



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUD ANCHOR RECOVERY EXPEDITION 2012

Archaeological expedition to recover anchors from the 1916 gun running ship the *Aud* at its wreck site at the entrance to Cork Harbour

An archaeological expedition to recover two anchors from the wreck of the 1916 gun running ship the *Aud* is scheduled to take place on Tuesday the 19th of June 2012. The expedition team, comprising interested individuals from Cork, Kerry and Waterford, is jointly led by Dungarvan diver Eoin McGarry and marine archaeologist Laurence Dunne who is based in Tralee. The *Aud* anchors recovery expedition is licensed by the State and is the culmination of over two years preparatory work that included a number of preliminary dive surveys, research and maritime archaeological input. It is intended to recover a stockless anchor from the bow as well as an admiralty pattern anchor.

The eight member archaeological dive team will deploy from Cobh and operate from the Youghal based vessel the Seahunter while the Rón Carraig will undertake the lift recovery. Both vessels are operated by Gavin Tivy. A third boat the Harpy operated by Carroll O'Donoghue from Kinsale will also be in attendance with members of the Fenit Heritage Association on board.

The expedition will also be monitored by the Underwater Archaeology Unit of the National Monuments Service of the Dept. Arts Heritage & Gaeltacht.

Historical Context

The *Aud* was originally named the *SS Castro* when it was built in Kingston-Upon-Hull in 1910. At the outbreak of WW1 it was captured by the Germans and renamed the *SMS Libau*. In 1916 Sir Roger Casement secretly arranged for the transport of 20,000 captured Russian rifles, 10 machine guns and 5 million rounds of ammunition to Fenit Harbour, Tralee Bay, Co. Kerry to arm the Irish Volunteers. It was decided that Casement would travel to Fenit separately by



U-Boat. The *Libau* was disguised as a Norwegian ship and renamed the *Aud* and the secret gun running mission was led by Captain Karl Spindler with a volunteer crew of 22.

After an amazing circuitous journey from Lubeck as far as the Arctic Circle the *Aud* steamed south past Rockall and along the west coast of Ireland. Having successfully evaded a number of British Navy patrols the *Aud* anchored off the Magharee Islands in Tralee Bay on Holy Thursday the 20th April 1916.

For a number of reasons the *Aud* never landed its cargo and Casement who was landed by U-Boat U-19 at Banna Strand never rendezvoused with it and was himself almost immediately captured. After leaving Tralee Bay the *Aud* was captured by a British Naval flotilla off the SW coast of Ireland and escorted to Cobh (Queenstown) in Cork. At the entrance to Cork Harbour, not far from Daunts Rock, Spindler and his crew donned their German Kriegsmarine uniforms and ran up their colours before scuttling the *Aud*. They were subsequently interned for the rest of the war.

A documentary about the *Aud* is also being undertaken and filming of the raising of the anchors will take place in association with George Clayton who has published a book on the *Aud* and who is also a member of the recovery expedition. Two descendants of the crew of the *Aud*, John and Fred Schmitz, will also be in attendance having travelled from New Jersey for this historic archaeological occasion.

It is hoped that the expedition will receive an Irish Naval escort into Cobh.

On arrival in Cobh the anchors will be inspected, filmed and photographed before being lifted into purposely built tanks and transported to Tralee by Moriarty Engineering.

The anchors will be conserved under licence from the National Museum of Ireland by *Laurence Dunne Archaeology* in their conservation facility. Full access to the anchors will be provided to the Receiver of Wrecks into whose care they will be given. Otherwise, *bona fide* access to the anchors can be made through contact with Laurence Dunne and Eoin McGarry.

An initial assessment and primary conservation work will be carried out on the anchors by Laurence Dunne and Ian Panter, Chief Conservator with York



Archaeological Trust next week. It is estimated that the conservation process will take at least three years to complete.

It is intended that following conservation one of the anchors will be put in contextualised indoor display in Cobh and the other anchor in a similar setting in Fenit Port in time for the centenary celebrations of the dramatic events of the *Aud* and the declaration of Irish Independence of Easter 1916.

Great credit and thanks are due to everybody concerned with the *Aud* Anchor Recovery Expedition 2012 who have generously and freely contributed their time, input, professional expertise, financial support and indeed patience.

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