A GOLD ring belonging to a British sailor who died during the First World War has been found by a diver while exploring the wreck of the HMS Opal in Orkney, Scotland. Retired Brigadier Malcolm Cubiss, 78, from York, was shocked when he received a call from diver Peter Brady about the engagement ring which originally belonged to his uncle Stanley Cubiss.

Cubiss died when HMS Opal ran aground along with HMS Narborough off the Orkney Islands during a fierce snowstorm, with the loss of 188 men. He was wearing a gold band engraved with the words ‘To Stanley from Flo, March 1916’, given to him by his sweetheart Florence shortly before they married in 1917.

During a routine dive Brady, 51, spotted something half-buried beneath the sand and at first thought it was part of the ship’s plumbing. However, after closer inspection he realised it was an engraved gold ring.

Brady and his dive buddy Bob Hamilton then searched through the ship’s casualty lists to find a sailor with the initial ‘S’ and managed to track down Cubiss’ nephew.

‘The list mentioned that he was the son of a couple in Keighley, but we could find no trace of the Cubiss family there, so widened the search to the whole of Yorkshire, and there was Malcolm Cubiss near York,’ said Brady.

Malcolm Cubiss said he has decided to donate the ring and family photographs of the couple to a naval museum in the Orkney Islands.