

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

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

Report Title:

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## **1.0 Abstract**

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

This project is to discover information relating to the history and sinking of the SS Korsnaes off Bardsey Island, Caernarvonshire in March 1917, (MADU Ref. 405).

The SS Korsnaes a cargo steamship was built as the SS Vale in Bergen, Norway by Bergens Mekaniske Verksteder A/S – BMV in 1891. The SS Vale was sold and renamed several times before being finally named the SS Korsnaes. In March 1917 while sailing to Liverpool, SS Korsnaes was stopped by the German U-boat UC-65 before being scuttled.

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

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### 2.4 Contributors

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

## 2.5 Abbreviations

MADU                      Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit

## 2.6 Appendices

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### **3.0 Introduction**

The SS Korsnaes was chosen as:

- it covered a period of sea history from the very late 19<sup>th</sup> century to WW1.
- for the circumstances of how it was sunk.
- it was a similar ship and time to other ships I had researched from the MADU Wreck list.
- I live overseas online information would be my priority research tool and similar to my previous research a ship from this period should be reasonably well documented online.

The following topics form the basis of the research:

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

## 4.0 Background

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

**Table 1: Extract from MADU Master Wrecksite Database**

MADU Ref. No.	Date Wrecked	Name	Location 1	Location 2	Vessel Type	Matls	Ref.
405	24/03/1917	Korsnaes	Caernarfonshire	Lleyn Pen. Bardsey Island 3M SWS	Steamship	Steel	rl

In March 1917, the SS Korsnaes while sailing to Liverpool from St Malo was stopped by the German U-boat UC-65. The crew were removed from the ship before the SS Korsnaes was scuttled (Fig 1).

