

'Other Space'

Vanessa Daws

“Isolated and connected, islands cause shipwrecks and rescue survivors”. (1)



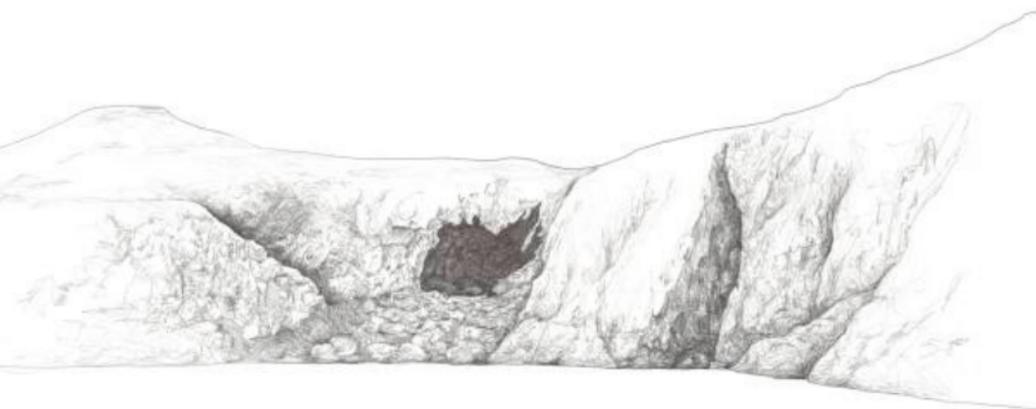


The RMS Tayleur was on it's maiden voyage from Liverpool to Australia. Built in Warrington it was pride of the White Star Line and was the largest merchant sailing ship in the world.

During a stormy night in January 1854 the Tayleur hit rocks and sank off the north east coast of Lambay Island in Dublin Bay taking with it half of it's passengers. There is some uncertainty as to the number of passengers on board and as to why the Tayleur was so off course to collide with Lambay.

Now lying 15m below the sea's surface, the Tayleur's iron structure hosts a "natural-cultural ecosystem." (2)

“...the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea... you will understand why the boat has not only been for our civilisation, from the 16th century until the present, the great instrument of economic development but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination.” (3)



Billy Crowley and his diving partner Tom Shakespeare rediscovered the RMS Tayleur in the late 50's after seeing an article about the Tayleur in a shop window in Skerries. A fisherman told them that he had noticed lobsters with rusty bellies while fishing at the back of Lambay. These rusty bellied lobsters are the reason that the wreck of the Tayleur was rediscovered, dived, and salvaged.





Over Tayleur.. Lombay 1962

Found the bell that day.

Bell recovered 1963.

That suit was very tight
under the circumstances.

Gerry Byrne, pictured above, recovered the bell from the Tayleur, which is now in the National Museum.

They were pioneers of diving in Ireland. Using only basic equipment and diving in layers of jumpers and long johns instead of wetsuits. Some tried painting their clothes with laytex in an attempt to make the diving warmer.

Laddie De Jong was a diver on the RMS Tayleur in the 80's. During his time diving the Tayleur Laddie and his diving partner Miles Dockrell brought up many artefacts including the binnacle that housed the compass, the boss of the steering wheel, and a Royal Suite flushing toilet, the Tayleur being one of the first ships to have flush toilets on board, and over a thousand pieces of crockery. These items are in the public domain in various museums.

In those days many divers would have a piece of Tayleur crockery most of which is now cracking and deteriorating, Laddie's family used to have Christmas dinner on a Tayleur plate "there was one huge big plate where you could put a whole turkey on".





Laddie and his wife Rosaleen currently run the “Marian Rose Nurseries” in Lusk and Laddie is a rose growing expert and judge at Rose competitions.

Laddie claims that “divers aren’t really interested in what grows in the ground, they are more interested in what grows under the sea.”

“Worms have colonised the outer shells of the concretions formed over the corroding metals ... the Anemone (Cnidarian), particularly Plumose anemone can be seen throughout the wreck, colonising exposed portions where it affords them the optimum advantage to capture passing nourishment. Crustaceans like Lobsters (*Homarus gammarus*) and crab (*Cancer*), Echinoderms, Pollock (*Pollachius pollachius*), Wrasse (*labrus*) and herring (*Culpea harengus*) are all colonisers. When considering the influence of marine organism, one must not just look at the influence the organism has on the immediate environment but also the effect its localisation has on the area.” (4)





“Water is a fluid and has weight and so any object immersed underwater will be subjected to the pressure created by the weight of the water above the object. Water is, of course, much heavier than air and therefore pressure changes underwater are more significant.” (5)



“Iron ships have two kinds of magnetism: induced and permanent.

