt-Smith RNR (12-15) in *Colossus* “saw the poor old *Defence* go up with a tremendous explosion. First of all her stern blew up, but she still continued firing with her forward guns until the next salvo came along and blew her up completely. There was nothing left of her.”



Colossus

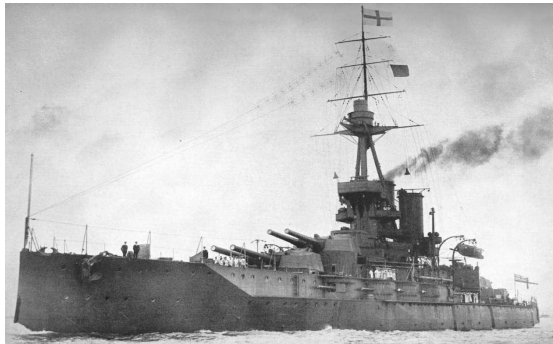
Crossing The “T”

At 1500 hrs Midshipman B R **Mordaunt-Smith** RNR (12-15) approaching in the dreadnaught *Colossus* was on watch on the Fore Bridge, when the signal was received to “*prepare for immediate action ... of course we were greatly surprised*”. By 1700 hrs he “*could see the firing of our own ships on the horizon. It was a very pretty sight ... with great bursts of flame and huge columns of water shooting up.*”

At 1814 hrs the Grand Fleet approached the scene and, two large-caliber shells fell near Jellicoe’s flagship *Iron Duke* but caused no damage. Herbert Joseph **Giles** OBE RD RNR (1888-89) was serving in *Iron Duke*. Fifteen minutes later, *Iron Duke* had closed to effective gunnery range - some 26,000 yards (24,000 m) - of the German fleet and fired on the dreadnought SMS *König*. Her first salvo fell short, but the next three were on target; scoring seven hits on *König* and inflicted significant damage

At 1817 hrs Cdr Henry **Hughes** (1892-94), Navigating Commander in *Revenge* (1st Battle Squadron) plotted a course correction SE by E with “*shots falling all around the ship*”. *Revenge* was one of the few British vessels sustaining no damage and receiving no casualties during the battle. At 1824 hrs the battleship *Agincourt* opened fire on a German battle cruiser with her main guns and on German destroyers with her six-inch guns. Lt W G **Lalor** RNR (06-08) “*ably performed his duties as a turret officer,*” and was specially promoted to Lieutenant for these services. Meanwhile,

Colossus fired on a German cruiser at very close range leaving her a burning wreck. However, the German plan seemed to be working but they were taken completely by surprise when drifting clouds of smoky mist parted and they found themselves facing the massed firepower of the entire Grand Fleet approaching in main battle line. A highly confused battle ensued with Captain Craig of *Barham*



Above: *Iron Duke*
Below: *Agincourt*



observing afterwards “*whilst the general trend of the action remains clearly fixed in the memory, it is impossible to reconstruct it strategically or tactically, owing to the difficulty of seeing the enemy, and to the lack of knowledge of the movements or positions of our own squadrons*”.

The two main battle fleets were now fully engaged with Jellicoe (steaming east) effectively "crossing Scheer's T" as the Germans steamed north. Lt D **Jones** (06-07) RN was in *Inconstant* (1st Light Cruiser Squadron) which led the whole fleet as the “Crossing” began.



Crossing The T

Butler in *Obedient* reported that “*The Germans then made a feeble destroyer attack .. the big ships fired at them and those not sunk made off one was disabled ... we went over .. and sank her*”.

At 1833 hrs, realising he was heading into disaster, Scheer ordered his fleet to turn and flee. Under a pall of smoke and mist, his forces disengaged by an expertly executed 180° turn in unison (“*battle about turn to starboard*”, German “*Gefechtskehrwendung nach Steuerbord*”), a well-practiced emergency manoeuvre of the High Seas Fleet. **Butler** again: “*The Germans were in a nasty state, practically every ship I could see was badly on fire. They all turned to starboard together with the aid of a smoke screen and were lost in the mist*”.

