

HULL SHIP AGROUND: CREW SAFE AFTER NIGHT OF PERIL

THE CREW of the Hull-registered freighter Britkon (3,880 tons), which went aground in heavy seas in the Baltic, near Oeland Island, last night, are safe.

One lifeboat, with eight men and three women, was picked up by pilots last night, and the other 27 were brought safely ashore this morning after a night in a lifeboat in the lee of the stranded ship.

The Britkon's Estonian-born master, 35-year-old Weimar Sooman, now a naturalised Briton living in Hull, reported today that the ship's back is broken.

AS BAD AS WAR

After stepping ashore, he said, "It was almost as bad as being torpedoed in the war, an experience I had twice.

"We spent the night in the motorboat under the lee of the vessel, but boarded her again at five this morning after Oskarshamn had promised to send a salvage tug out for us.

"The engineroom was flooded and we were without light or heat. High seas were breaking over the bridge, and we were all wet through. I became less worried when I saw the pilot boat coming out last night."

70mph BLIZZARD

Today heavy seas, lashed by a 70mph blizzard, was threatening to break up the Britkon.

The sharp rocks on which she struck were goring a widening hole in her as she "see-sawed" in the storm.

Salvage men are standing by for an opportunity to board her and shift the cargo.

RESCUE HEROISM

Among those rescued last night was M. Macdonald, first engineer, who praised the rescue attempts made by pilot boats from Furøe Island. Their first attempts to ride the raging breakers failed, but they went out again to bring in the lifeboats.

The Britkon was taking pit props to Oskarshamn, Sweden, when she grounded.

The owners of the vessel are the Woking Shipping Co., Ltd., Hull, and she is managed by John Carlborn and Co., Ltd., Lowgate, Hull. She was in Hull some months ago, but it is understood that her crew were mostly signed on elsewhere.

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