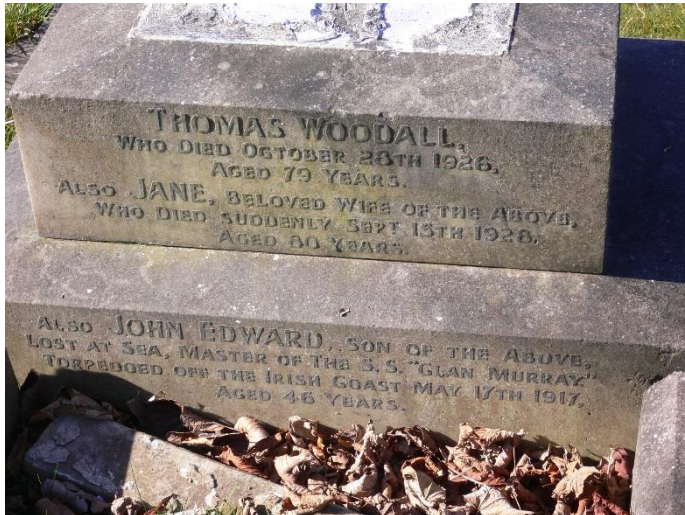


29 Capt JE Woodall Master of SS Clan Murray 17th May 1917



Where is the grave?

From the back of the crematorium, walk down to the left. Before losing much height take the path to the left. The Woodall family grave is just on the right, a couple of rows back.

(It is just past the Stainton grave [no 28 on the WW1 walk], and has a broken cross lying across the front of it.

Son of Jane Woodall, of 111, Anson St., Barrow-in-Furness, and the late Thomas Woodall; husband of Katherine Laura Woodall, of 15, Monmouth Rd., Wallasey. (CWGC)

Even in WW1 the German U-boat fleet caused problems for British shipping. The dates on the

following Internet sources do not match that on the gravestone. Capt Woodall is commemorated on the Merchant Navy Tower Hill memorial. The CWGC website formerly gave his rank as First Engineer; his age as 34, and the date of death as 29th May 1917, but his rank and age have now been corrected. (July 2014)

USS Conyngham.

20th May 1917. A merchant ship, the *SS Clan Murray* was torpedoed just before reaching her rendezvous at 1500 hrs on the 20th of May. 16 survivors were picked up by Q-Ship *HMS Pargust*, transferred to *USS Conyngham* and landed at Bantry.

<http://www.corkshipwrecks.net/United%20States%20Destroyers%20Cork%20WW1.html>

Letzens Jan 22/01/11 The British steamer *Clan Murray* was about 30 miles south of the Fastnet on the 29th May when she was torpedoed without warning, being struck amidships on the starboard side. The boiler and engine-rooms were immediately filled with water, the vessel listed heavily to starboard and foundered within five minutes.

The submarine then appeared and circled round the wreckage, taking the third officer and one other man prisoners. She then made off in a westerly direction. The survivors clung to floating wreckage for six hours before being picked up. Sixty-four men lost their lives, 12 were saved and two were taken prisoners.

ref. used [1] [Ajax, The German Pirate: His Methods and Record](#)
[2] [Internet Archive, archive.org](#)

Vleggeert Nico 21/06/09 On passage Australia for Belfast, the British turret hulled steamship *Clan Murray* was torpedoed by UC-55 and sank 40 miles WxS of Fastnet. Of her complement of 64, only the 3rd officer survived and was picked up by the submarine and taken to Germany as POW.

ref. used [uboat website](#)

Allen Tony 26/06/07 *Clan Murray* was a 4.835grt, defensively-armed British Merchant steamship. On the 29th May 1917 when 40 miles W by S from Fastnet, Ireland she was torpedoed without warning and sunk by a submarine. 64 lives lost including Master.

<http://www.wrecksite.eu/wreck.aspx?12284>

From Keith Johnson's research into former Municipal/Grammar School Boys:

John Edward Woodall was one of the oldest "Old Boys" to lose his life in the Great War. He was killed in 1917 at the age of 46, which means he must have been one of the first boys to attend school at the Oxford Chambers. John went to sea as a youngster, working for his Master's ticket with a number of shipping lines. He married Katherine in 1899 and settled in Wallasey. In early 1917 John was skippering *SS Clan Murray*, loaded with much-needed wheat from Australia to Belfast. The ship was an unarmed freighter, but called in at Sierra Leone on the homeward journey to have a 4.7 inch gun fitted aft. At 4 a.m. on 29th May, 40 miles off the coast of Ireland, she

was torpedoed amidships by U55, commanded by U boat 'ace' Theodor Schultz. John and his Third Officer, Archie McPherson, were blown off the bridge. John recovered sufficiently to stop the engines and see all his crew safely over the side before going below to destroy the code books. John was never seen again. U55 circled the 77 men in the water and rescued Archie McPherson having identified him as an officer. No effort was made to rescue anyone else. One man who managed to climb on the Uboat was kicked back into the water. Schultz was cited as a war criminal but was killed before the war ended. John left his widowed mother in Barrow and his wife Katherine and 3 boys in Wallasey.