By 1830 hrs **Mordaunt-Smith** RNR (12-15) in *Colossus* was in charge of “*the left gun in the after turret*” when she opened fire with 12” shells on a cruiser directly ahead, setting her on fire. They turned their attention to a Destroyer steaming straight at them at tremendous speed and after a few rounds blew her up. Next they

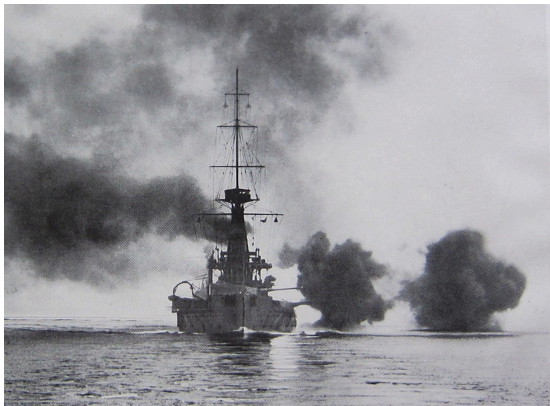
targeted a battle cruiser which had been firing at them for some time. *“I had been watching her shots gradually creeping nearer for some time and juts as we opened fire she landed one large shell on our forward superstructure which exploded ... caused great havoc sending all the neighborhood to atoms”*. *Colossus* returned fore and soon the German was on fire fore and aft. They then engaged another battle cruiser and *“some of the battleships in the distance”*.

G Overton (09-11) in the battleship *Temeraire* with Lt D M **Kelly** RN (00-01) reported that *“we were rather busy during the action and it was a bit exciting at times”*. They opened fire at 1834 hrs on the German *Roon* at a range of about 8,000 yards while narrowly avoiding four German torpedoes.



Above: Temeraire
Below: Colossus Firing

Meanwhile *Colossus* engaged and sank a destroyer steaming at top speed straight at her, and then engaged two battle cruisers and a number of battleships. She suffered several direct hits in the process. *Temeraire* joined her attack on the battle cruisers *Wiesbaden* and *Derfflinger* and some destroyers, firing seven salvos at a range of about 12,500 yards.



S Butler (11-13) was in the destroyer *Obedient* shots were falling all around her but she escaped largely unharmed firing a departing coup de grace on a German battleship.

At 1900 hrs **Mordaunt-Smith** RNR (12-15) in *Colossus* reported *“I saw one of the most beautiful sights that anyone could imagine. We were firing at the German Fleet at the edge of the mist when our battle cruisers suddenly appeared on the scene out of the mist firing at a tremendous speed. Just at this moment the sun came out and lit up the whole scene. It really was magnificent. We could plainly*

see the German Fleet in the distance with shots falling all around them and their guns belching forth for all they were worth. Two or three big ships were on fire." Colossus then came under very heavy fire receiving direct hits forward just abaft the Fore Bridge, and by the funnel. "A lot of damage was done by smaller gun-fire and splinters from the big guns. I never imagined that splinters from a shell could rip the iron plating of the ship's side so easily". She stopped firing at 2100 hrs as "the enemy slipped away from us under cover of the mist which had hampered us all through the action".

At 1911 hrs, **Giles** in *Iron Duke* opened fire with her secondary battery on the disabled German cruiser *Wiesbaden* and nearby destroyers at a range of 9,000 to 10,000 yards (8,200 to 9,100 m). *Iron Duke's* gunners claimed to have sunk one of the destroyers and hit a second, but they had in fact missed their targets entirely. Shortly thereafter, the German destroyers attempted to launch a torpedo attack on the British line; *Iron Duke* began firing again at 1924 hrs. The sinking of the destroyer *S35* is credited to a salvo from *Iron Duke*.