**Fig 1: Location of SS Korsnaes Wreck, off Bardsey Island, Caernarvonshire**



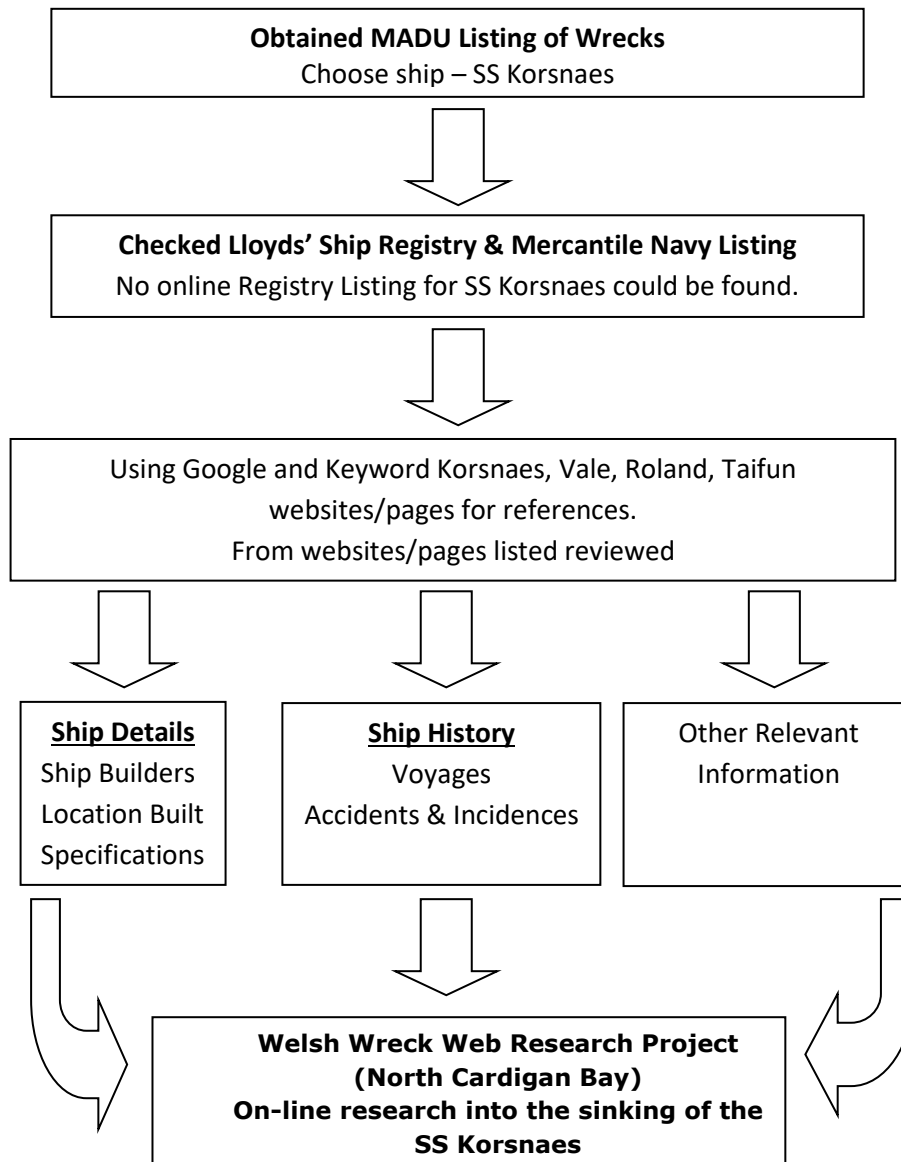
## 5.0 Research Methodology

### Computer System

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

Search engines used: Google Chrome

### Methodology



**This report has been written using the ship name as it was at that time**

**See Section 9 for list of websites viewed**



## 6.0 Results

**Table 2: SS Vale (later named Roland, Taifun, Korsnaes) Specification and History**

Vessel	Name/s	Vale		
	Type	Steamship		
		General Cargo		
Built	Date	Laid Down: N/A		
		Launched: 1891		
		Delivered: 1891		
		Cost: N/A		
	Builder	Bergens Mekaniske Verksteder A/S – BMV		
		Bergen, Norway		
Construction	Materials	Steel		
	Decks	N/A		
	Bulkheads	N/A		
Propulsion	Type	Screw		
	Details	1		
Engine	Details	Type: 3 cyl trip exp.		
		Size: N/A		
		HP: 100		
		Manufacturer: Bergens Mekaniske Verksteder A/S – BMV		
	Boilers	N/A		
Drive	Type	Single shaft		
	Number	1		
Dimensions	Length	201ft	1ins	61.3 m
	Beam	28ft	2ins	8.6 m
	Draught	11ft	2ins	3.4 m
Tonnage	Gross	730		
	Net	405		
Owner	First	Giertsen Johan C (SS Vale)		
		Bergen, Norway		
	Last	Eriksen & Andersen (SS Korsnaes)		
		Bergen, Norway		
	Others	Lindvig A. O., Kragero, Norway (SS Roland) Lindvig Johs, Kragero, Norway (SS Taifun)		
Registry	Port	Bergen		
	Flag	Norway		
	Number	N/A		
History	Routes	Scandinavia, U.K		
	Cargo	Coal, Salt, etc		
Final Voyage	From	St Malo		
	To	Liverpool		
	Captain	Hilmar Froisland		
	Crew	N/A		
	Passengers	0		
	Cargo	In Ballast		
Sinking	Date	24/03/1907		
	Location	52.43.30N, 04.52W; 3 miles SWS of Bardsey Island		
	Cause	Scuttled by German U-Boat UC-65		
	Loss of life	0		
	Outcome	Sunk		

## 7.0 Analysis

- The SS Vale was built by Bergens Mekaniske Verksteder A/S – BMV, Bergen in 1891.
- On Jun 11 1909, the SS Vale was sold to Lindvig A. O., Kragero and renamed SS Roland.
- On Aug 15 1912, the wife of the captain of the SS Roland who was travelling onboard with their children was killed in a dockyard incident at Boston Harbour, Lincolnshire.
- On Dec 16 1913, SS Roland was taken over by Lindvig Johs, Kragero, Norway and on Jan 1<sup>st</sup> 1914 renamed the SS Taifun. Newspaper records show the SS Taifun to ply routes between Scandinavia and the U.K.
- In July 1916, SS Taifun was sold to Leif Eriksen, Bergen.
- On July 20 1916, SS Taifun was sold to D/S A/S Korsnæs (Eriksen & Anderson), Bergen and renamed SS Korsnaes. Newspaper records show the SS Korsnaes to ply routes between Scandinavia and the U.K.
- On March 24 1917, SS Korsnaes sailing in ballast from St Malo France to Liverpool was stopped 3 miles SWS of Bardsey Island, Caernarvonshire by the German U-boat UC-65 (Appendix A).
- The crew were removed from the SS Korsnaes before it was rigged with explosives and sunk.
- The SS Korsnaes was one of 3 ships reported as stopped and scuttled on March 24 1917 by UC-65. Two other ships were sunk on the same day by the UC-65.

