

Preface and acknowledgements

At the centenary of the beginning of the First World War international attention turned to its legacy. UNESCO, in particular, sought to focus attention on the oft-ignored war at sea and the wrecks that constitute a legacy of that conflict. To address this, UNESCO convened a commemorative event in Bruges, Belgium on the centenary of the start of the war. The event included a meeting of invited delegates at the end of which participants drafted a resolution calling on States to protect legacy wrecks. I was fortunate to have attended this meeting and chaired a sub-panel that drafted those paragraphs of the resolution dealing with the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage. Having been party to its negotiation as a member of the South African Delegation, I have followed its progress through to its coming into force in 2009 and have continued to advocate for its adoption by States. Having lived, studied and worked in the United Kingdom, I remember well the debate within the UK as to its negotiating position and its subsequent position in relation to the Convention. In Bruges it occurred to me that the UK's position might better be evaluated through the prism of a sub-set of underwater cultural heritage of particular importance to the UK, and at that time, in 1914, that sub-set began to emerge as each day thereafter, on the centenary of its sinking, a British wreck fell within the scope of the Convention's 100 years. Each day the stock of underwater cultural heritage grew at an ever-increasing rate; and most of that was British – yet the UK was not a party to the Convention. This work is the result.

Thanks then are due to all those who attended that meeting and with whom I discussed these issues, with special thanks to Dr Ulrike Guérin, the driving force behind this initiative (and for much assistance in all matters relating to underwater cultural heritage). As will be evident in Chapter 8, the work of the UK UNESCO 2001 Convention Review Group has been instrumental; indeed, I have effectively done little more than channel their argument and conclusion through the prism of legacy wrecks. As such, that Committee is acknowledged here in full: John Gribble, Dr Antony Firth, Michael Williams, David Parham, Dr Simon

Davidson, Tim Howard, Dr Virginia Dellino-Musgrave, Ian Oxley and Mark Dunkley.

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