



MERCHANT NAVY

**Second World War
Tour of Merthyr Dyfan
Cemetery, Barry**

1939-1945

Revised and updated

Cyfeillion Mynwent Merthyr Dyfan



Friends of Merthyr Dyfan Cemetery



The Barry Memorial to the Merchant Seamen
at the Civic Offices in Holton Road, Barry.

Special thanks from the
Friends of Merthyr Dyfan Cemetery to the
staff at Barry Town Council.

The Merchant Navy Commonwealth War Graves at Merthyr Dyfan Cemetery, Barry.

There are 14 Commonwealth War Graves in this Cemetery dedicated to the Merchant Navy in the Second World War. Not a high number for a town that lost more Merchant Seamen proportionately than any other port.

The reasons are simple; most died at sea, victims to drowning, exposure and enemy fire. The substantial memorial (opposite) is dedicated to the Merchant Navy and can be found outside the Vale of Glamorgan Civic Offices in Holton Road, Barry and illustrates the scale of loss.

Around 360 men and boys didn't return to Barry some dying on their first and only voyage.

In total around 32,000 British merchant seamen died as a direct or indirect consequence of the war. 2,426 British registered ships were lost of all shapes, sizes and types. Also some 5,000 men were taken prisoner. About 1 in 3 ships that sailed from Barry fell victim to the enemy.

Life in the Merchant Navy was tough with long hours on minimum wage and with no paid leave on returning to port. The obligations of the ship-owners to pay crew wages ceased when a ship was sunk. Only those who survived a trip received their wages in full.

The Merchant Seamen kept Britain fed, kept the factories supplied and moved the weapons of war to where they were needed. They braved the sea in all its fury and the U boat packs that sought to starve us into defeat.

This is our small tribute to the men buried in Merthyr Dyfan Cemetery, Barry. Not all from our town but who are now forever part of it.



The tour. See map middle pages.

We enter the Cemetery and turn left at the Royal British Legion cross. Follow the path west to section O1.

There are 2 memorials in this section.

1. **Francis William Hammill Grave O/588 S.S. Fort Marin.**
Greaser. Died 30/05/1946 Age 37.

Francis was the son of William and Mary Hammill of Barry Dock. He served as a Greaser on the S.S. Fort Marin. This was built in Vancouver in 1943 and broken up in 1966. Men from Barry predominantly worked below as Donkeymen, Trimmers, Greasers and Firemen. If a ship was struck by torpedo they had a far less chance of making it out of the ship.

2. **George Peter Tong. Grave O/758 S.S. Empire Runner.**
Chief Engineer Officer. Died 16/04/1946 Age 41.

George was the son of Harry and Anna Tong and married to Cecelia Tong of Hamrun, Malta. He served on the S.S. Empire Runner which was a small coastal vessel taking coal from Barry to Hayle, Cornwall for use in the power station. Coal was seldom moved long distances in the war by train as the rail system had to move other essentials.

Apart from its officers the Merchant Navy had no recognised uniform.

As soon as war broke out the authorities devised a badge to be worn on the lapel to prevent any unfortunate mistakes by shore men.

The badge is a distinctive "MN" surrounded by a rope surmounted by a Tudor naval crown.



Head northwards towards the larger section R.

There are 7 memorials in this section

3. **August Jorgensen Grave R941 S.S. Söborg.**
Able Seaman. Died 06/04/1942 Age 35.
4. **Svend Hansen Grave R1031 S.S. Söborg.**
Donkeyman. (A rating that attends to the donkey boiler and helps in the engine room) Died 06/04/1942 Age 22.
5. **Askel Frederiksen Grave R1123 S.S. Söborg.**
Able Seaman. Died 06/04/1942 Age 17.
6. **Borge Herskind Grave R1215 S.S. Söborg.**
Fireman. Died 06/04/1942 Age 35.

These four Danish seamen lost their lives in April 1942 when the British registered vessel S.S. Söborg exploded. They are buried in a group together in section R. The body of a 5th Danish member of the crew was repatriated later and a sixth body was never recovered.

7. **Danish Memorial Stone**

The names of all six are separately commemorated on a grey granite memorial placed on the repatriated grave. It was unveiled by the Danish Ambassador, Count Eduard Reventlow in April 1948.

The stone was funded by donations from the surviving crew, the Free Danish Movement in London and Danish seamen visiting South Wales.