Induced is brought about naturally by the effect of the earth’s magnetic field on the soft iron of the ship.

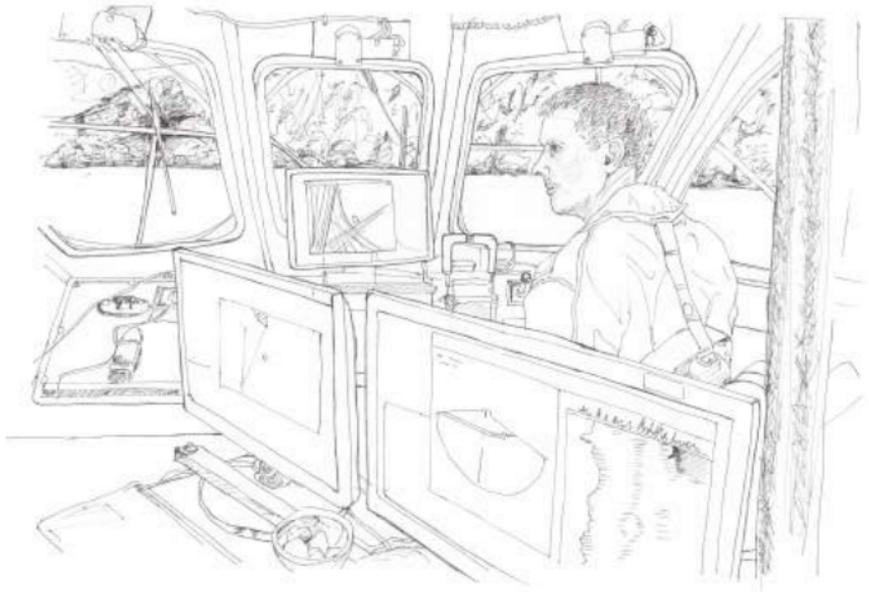
Permanent magnetism is induced by the vibration of hammering and riveting during the construction of a ship. It aligns the molecules permanently in a way that is determined by the lie of the ship during construction.” (6)





Taylor Wreck Plan

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DATE	1/1/1900
BY	J. H. B. & C.
FOR	THE ROYAL NAVAL ARCHITECTURE SOCIETY
SCALE	1/1000

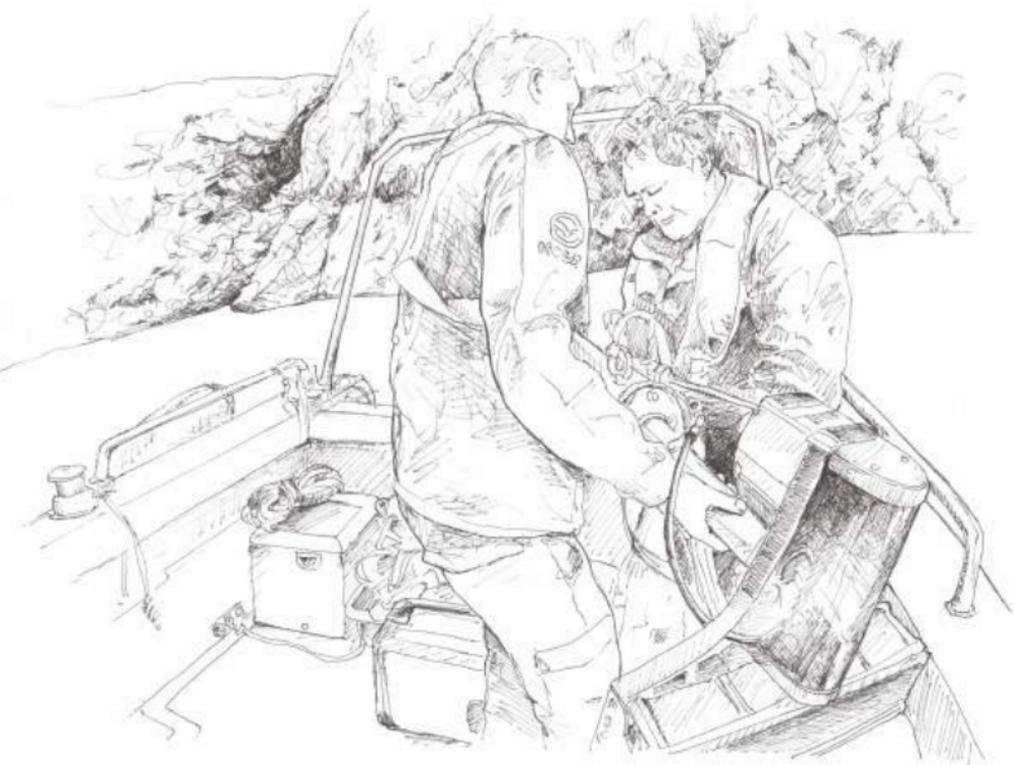


Eoghan Kieran an underwater archaeologist and director of Geomara, he recently took me on Geomara's Survey Boat while conducting a multibeam sonar of the Tayleur. Geomara is a subsea survey, asset protection and intervention service provider based in Galway.

