

# Davy Jones's liquor?

## Bottle hides treasure



Treasure hunt: Andy Jackson, left, and Carl Racey with the gold.

### Alexandra Wood

WHEN Andy Jackson struck gold off the East Coast of Yorkshire he almost didn't bother to pick it up.

But the bottle of gold filings – possibly the scrapings from a jeweller's bench – could be worth thousands of pounds.

He and his diving partner Carl Racey found the bottle during a dive on what's thought to be the wreck of a Norwegian merchant ship, the *Ellida*, which was torpedoed off Whitby by a U-boat.

Mr Jackson said he hesitated before picking it up: "To be honest it wasn't much of a dive, the visibility was poor and it was early in the season, our first reasonable depth dive.

"All the equipment was feeling a bit cumbersome – and it was

towards the end of the dive. I just saw this bottle. I thought shall I pick it up or not?

"Can I be bothered to wrestle with a bag and get it open and get it in?

"I thought I would give it a whirl really because it had a fancy top, with a porcelain stopper and a rubber seal."

Once back on the surface the silt-covered bottle ended up with the rest of the kit and it was only when the pair from Scarborough Sub Aqua Club returned to shore that they bothered to examine it more closely.

Interest grew as they found that, despite the decades under the sea, the seal had held and there was still air in the bottle.

A jeweller has since examined the contents and says he believes

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# Divers find bottled treasure

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it is gold. Unlike the £44m gold bullion salvaged by Keighley-born wreckhunter Keith Jessop from the sunken HMS *Edinburgh*, this gold is "typical of the sort of thing they scrape off the jeweller's bench and then have melted down," said Mr Jackson. At today's prices it could be worth up to £3,000.

He added: "In normal daylight it looks like dull brass but when you get proper lighting on it it starts to reflect back."

Mr Racey said they could only speculate on why the gold was on board - it may have been some-

one's nest egg or was being taken to be analysed.

"The ship must have sunk rapidly as there was severe damage in the stern."

The find has been declared to the Receiver of Wreck and will remain in the Receiver's ownership for 12 months while attempts are made to trace the original owner.

It is the Receiver's decision whether it will be returned to Mr Jackson, who said: "My hope is to keep it as an artefact.

"The bottle and contents are a story in itself and I don't want to split it up."

Now the two are concentrating on confirming that the wreck is

the cargo vessel *Ellida*, which was sunk by UB 41 and was discovered last summer by Mr Racey and Mr Jackson.

The last sighting of UB41 was in October 1917, just a few months after she had sunk the *Ellida*.

So far the evidence for the wreck being the *Ellida* looks good, because of the position where she was found, her engine and boiler arrangements and overall length.

Keith Jessop earned the nickname Goldfinder after his team raised 434 gold bars from a British cruiser, sunk in a U-boat attack during the Second World War.

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