Night Fighting

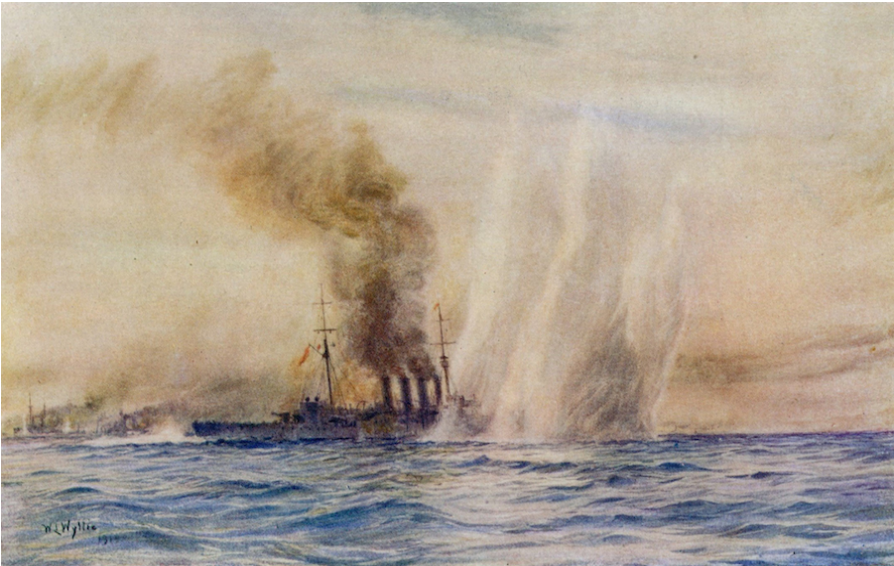
With darkness setting in the fleets inevitably began to lose touch with each other. Fighting continued through the night amidst great confusion as both fleets began a series of manoeuvres with Scheer seeking to break away and Jellicoe, reluctant to fully engage at night, sought to keep in touch while avoiding torpedo and destroyer attacks. To the south the cruiser *Black Prince* stumbled into the heart of the German battleships was caught in their searchlights and destroyed.



Black Prince Caught in the searchlights

Butler explained “It was near 10pm and the CinC so disposed the fleet that our destroyers were in a position to guard our fleet from destroyer attacks ... we took our positions for the night and an awful night it was too. At about 11pm firing broke out abeam. We could not tell a bit who or what it was. At midnight it broke out again and lasted much longer. Torpedoes were seen to explode and one ship observed on fire. Searchlights were used and swept around onto us ... a few shells came our way ... so we turned away.”

Sub Lt C V **Marsden** RN (10-12) in *Southampton* was wounded when she was heavily damaged in action with a group of light cruisers. He was transferred to hospital at Londonderry House and made a good recovery by August.



Southampton Straddled During The Night Engagement

At 0200 hrs destroyer *Obedient* came upon five battleships on an opposite course. **Butler** recalled “We were about to attack them with torpedoes when they turned off ... we steamed around and met them a few minutes later and passed down their line firing our torpedoes.” One hit the *Kaiser* amidships, the flame ignited a magazine and she blew up. *Obedient* was lucky to escape when the remaining four battleships focused all their fire on her. In his post battle dispatch Jellicoe noted “The destroyers were under a heavy fire from the light cruisers on reaching the rear of the line, but the *Onslaught* was the only vessel which received any material injuries. In the *Onslaught* Sub-Lieutenant Harry W. A. Kemmis, assisted by Midshipman Reginald G. **Arnot**, RNR (11-14) the only executive officers not disabled, brought the ship successfully out of action and reached her home port.”

Other OCs AT Jutland

OCs Sub-Lieutenant L **Barradell** RNR (08-10) and Sir R. **Irving** OBE RD RNR (1892-93) also fought at Jutland but no information about their ships has been found.

Aftermath

Butler again: *“The next morning we joined some battleships and swept over the battle area. A zeppelin was sighted which we fired at: she made off. As there was no sign of the enemy anywhere we returned to our base”*.

Harding in *Indomitable* took the damaged and listing flagship *Lion* under tow and reached Rosyth on 2nd June.

By 0520 hrs on 1st June Scheer had escaped and his fleet was safely on its way home to port. The Germans, with a 99-strong fleet, sank 115,000 long tons of British ships, while the 151-strong British fleet sank 62,000 long tons of German ships. The British lost 6,094 seamen; the Germans 2,551. The battle was widely viewed as indecisive although both sides claimed a costly victory. Scheer, knowing his depleted fleet could no longer defeat the British fleet, switched to unrestricted submarine warfare in the Atlantic.

Harding observed *“It was all very exciting of course at the time, but afterwards one thinks of the poor fellows who must have drowned or burned”*.



Admiral Jellicoe's Commendation of Conway Cadets

On 3rd July 1916 Jellicoe wrote to *Conway's* Captain Superintendent about the battle saying *“... the record of (your) 'Old Boys' ... is one of which the MMSA may well be proud and I can assure you that the splendid work of those in the Grand Fleet and in the Auxiliary Services associated with the fleet is most appreciated by me and by the other officers with whom they have served”*.

A Link to Jutland

In November 1949 the sister of J S Kirkpatrick (13-15) who had been lost at sea presented the Ship with a gong in his memory. It was made from a shell case fired at the Battle of Jutland. It was hung in the Shore Mess Deck.