Sounding: the action of measuring the depth of a body of water.

Echo Sounding: measures the amount of time it takes a sound wave to travel from the hull of a boat to the sea floor and back again, divide this by two and this gives you your depth because you know what the speed of sound is through the water column.

Most traditional echo sounders have one point directly under the echo sounder, the Geomara multibeam echo sounder records 512 individual points. It can transmit 70 times a second, thus giving a potential 3,584 soundings per second.



“Archaeology is a public activity; everybody is entitled to draw upon the past in informing their own lives, and every effort to curtail knowledge of the past is an infringement of personal autonomy.” (7)

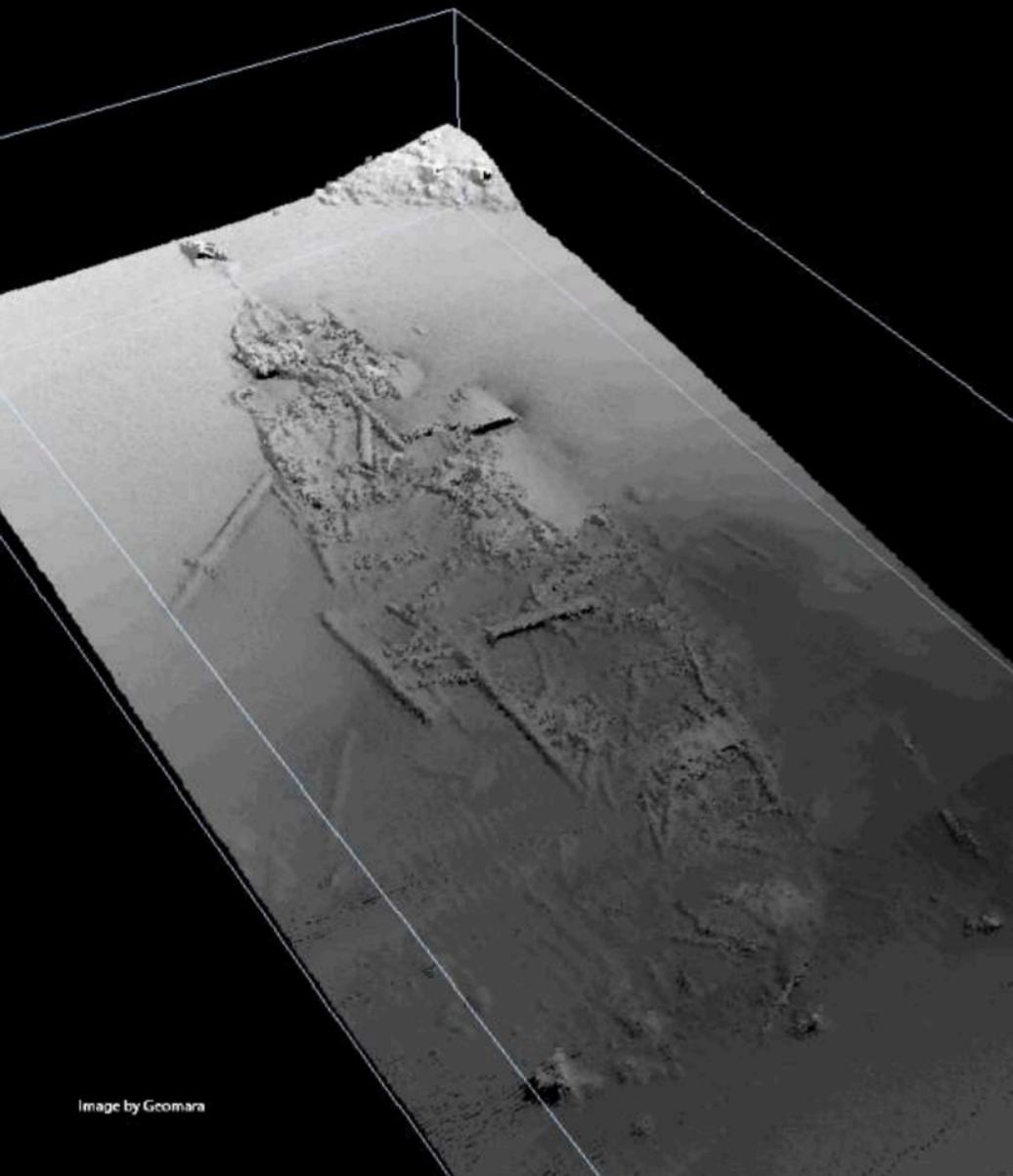
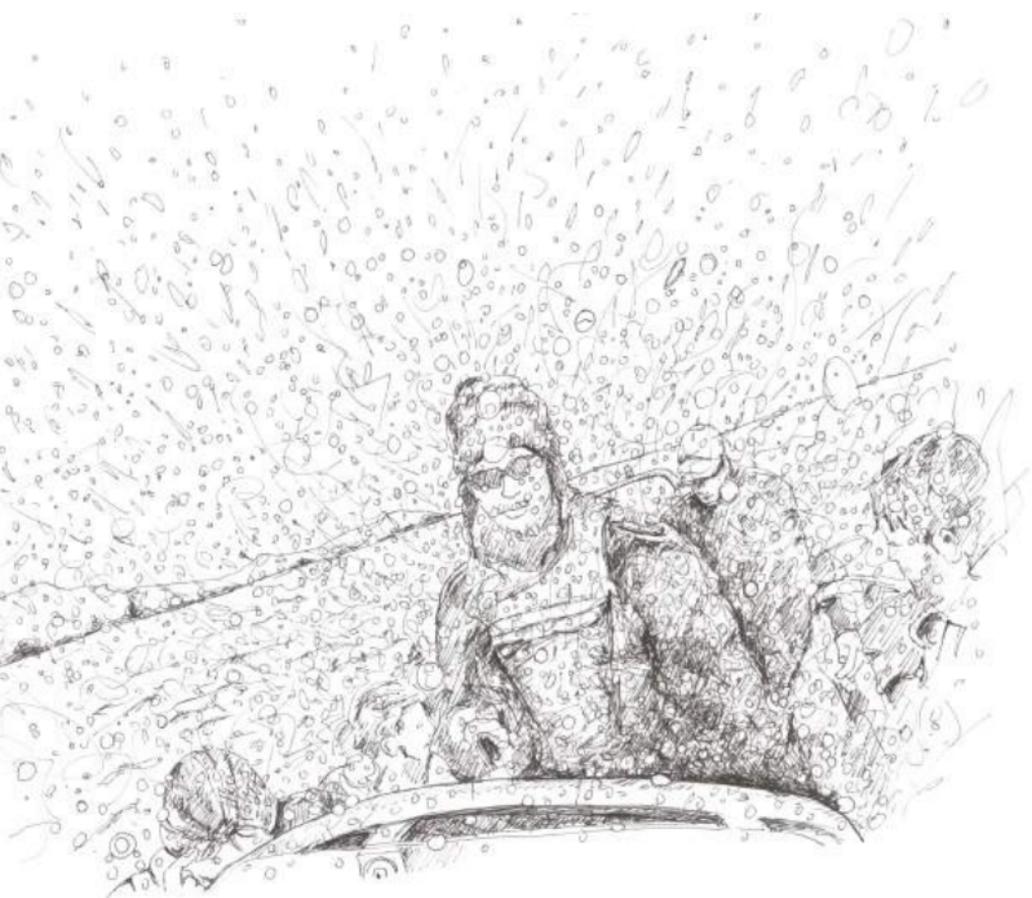


