

Review: *HMS Hampshire: a Century of Myths and Mysteries Unravelling* by various authors.

Published by Orkney Heritage Society, August 2016

Dr Innes McCartney

This short publication compiles essays by a number of Orcadian and international writers on topics surrounding the loss of HMS *Hampshire* to a mine off Orkney in 1916 and subsequent investigations of what happened. The opening chapters comprehensively detail the circumstances that led to the loss of the ship and are particularly informative on issues relating to the German mining offensive and the nature of HMS Kitchener's mission to Russia.

The book then turns its attention to the sinking of *Hampshire* itself and details rescue efforts made and the stories of the few survivors who made it onto rafts. The attempts to keep the disaster quiet through censorship, and even intimidation of the local populace is also given full airing; a topic which usually does not receive attention from authors. Further chapters also provide biographical details of the few survivors and many of the casualties.

The final chapters of the book cover the legacy of the loss of *Hampshire* up to the present day. This includes a chapter covering the building and subsequent restoration of the Kitchener memorial. A chapter is also given over to the history of the wreck site itself, through illegal salvage to the recent geophysical and diving surveys, featuring some nice photographs. The final chapter covers the extent of the 100th Anniversary commemorations.

All in all this is an interesting little publication which will inform the reader of the myriad topics surrounding this most enigmatic of shipping losses. In that regard it will appeal to a wide range of readers. There is even a chapter covering conspiracy theories. All in all a worthy addition to any library covering Orcadian or broader naval history; recommended.