

**SUBJECT TITLE: ADMIRALTY BATTLE PRACTICE TARGET BARGE**

**Warning:** This vessel lists to the west and is substantially broken up. There is an extensive debris field, especially to the west. A low water recce on foot wearing mud boards is recommended before bringing a boat alongside, failing that binoculars from shore. Most of the vessel covers. It would be a dangerous trap in an easterly. Fender board advised.

**Location description:** Vessel lies north - south on drying mud, approximately one mile east of Blackness castle. On a 5.1 metre tide (Leith) the upper edge of the main deck just breaks the water. The forecastle head is a foot higher.

**Chart No:** 737 Oxcars to Rosyth  
Imray C27 Firth of Forth

**Lat/Long:** 55<sup>0</sup> 59' .93 N 003<sup>0</sup> 29' .69 W.

**OS 1:50,000 sheet number** Sheet 65  
**National Grid Ref.:** NT 794069

**Subject description:** An unknown 19<sup>th</sup> century Admiralty target barge, c.100 ft LOA x 10 ft beam, left in its present location in the 1950s. The barge is constructed of timber cross beams and iron girder longitudinals. It was clad with riveted iron plating, much of which has rotted away. The forecastle head and 25 ft of main deck remain. The main deck is wooden cross beams a foot thick. The forecastle head is similar, up to three feet thick. On deck there are various bits, cleats, eye bolts and a tabernacle. The rest of the structure is skeletal. Stud link chain hangs from the forecastle head and a towing point on the stem. The forecastle head is 9 ft from the mud and the vertical 16 links of stud link serve as a depth gauge. The barge would have carried an open weave lattice of black hessian strips up to 30 feet high.

**Approach by sea:** Approach from the north avoiding the stern frames of the vessel and a stockless anchor and pole beacon 2 cables to the north east. These hazards cover.

**Directions by land:** Cars may be left in the village of Blackness from where the barge can be reached on foot along the foreshore. Mud boards are necessary to reach the V/L.

**Anchoring / Mooring:** Berth on the port (east) side of the forecastle head and remaining section of main deck. Avoid a pile of stud link chain on the port beam and a spike in the mud at the after end of the section of main deck. Two scaffolding boards were set vertically in the mud and lashed to the barge in 2004 for berthing.

**Landing:** Along the shore – mud then large stones and heavy weed growth.

**References / weblinks:** Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland public access CANMORE system. See entry NT07NE 8003 at [www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk)  
Admiralty Manual of Seamanship Vol II 1932.

**Photographs / weblinks:** RCAHMS website above.

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