**Able Seaman Daniel James Taylor of Reynoldston**

Daniel Taylor had served in the Royal Navy during the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900. A fleet of Royal Navy ships and Royal Marines had been sent to China to relieve Europeans besieged by Boxer rebels.  He was awarded the China Medal and remained a Royal Nay Reservist.

Daniel was the son of James and Mary Taylor of Llangennith. At the time of his returning to the Royal Navy in 1914 (as a sub-mariner on the E5), he was living with his wife and three children Willie, May and Tom\*, at Glen View, Upper Green, Reynoldston. Daniel was a postman and the local Scout Master.

\*(Willie joined the police force, May married but died at an early age and Tom joined the Army, serving in Ireland).

Daniel transferred to the armoured cruiser *HMS Good Hope* after a few months on submarine duty.

The Battle of Coronel Sunday 1st November 1914

*HMS Good Hope* (launched 1901) was detached from the Grand Fleet, when war was imminent, to Halifax, Nova Scotia in the belief that German liners in New York were really armed merchant cruisers prepared to harass merchant shipping. When this was proved incorrect and German ships were detected off South America, *Good Hope* sailed to the South Atlantic.In the Pacific and South Atlantic, troop ships from Australia and New Zealand were being threatened by the German China Squadron, commanded by Admiral Graf von Spee. The German ships were modern and powerful. The *Scharnhorst* and her sister ship the *Gneisenau* were able to outgun the best the Royal Navy had, except for the latest Dreadnought battle cruisers.  Rear-Admiral Christopher Cradock, who had made the *Good Hope* his flagship, was well aware of the deficiencies of his ships and urged the Admiralty to send reinforcements. Admiral Sir John Jellicoe and Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty refused, because they had decided that all the navy’s modern assets were needed at Scapa Flow to keep the German High Seas Fleet penned in its North Sea bases.

Cradock’s *Good Hope* and the other old armoured cruiser *Monmouth* were manned almost entirely by reservists, only just called up and with no real gunnery practice. In contrast, the crews of the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* had won the German Navy’s top gunnery award for the past two years. Added to this, the old design of the British ships meant that their main armament was mounted too low to be brought into action in the heavy seas found in the area. The outcome of the encounter was inevitable. Cradock felt he had to fight to avoid accusations of cowardice. The German ships with their superior qualities waited until the British ships were silhouetted against the afterglow of the setting sun and sunk both the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth* with the loss of 1,500 lives, including Cradock. No one saw the *Good Hope* sink but the *Leipzig* had steamed towards a red glow, thought to be the *Good Hope* burning, but when she reached the position only a few pieces of floating debris remained.

This defeat, at the Battle of Coronel, was the first time British naval supremacy had been seriously challenged since Trafalgar. The two battle cruisers *Invincible* and *Inflexible*, with five cruisers, were sent to the South Atlantic. Graf von Spee’s squadron (including the *Scharnhorst, Gneisenau* and *Leipzig*) was destroyed at the Battle of the Falkland Islands in December 1914, with the loss of 2,100 men.

The announcement of Taylor’s death in the Gower Church Magazine of December 1914 is surprisingly critical of the condition of the British ships and the inevitable result, given that it was written in time of war….

*Reynoldston has already paid a heavy toll in the War. Two of the Benson family have been killed and now the sad news has been confirmed that D.J.Taylor, AB of the Flagship “Good Hope” went down with the rest of the crew and with that of the Monmouth in the naval battle off Valparaiso on the evening of Sunday November 1st. Unfortunately the British ships engaged were comparatively old and ill armed and had no chance of victory against the superior and up to date guns of the German cruisers. Early in the action the Good Hope caught fire but the gallant men served her useless guns for three quarters of an hour, until the magazine blew up with a terrific explosion and she went down, to be seen no more. The battle has been described as one of the most gallant fights against disastrous odds in the crowded and heroic chronicles of the British Navy. We are proud to think he died so nobly for king and country. Being a naval reserve man, he left for his annual training before the War and was one of the crew of Submarine E5, afterwards he was transferred to his boat the “Good Hope” in the Pacific Squadron. The deceased was a good type of British sailor, industrious, cheerful and hardy. He was Postman of the Oxwich and Penrice round and all there speak well of him and deplore his loss. He will be much missed also in Reynoldston where he was Scoutmaster and always ready to help in any way he could. He was one of our congregation and in the case of a lecture always worked the lantern efficiently. General sympathy is felt for his brave widow and her three children. Her grief is a heavy one and its only adequate comfort is the Christian faith but considerable consolation too can be found in the thought that she shares at this time, her sorrow with countless others, who like her, are giving their dearest and best to preserve our country’s life. RIP*

(H.J.J)