

# THE SALVAGING OF THE SCUTTLED GERMAN HIGH SEAS FLEET AT SCAPA FLOW (1924-1939) by Ian Taylor, CEng, FIMechE, MRINA

This is the story of the scuttling and subsequent salvage of the German Fleet. The story starts at the Battle of Jutland on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1916 and is followed by scenes of the German Fleet's ignominious surrender and internment at Scapa Flow. On 21<sup>st</sup> June 1919 the Germans took advantage of the guarding British Fleet being absent on exercises and scuttled their whole fleet comprising 16 capital Ships, 8 Cruisers and 50 Destroyers totalling nearly half a million tons. It was the largest mass sinking in maritime history.



German Battleship SMS Bayern sinking



Battlecruiser SMS Hindenburg listing badly



SMS Kaiserin breaking surface.

The author recently appeared on the BBC in the "Great British Home Movies Roadshow" with Dan Cruickshank, where extracts from his unique privately owned film were shown. Ian's grandfather was Chief Salvage Officer in charge of the operation, and Ian has inherited this unique film and numerous technical diaries and photographs of the salvage.

Some ships that sank in shallow water were raised by conventional salvage methods but the deepwater wrecks were considered to be impossible to be salvaged.

This is the story of how the "impossible" was achieved. The author has also collected archive film of the German Fleet's surrender, and added some background on the Battle of Jutland.

The presentation would comprise a "Powerpoint" slide show showing in simple terms how the ships were salvaged, followed by the films taken prior to and during the Salvage of the German Fleet in the inhospitable waters of Scapa Flow