**Table 3: UC-65 Specification and History**

Vessel	Name/s	UC-65
	Type	UC 11 submarine
Built	Date	Ordered: Jan 12 <sup>th</sup> 1916
		Launched: July 8 <sup>th</sup> 1916
		Delivered: Nov 7 <sup>th</sup> 1916
		Cost: N/A
	Material	Steel
	Builder	Blohm & Voss, Hamburg; Yard #281
	Owner	Imperial German Navy – Kaiserliche Marine
Dimensions	Length	50.35 m
	Beam	5.22 m
	Draught	3.63 m
Tonnage	Gross	427t (surface); 508t (submerged)
Propulsion	Type	2 x propeller shafts
Engine	Details	2x6 cyl, 4-stroke diesel, 600PS 400 kW; 590 shp) 2 Siemens-Schuckert electric motors, 620 PS 460 kW; 610 shp HP: 500
	Speed	12 knts (surface); 7.4 knts (submerged)
	Range	10,420 nat miles at 7 knts surface; 52 nat miles at 4 knts submerged
	Depth	50m
	Crew	27
Armaments		6 × 100 cm (39.4 in) mine tubes 18 × UC 200 mines 3 × 50 cm (19.7 in) torpedo tubes (2 bow/external; one stern) 7 × torpedoes 1 × 8.8 cm (3.5 in) Uk L/30 deck gun
Captains		Kptlt. Otto Steinbrinck, 10 November 1916 – 31 July 1917 Kptlt. Max Viebeg, 1 August – 3 September 1917 Kptlt. Claus Lafrenz, 4 September – 3 November 1917
Operations		11 patrols
Victories		105 merchant ships sunk 116,218 grt 11 merchant ships damaged 64,712 grt 1 warship sunk 11,000 grt 1 warship damaged 850 grt
Wrecking	Date	3/11/1917
	Location	50°31'N 00°27'E.
	Cause	Torpedoed by HM SubC15
	Loss of life	22 dead and 5 survivors
	Outcome	Wreck. UC-65 lies at a maximum depth of 50m

- On 1 February 1917 Germany declared a renewal of 'unrestricted submarine warfare' in a last ferocious attempt to force an end to the First World War.
- Almost immediately, major losses of merchant ships occurred in Welsh waters. Thirteen ships were sunk off Bardsey Island and the Pembrokeshire coast in that month alone – all by the U-boat, UC-65, captained by Otto Steinbrinck, one of the most successful German U-boat commanders of the war.
- UC-65 also patrolled in the North Sea, and coast of France.
- On Nov 3 1917, at 16h45, HM Sub C-15 (Appendix B) fired two torpedoes and obtained one hit on the stern of UC-65, which sank immediately (Appendix C). Only the five men on

the bridge (incl. Commander Lafrenz) survived, the rest of the crew, 22 in total, were killed.

**Table 4: C-15 Specification and History**

Vessel	Name/s	HMS C15 (Appendix C, D)	
	Type	C-class submarine	
Built	Date	Laid Down: Jan 7 <sup>th</sup> 1906	
		Launched: Jan 21 <sup>th</sup> 1908	
		Delivered: Apr 1 <sup>st</sup> 1908	
		Cost: N/A	
	Material	Steel	
	Builder	Vickers, Barrow	
	Owner	British Royal Navy	
Dimensions	Length	142 ft 2.5in	
	Beam	13 ft 7in	
	Draught	11 ft 2in	
Tonnage	Gross	287t (surface); 316t (submerged)	
Propulsion	Type	1 x electric motor	
Engine	Details	1x16 cyl Vickers petrol engine 600 bhp, 450kW	
		300hp, 220 kW electric	
		Speed	12 knts (surface); 7 knts (submerged)
		Range	910 nat miles at 12 knts surface; 52 nat miles at 4 knts submerged
	Depth	100 ft	
	Crew	16	
Armaments		2 × 18 in (450 mm) bow torpedo tubes 800 yards @ 26.5 knots, 118 lbs. wet gun-cotton warhead 2 reloads	
	Outcome	Scrapped Feb 1922	