Danish Memorial at Merthyr Dyfan Cemetery

The S.S. Söborg was a coal carrier taking coal to Iceland to bunker the ships for the Murmansk convoys. The crew lost their lives when the stern was badly damaged after being bombed. The ship caught fire and the crew tried to escape from their quarters in the stern but got trapped in the portholes. It was believed to then have suffered an ammunition explosion. The Söborg managed to make port and went into dry-dock for repairs.

8. **Herbert Leslie Dickinson. Grave R1589 S.S. Carare**
Writer. Died 28/05/1940 Age 38.

Herbert was the son of Herbert and Lilian Dickinson. He served on the S.S. Carare which was an Elders and Fyffes banana boat. As Writer, he was responsible for keeping records on personnel, the movement of the ship, cash accounting, pay and allowances. Also the loading and unloading of supplies and helping to protect the ship from damage in conflict.



S.S. Carare

There were 97 crew and 29 passengers on what was to be her last voyage as she set sail from Avonmouth on the afternoon of 28th May 1940 .

The ship struck a mine in the Bristol Channel killing seven of the crew; including Herbert and three passengers.



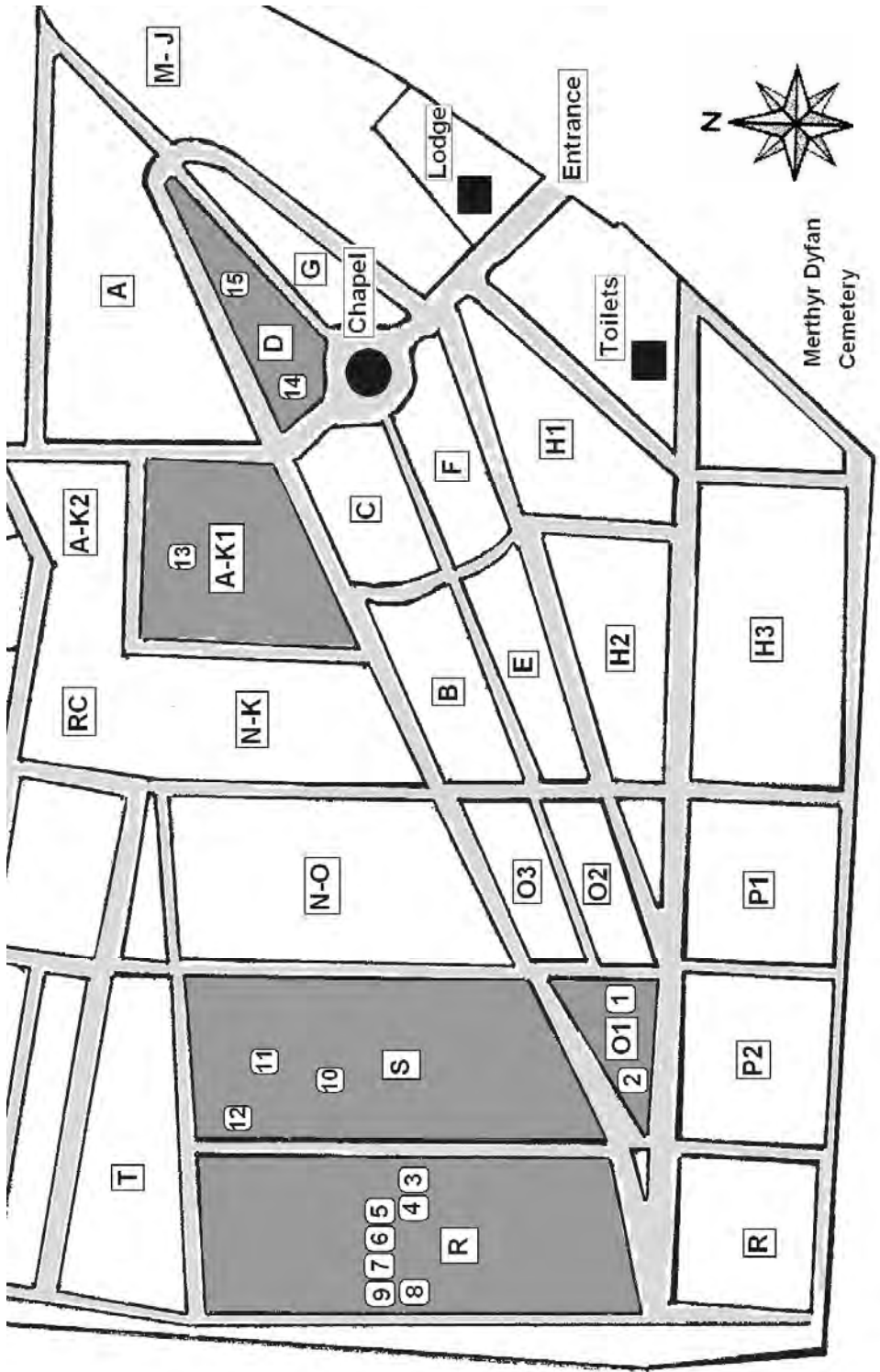
The Saloon of S.S. Carare

The survivors were picked up by a naval patrol boat and taken to Barry Dock.

S.S Carare

These pictures were probably taken from the naval patrol boat that rescued the survivors on that fateful afternoon 28th May 1940.





List of Seaman

1. Francis William Hammill.
2. George Peter Tong.
3. August Jorgensen.
4. Svend Hansen.
5. Askel Frederiksen.
6. Borge Herskind.
7. Danish Memorial Stone.
8. Herbert Leslie Dickinson.
9. James Yeoman.
10. Stanley Jeavons.
11. Percival Harry Bloodworth.
12. Ernest Edmondson.
13. Andrew Albert John Hunter.
14. Patrick Joseph Coleman.
15. Patrick Joseph Lucey.

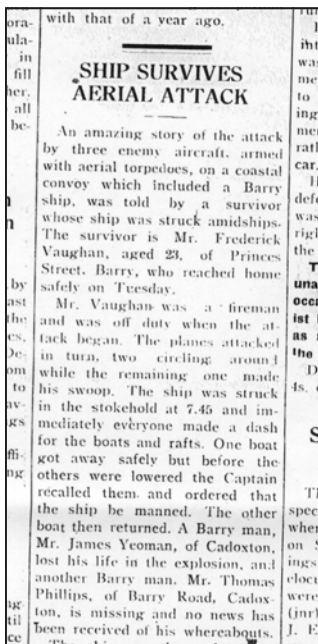