Image by Geomara

On July 22nd 2017 the UCD Sub Aqua Club and myself dived the Tayleur. It was a bumpy day in Dublin Bay, Stephen Kelly our Coxswain drove us to the cove. We dived in three groups of three, my group going last.

It was tricky putting on all the equipment on a rocking boat, but once we had all rolled backwards into the sea and given our 'ok' signals we followed the shot line down.

The Tayleur is a protected wreck site and permission to dive there needs to be granted from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.





References:

- (1) Steve Mentz "Shipwreck Modernity" p51. 2015.
- (2) Stephanie Merchant 'Deep Ethnography: Witnessing the Ghosts of SS Thistlegorm' 2014.
- (3) Foucault - "Of Other Spaces" 1967
- (4) Eoghan Kieran "Investigations on the wreck site of the Tayleur" 2005.
- (5) CFT Diver Manual p8.
- (6) Williams J.E.D. "From Sails to Satellites, the origin and development of navigational science, 1994 - from Eoghan Kieran's thesis.
- (7) ICOMOS Charter 1996, Appendix 4.

Artefacts from the Tayleur:

Detail of a plate - Billy Crowley

Bottle - Billy Crowley

Binnacle - Laddie

Detail of jug - Laddie

Thanks to Laddie, Eoghan Kieran, Geomara, Billy Crowley, Cormac Lowth, UCD Sub Aqua Club, Caroline Cowley and Fingal Arts Office.

