

HULL
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MEN IN HUMBER AS VESSELS COLLIDE: DECKS AWASH WITHIN SECONDS HOLED TRAWLER DRIFTS BROADSIDE UP RIVER AFTER DOCK ENTRANCE CRASH



WHEN TWO HULL TRAWLERS CRASHED in the River Humber outside St. Andrew's Dock last night, the decks of the St. Leander, holed below the waterline, were awash within seconds, but the crew of 20 were all ashore, more or less unhurt, within 30 minutes.

The St. Leander, which drifted broadside with the tide up the Humber with attendant tugs powerless to stop her or bring her under control, was involved in a collision with the Davy, holed above the waterline at her bows, which were slightly twisted.

The St. Leander today drifted back to within half-a-mile of St. Andrew's Dock, where she was this afternoon still grounded on mudbank.

The collision occurred shortly before high tide as a number of trawlers and other craft were manoeuvring into position to enter St. Andrew's Dock. The Davy was at anchor.

With the ship listing heavily, three of the crew of the St.

the stricken trawler was faintly outlined like a huge triangular wedge against the night sky and shore lights.

Members of the crew taken to Hull Royal Infirmary were George William Hinchliffe (43), fireman, of Edith's-ave., Westbourne-st., Hull; Percy Coleman (29), sparehand, Victoria-terr., Burleigh-st., Hull; James Jackson (50), thirdhand, of Daresmere-ave., Edinburgh-st.; and Stanley Macey, cook, of Commercial-rd., Hull.

HEAVY LIST

Capt. H. Hempleman, St. Andrew's dockmaster, was one of the first to realise the danger to the St. Leander's crew.

He was standing on the lock-head waiting to admit returning trawlers into the dock when he spotted the vessel, listing heavily, drifting by the dock.

Lighted lifebuoys also indicated that there were men in the water.

Capt. Hempleman immediately called for tugs and ambulances, and sent out the oil barges which were waiting in the lockpit.

Capt. Hempleman told the Hull Daily Mail, "My first thought was that there were men to be rescued, and that it was necessary to get something afloat to the trawler without delay."

He thought the collision must have happened just before he stepped out of his office on to the lockhead.

Both ships were returning from three-week trips to the White Sea. The St. Leander had a catch of about 14,000st., and the Davy about 12,000st.

BUILT IN 1949

The St. Leander (658 tons) was built in 1949 by Cook, Welton and Gemmell. Owners are T. Hamling and Co., Ltd., Hull.

The Davy (449 tons) was built in 1936 by Cook, Welton and Gemmell, Beverley, and is owned by F. and T. Ross, Ltd., Hull.



Members of the crew of the Davy talking on the quay after their ship had tied up.

HAULED ABOARD

With much difficulty, owing to the tremendous current, the men were hauled aboard and landed suffering from shock and immersion. One of them was said to be "all in."

Some of the survivors, landed at West Pier, St. Andrew's Dock, were without shoes and had to walk over the bridge to the first-aid centre in stocking feet. None of them had coats.

They were treated at the centre for shock. After a cup of tea and a cigarette apiece, taxis were laid on to take them home.

Meanwhile, at Hull Royal Infirmary, four of their more-seriously-affected mates were receiving similar treatment. Later they too were allowed to go home.

PLAYING DOMINOES

Sparehand John Gordon Campbell (32), of Seathorne-walk, Withernsea, told the Hull Daily Mail he was playing dominoes with some of his mates on the mess-deck when he felt a thud. "I had got a winning hand . . . first thought was to go overboard . . . but the skipper did not give the order to abandon ship, so I stayed where I was," he said.

When Campbell came ashore he was still carrying three of his winning dominoes. He gave two away and kept one—the 6-2—as a souvenir. His first reaction was, "Thank God we are all safe."

Hundreds of men were working on the Fish Dock at the time of the accident, but no one knew exactly what had happened.

RELATIVES COLLECT

Then one or two realised the serious nature of the incident as the SOS sounded. There was a rush to the water's edge.

Said one workman, "I was watching the Davy when it happened. I thought the St. Leander was done for."

As the St. Leander started to drift helplessly up the Humber, the Davy was edged towards the West Pier. By now, a crowd, including women and children, had collected, and there were anxious shouts as relatives on board the Davy were recognised.

Among the first ashore from the Davy was trimmer Fred Hird, married, of Sidney House, Porter-st. "It all happened so suddenly, that we were taken by surprise," he said. "The St. Leander started to heel over as she made more and more water."

SHIPPING WARNED

After the collision, owners' representatives boarded the Davy and were given a report on the incident by the skipper, Mr Cyril Watson.

The St. Leander rapidly disappeared up river in the haze and dark, and for a time there were conflicting reports of her whereabouts. A number of tugs followed the St. Leander, but were unable to control her. Shipping in the river was warned.

Eventually she was located at Barton Ness, and a grip was obtained by the tugs. They started to tow her back to Hull, but she grounded near Hessle Flats, about a mile offshore and in the middle of the Humber.

From a launch which circled the grounded wreck, a Hull Daily Mail reporter saw that the St. Leander had a slight list. Her bows pointed skyward, with the stern completely submerged.

Standing-by was a tug, warning all approaching vessels of the danger.

Rising out of pitch-black water,