9. James Yeoman. Grave R1496 S.S. Lieutenant Robert Moray.

Fireman and Trimmer. Died 10/02/1942 Age 25.

James (Jim to his family) was from Cadoxton and the son of James and Teresa Yeoman and the husband of Audrey Yeoman of Birkenhead. He served as a fireman and trimmer on the S.S. Lieutenant Robert Mory. This was a 3,176 ton steamship.

An eyewitness account was reported in the Barry and District Newspaper on Feb 12th 1942 and described how the ship was attacked by 3 enemy aircraft whilst on a coastal convoy. "The planes attacked in turn two circling around while the remaining one made his swoop. The ship was struck in the stokehold at 7.45."

James lost his life in the ensuing explosion. The ship was taken in tow and after 36 hours reached port.



Barry and District News 12th Feb 1942.

Head toward section S, the next block.

There are 3 memorials in this section.

10. **Stanley Jeavons. Grave S570 S.S. A.D.C 527.**
Ordinary Seaman. Died 08/01/1946 Age 19.

Stanley was the son of Tom and Emily Jeavons of Barry Island. The S.S A.D.C 527 was en route from Silloth in Cumbria to Cairnryan near Stranraer in Scotland. This is the port from where sea dumping of superfluous munitions took place after the war.

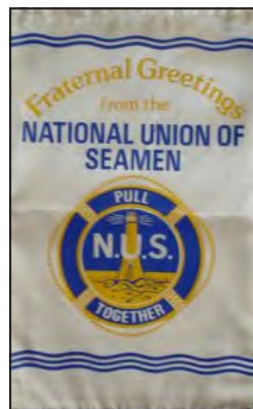
11. **Percival Harry Bloodworth. Grave S438 M.V. Empire Jet**
Chief Steward. Died 24/9/1946 Age 63.

Born and educated in Dursley, Gloucestershire, Percival married Marguerita of Barry Dock. In his earlier life he worked as a waiter in the Railway refreshment room and perhaps it was his association with the railway that brought him to Barry. He lived in Barry Dock from 1928 and served on the Motor Vessel "Empire Jet", a tanker built in 1941 by the Blythswood Shipbuilding Co. Scotstoun.

He died at 63 after a prolonged illness, he was a Chief Steward and his seafaring life spanned some 47 years. The Secretary of the National Union of Seamen, a Mr Bennett, attended his funeral.

