



The *Brenda* is a motor launch from the German battle cruiser S.M.S. Hindenberg, which was completed in 1917. In 1919 the Hindenberg was scuttled in Scapa Flow, at the command of Rear Admiral Ludwig Von Reuter. After the Armistice, seventy-four ships of the Kaiser's navy were ordered into Scapa Flow to surrender. Arriving in November 1918 and lying at anchor for the next six months, the skeleton crews who manned the ships became ever more mutinous. Along with the boredom, another contributor to

their dissatisfaction was their being poorly supplied direct from Germany. In June 1919, the peace terms were announced, and it is thought that after reading these terms in the pages of 'The Times', Rear Admiral Von Reuter decided to scuttle the fleet in a final act of defiance.

The first ship of the German fleet to sink after the order to scuttle was given was the Friedrich der Grosse, the flagship of the Jutland fleet, which slipped beneath the surface at 12:16pm on the 21st of June 1919. The Hindenberg was the last of the fleet to go under, but at 5:00pm, she too found her final resting place. Some of the ships that settled in shallower water were successfully towed ashore and a handful of German ships were salvaged in this manner.

A total of 24 destroyers were raised before efforts were turned to the massive capital ships, the first of which was indeed the 26,947-ton battlecruiser Hindenberg. Sinking almost upright, with her bridge, funnels and guns above the water, the Hindenberg was the most prominent feature of the Scapa Flow seascape. It is unclear whether the lifeboat later to become known as the *Brenda* left the mother ship prior to her sinking but in all probability she would have served as a means of escape. After a detailed survey of the wreck S.M.S. Hindenberg, it transpired that to have any hope of raising her, more than 800 holes would have to be repaired. Eventually all the holes were plugged, but due to a combination of lack of transverse stability and bad weather, attempts at raising her failed. Subsequently, work on the Hindenberg was abandoned at the beginning of September 1926.



The *Brenda* during her days as a Malakoff tender tied up beside the *Day Dawn* (circa mid to late 80s) photograph by Trevor Jamieson.

About 1935, the firm of Black & Williamson, then in Hoversta farm, acquired and fetched the *Brenda* from Orkney and she ran for many years as the main ferry from Lerwick to Bressay. There were usually two men in charge of the *Brenda* and she served the people of Bressay until 1975. In 1976 the *Brenda* was bought by the Malakoff and used by them as a tender up until 1998, after which she was donated to Shetland

Museum/Shetland Amenity Trust. In her Bressay ferry years she was fitted with a 44-horse power Kelvin. Mr J Peterson took the above photograph during the 1950s.

For more pictures of the *Brenda* visit <http://www.shetland-museum.org.uk/> and go to the photo archive. A search on 'Brenda' will provide access to several interesting photographs of this much loved vessel. Better still, the actual vessel herself will be on display at the New Shetland Museum and Archives, which is due to open in the spring of 2007.

For further information concerning Orkney and Shetland during both World Wars II and I see the 'Shetland Lending' section of the library under Dewey numbers D940.3 – 941. For further reading on Scapa Flow, there are several books normally kept in stock including:

Dan Van der Vat, *The Grand Scuttle: the sinking of the German fleet at Scapa Flow in 1919* (1982, London) Hodder and Stoughton.

David M. Ferguson, *The wrecks of Scapa Flow* with underwater photographs by Bob Michelson and a historical preface by Friedrich Ruge (1985, Stromness) The Orkney Press.

James Miller, *Scapa: Britain's famous wartime naval base* (2000, Edinburgh) Birlinn.

For a more general history of the North Isles during both wars James Miller's *The North Atlantic front: Orkney, Shetland, Faeroe and Iceland at war* (2003), by the same publishers is an excellent read and contains a vast number of pictures and illustrations.

Shetland's important role during the WWII 'Shetland Bus' operations is also well covered in the same section. David Howarth's *Shetland Bus: A Classic Story of Secret Wartime*

*Missions Across the North Sea* (1998, Lerwick) Shetland Times Ltd is probably one of the best accounts given that Howarth himself was a junior naval officer at the time and assisted in the establishment and operation of the Shetland Bus.

A more recent contribution (than Howarth's book which was first published in 1951) to our understanding of the Shetland Bus comes from Trygve Sørvaag in *Shetland Bus: Faces and places 60 years on* (2002, Lerwick) Shetland Times Ltd. Using a clever blend of old and new photographs along with personal, oral accounts from the people involved in the operation Sørvaag's book is an extremely important work which ought to be read by old and young alike.