## 8.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

The project took approximately 2 working days with half of that time spent on on-line research.

I set out with the goal of researching the history of the SS Korsnaes with basic information provided. Reading the report here, I believe I have collated sufficient information on the history of the SS Korsnaes from when it was built to her sinking off Bardsey Island in March 1917.

I have also added some information on U-boat UC-65 which was responsible for the sinking of the SS Korsnaes and on C-15 the Royal Navy submarine that sank the UC-65.

As the SS Korsnaes was a Norwegian build ship basic information was obtained from data already compiled. Newspaper articles were again thin on information.

An information package for the wreck of the SS Korsnaes is available for purchase at <https://www.wrecksite.eu>

Many different WebPages were viewed ranging from large organisations e.g. Lloyd's Registry Listings to smaller WebPages such as local history or people with a given interest in a subject. The quantity and quality of the WebPages appeared depended on the targeted audiences and the amount of work undertaken.

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

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

From the research conducted, setting a goal and how to reach that goal should be mapped out first. Careful use of specific words in search engines is very important. In the case of the SS Korsnaes the ship had previously sailed under 3 different names.

## 9.0 References

### 9.1 Online WebPages

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

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

Keyword: SS Vale, SS Roland, SS Taifun, SS Korsnaes; Years 1891-1917

<https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/271659/details/korsnaes>

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

[http://www.maritimequest.com/warship\\_directory/great\\_britain/submarines/pages/c\\_class/c\\_15\\_page\\_1.htm](http://www.maritimequest.com/warship_directory/great_britain/submarines/pages/c_class/c_15_page_1.htm)

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

[https://uboaat.net/wwi/ships\\_hit/3385.htm](https://uboaat.net/wwi/ships_hit/3385.htm)

<https://uboaat.net/wwi/boats/?boat=UC+65>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_shipwrecks\\_in\\_March\\_1917](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_shipwrecks_in_March_1917)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS\\_C15](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_C15)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SM\\_UC-65](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SM_UC-65)

<https://www.wrecksite.eu/wreck.aspx?154977>

### 9.2 Personal Correspondences

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

### 9.3 Publications

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

## Appendices:

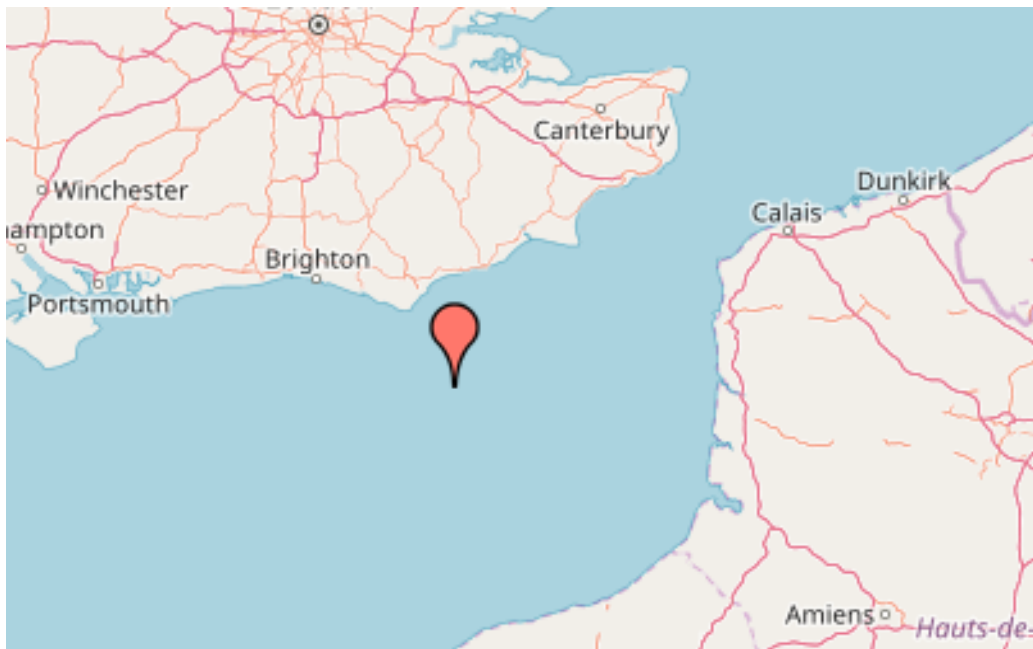
### Appendix A: UC Class Mine laying U-Boat 1917