The **National Union of Seamen** was the principal Trade Union of merchant seafarers from the 1880's to 1990.

In 1990, the union amalgamated with the National Union of Railwaymen to form the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT).



12. Ernest Edmondson. Grave S942 M.V Fishpool.

Died 21/11/1940 Age 42.

Ernest was the son of Thomas and Jessie Edmondson and was married to Elizabeth. Born in Yorkshire, his father was a hydraulic machine attendant. Ernest served on the M.V. Fishpool, a remarkably unfortunate vessel. In November 1940 she was bombed by German aircraft in the North Atlantic whilst on her maiden voyage out-bound in ballast. Captain Hill, 10 officers and 16 men were killed including Ernest. She was abandoned and eventually towed back to the Clyde.

The Fishpool was bombed again, set alight and sank by German aircraft in July 1943. She was carrying 1,000 tons of aviation spirit and 4,000 tons of munitions.



Whilst Ernest's grave is listed as a Commonwealth war grave, it does not have the standard Commission grave stone, it may be he was lost at sea.

Ernest Edmondson S942



S.S. Fishpool

Head back towards the Chapel to section A-K1

There is 1 memorial in this section

13. **Andrew Albert John Hunter. Grave K409 S.S. Tyndall.**
Carpenter. Died 27/01/1945 Age 26 (marked unknown)



Andrew served on the cargo ship S.S. Tyndall. We were originally unable to trace any information on Andrew or the S.S. Tyndall.

With the kind help of Keith Greenway from Barry Merchant Navy we can now confirm that Andrew is commemorated on the **Shetland Roll of Honour.**

Andrew Hunter

Andrew was the son of Andrew and Agnes Hunter from Garth, South Nesting, Shetland. He was married to Emily Dunn.

Andrew died at Barry Dock as a result of illness caused by exposure following shipwreck. Aged 26 years according to the Shetland Roll.



Head past the Chapel to section D

There are 2 memorials in this section

14. Patrick Joseph Coleman. Grave D48 S.S. Fort la Traite
Donkeyman. Died 15/9/1944 Age 38.

The son of John and Ellen Coleman, he married Nora Coleman of Barry Dock. He served on the S.S. Fort la Traite, owned by Evan Thomas Radcliffe Ltd. of Cardiff. She was built in Vancouver in 1942 and broken up in 1972 . The gross tonnage was 7,134 tons.

15. Patrick Joseph Lucey. Grave D159 S.S. Westdale.
Able Seaman. Died 10/04/1942 Age 50.

Patrick was the son of Michael and Joan Anna Lucey.

He married Mary Christina Lucey (nee Mahoney) of Scilly, Kinsale, Co.Cork, Irish Free State in 1925 in Hampstead, London. He served on the Liverpool registered S.S. Westdale.



S.S. Westdale



The Friends of Merthyr Dyfan Cemetery is a loosely bound collection of groups and individuals who care for the cemetery and wish to improve awareness of this priceless asset. Membership is open to all. The “Friends” was established in 2007.

Details available from :-

Nic Hodges, Chairman Friends of Merthyr Dyfan Cemetery,
C/O Barry Town Council,
7 Gladstone Rd,
Barry.
CF62 8NA.

Can we thank the following for their invaluable assistance.

All the staff of Barry Town Council.

Especially those at the cemetery. www.barrytowncouncil.gov.uk

Commonwealth War Graves Commission. www.cwgc.org

Merchant Navy Association. www.mna.org.uk

Merchant Navy Association (Wales).

Patron. The Rt.Hon The Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas P.C. A.M.
The Presiding Officer, National Assembly for Wales.

Barry Merchant Seamen website. www.barrymerchantseamen.org.uk

The archives of the “Barry and District News”.

The Vale of Glamorgan Library service. www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

All our friends in “Friends of Merthyr Dyfan Cemetery”.

Barry Town Council for the use of the town crest.

The Authors.

Nic Hodges is a Councillor on Barry Town Council and the Vale of Glamorgan Council. He is the current Chairman of “The Friends of Merthyr Dyfan Cemetery” and was the Mayor of the Vale of Glamorgan in 2006/07.

He co-authored this and the first booklet in the series –“**First World War Tour of Merthyr Dyfan Cemetery, Barry**” with his wife Shirley Hodges who is also a Councillor on Barry Town Council.