

# *Lydney's Lost Fleet*

## The Lydney Ships Graveyard

Winner of the Nautical Archaeological Societies converted award: *Adopt A Wreck 2007*  
& The Forest of Dean Local History Societies: *Scott-Garrett Award 2008*



The second in the trilogy of talks regarding the long since abandoned and forgotten hulks of the mighty River Severn. Entitled *Lydney's Lost Fleet*, The Lydney Ships Graveyard, this unique 45 minute -1hour slide presentation seeks to transport the viewer from the hustle and bustle of a 1930s working dock, engaged in the transshipment of Forest steam coal, thought to its eventual decline in the 1960s and recent rebirth as a sailing Mecca and tourism attraction of the Severn Estuary.

To this end and upon visiting the nearby adjacent foreshore, many visitors would be forgiven for not noticing that the rugged wave swept bank which falls away before them, is the last known resting place of some twenty one trows and river going barges.

Sadly like the dock, the foreshore is now devoid of this once proud fleet, abandoned like so many others to strengthen the constantly shifting coastline. Furthermore the sea continues to reclaim its own and in light of the last eighty years of surging tides, the bank has once more been swept clean by nature and mankind in his constant thirst for salvage.

Very little now remains, the odd stick of timber here and the twisted iron knee there. However with the use of a recently rediscovered archive and images dating back to the early 1930s, I am able to recreate a comprehensive timeline which seeks to illustrate individual working craft, their early abandonment and current remains following decades of destruction.

As with *Fore & Aft*, The Purton Ships Graveyard, I attempt to relay a sense of the Severn' maritime past through anecdotal memories, light hearted nautical banter and welcome audience participation throughout. Further *Lydney's Lost Fleet* attempts to complete the chapter on this once thriving maritime community whilst in part seeks to act as fitting epitaph to this lesser known ships graveyard in the Severn Sea.

With fondest regards

*Paul Barnett*

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