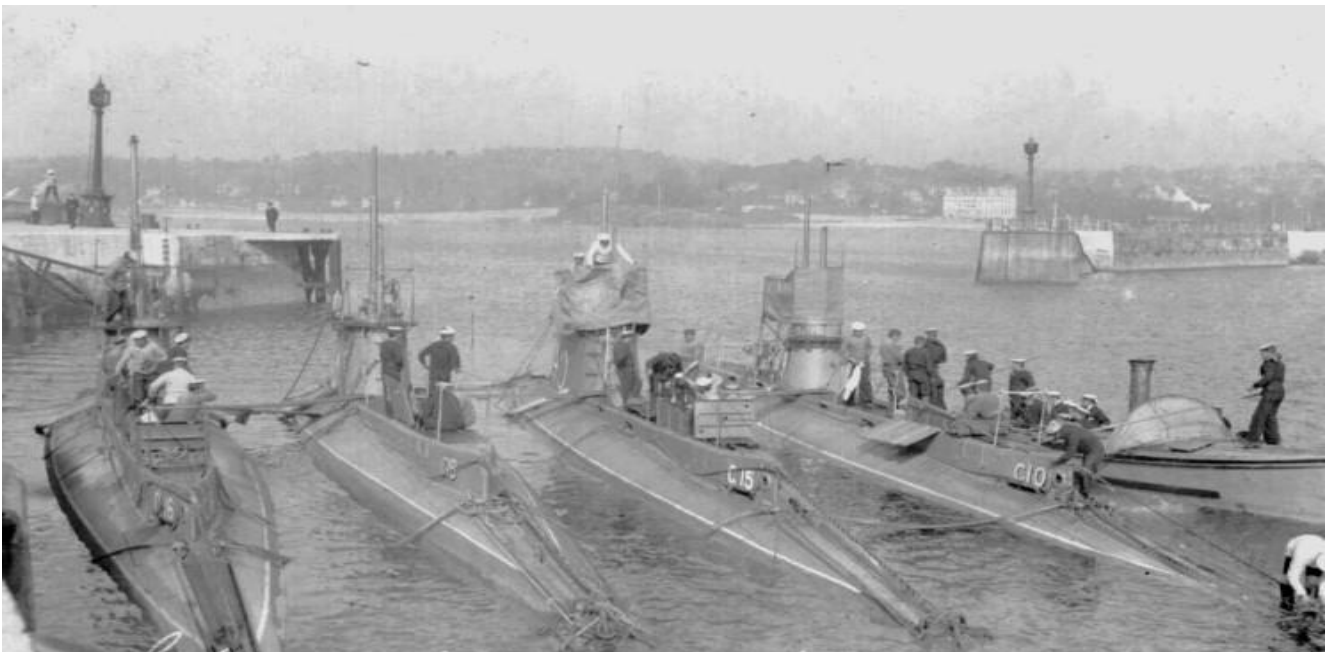
### Appendix C: C-15 at Sea



### Appendix C: Location of UC-65 Wreckage, English Channel



### Appendix D: C Class British Submarines



From left to right; HMS C-16, HMS C-18, HMS C-15 and HMS C-10 at Torquay, England.