

A corner of an Angle churchyard forever Japan to be remembered

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A MEMORIAL to British allies buried in an Angle churchyard is to be unveiled later this year, 100 years after they were buried.

The Hirano Maru, a Japanese merchant ship was sunk by the German submarine, the UB91, on October 4, 1918 - one month before the end of the First World War.

While travelling from Liv-

erpool to Yokohama, the Hirano Maru was struck by a torpedo 200 miles south of Ireland. There were just 29 survivors from the ship's 320 strong crew.

Nine bodies washed ashore at Freshwater West and were given a burial in St Mary's Churchyard in Angle.

Japanese officials attended the burial and erected an inscribed white-painted wooden post as a memorial.

The idea of placing a new memorial at the graves was proposed by David James, of the West Wales Maritime Heritage Society, who had

noticed the original post had rotted away.

"This was an idea I had some five or six years ago," Mr James said.

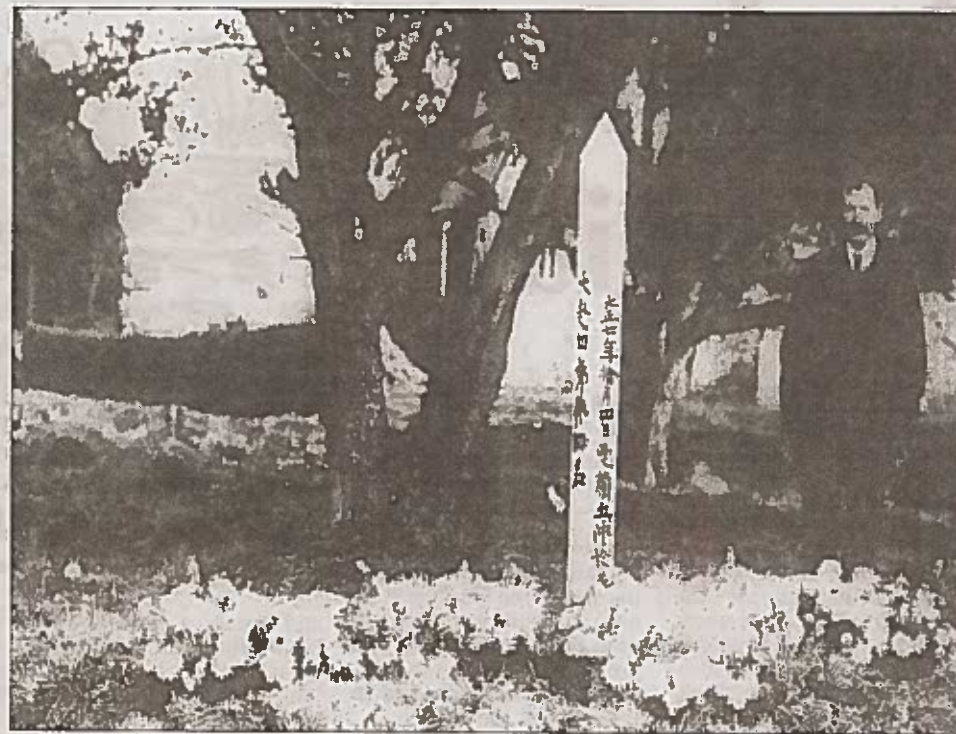
"I realised that there was a grave in Angle with Japanese sailors in it and the memorial, being of wood, had rotted away."

Mr James contacted the Japanese Embassy and the shipping company Nippon Yusen Kaisha, who owned the Hirano Maru.

Both groups were interested in the plan, and NYK sent senior directors to meet Mr James and the Angle community.



The grave site in 2016, the black pot in the centre indicates where the actual grave is. PICTURE: David James



The wooden memorial post in Angle churchyard. Pictured is Mr Watkins, the acting vergier at the time. PICTURE: Courtesy of Jeff Adams

"I took them to meet the people of Angle because obviously, I have to have the community on board, otherwise it won't work," Mr James said.

"The directors saw the burial records and I took them down to see the grave site as it is now.

"They were quite intrigued and they appreciated that I had already raised more than £1000 towards the cost of the new memorial."

Mr James said the directors' immediate reaction was to pay the remaining balance to have the memorial made.

The memorial will be made of grey granite, carved in Thornton, Milford Haven, with an inscription in Japanese, Welsh and English.

The carved memorial is to be unveiled on October 4, 2018, 100 years to the day after the Hirano Maru was sunk.