

WARTIME RELIC *found* IN EDINBURGH

A SEARCH for a wartime relic has come to a happy ending thanks to Lorn Life.

In January, Lorn Life asked readers if they knew the whereabouts of a sextant, a naval navigational instrument, which was given to a Benderloch man for safe keeping by a Dutch naval officer, Janssen, in 1940.

Now, the sextant has returned to Benderloch after an Edinburgh policeman read about the search for the instrument in the magazine and, during this summer it is planned to hand the sextant back to officer Janssen's daughter, Tonny Klein-Janssen.

When the Dutch ship S.S. Breda was attacked by German bombers in the Lynn of Lorne in 1940, the crew landed at Benderloch on Christmas Eve that year.

Oban man Peter MacLeod, who was seven at the time, remembers how his father, a lieutenant with the Benderloch platoon of the Home Guard, took the ship's First Officer Janssen into his home.

Peter said: 'The first officer had with him a wooden box containing his sextant but for some reason asked my father if he could look after it until he could return to collect it.'

Mr Janssen never returned to collect the device and Mr MacLeod held onto it, despite the best efforts of the police.

However, the sextant was lost and a false story emerged that the device was handed into Oban High School.

The instrument was assumed lost but a search began after Tonny visited Oban and enquired about the instrument's whereabouts.

Ironically, Andrew is hoping to retire to Benderloch so the sextant would have returned to its first 'port' regardless.

Peter said: 'It transpires that the navigational instrument did not pass to Oban High School after all but my parents were retiring to Oban and it was given to Benderloch and North Connell Drama Club as a prop.

'Not surprisingly plays requiring a sextant did not materialise and some time later the Oban surgeon Robin Clark was studying navigation and acquired the instrument for a suitable donation to the club.'

Robin had then passed the sextant onto his son, Andrew, a policeman in Edinburgh, who was reading January's Lorn Life and recognised the sextant. Ironically, Andrew is hoping to retire to Benderloch so the sextant would have returned to its first 'port' regardless.

Andrew had decided the sextant should be returned to Tonny Klein-Janssen and a handover is expected to take place this summer.

In the meantime, Oban Museum plans to display the sextant in a display commemorating the sinking of the S.S.

War and Peace include the on the Breda.



Peter MacLeod collects the sextant from Andrew Clark. t07sxt01