

3

S. S. "Hartley"

Jan. 17th 1925.

Third day.

Witness:- M^r Scott, Superintendent Engineer

Continued from yesterday.

Speed of vessel loaded 9 knots.

light ship 10 " "

— " —

Witness:- A. B. Adams - Survivor.

A. B. with 7 years sea service principally in coasting craft. Joined the 'Hartley' at the beginning of her third voyage. He found her a very good ship, but had experienced no very bad weather.

The worst weather previously experienced was on a voyage from Farrow to Bordeaux when half a gale was met in the Bay of Biscay. The ship behaved alright and shipped no heavy water on decks.

He would describe the vessel as a dry ship, and any water cleared freely off the deck. The ship answered her helm quickly and her steering qualities were good.

He assisted in putting the hatches on No 2, and then on No 1. Two tarpaulins were fitted to No 2 both in good condition and properly secured.

Two tarpaulins were fitted on No 3 hatch, and wedged in by the 2nd Officer.

2 1/2" Manilla Rope lashings were put on Nos 1 & 2 hatches on the day the vessel sailed, after leaving Barry. The lashings were in two or three lengths, bent on. No 3 was lashed with, probably, 3" manilla rope. No 4 was not lashed. The lashings were drawn hand tight by three men.

Vessel left Barry upright and in good trim

Vessel off Start Point at midnight on 26th, and wind becoming strong

Witness came on watch again at 4 a.m and took the wheel. Blowing half a gale from about 3 points off the Starboard bow. 4.20. Ordered to go round ship and see everything was secure. Examined all hatches and found same all secure, green water come over into both wells, but more aft. The water was getting away readily. The vessel was pitching, but not heavily, and she was not rolling. Beam wind on Starboard side.

6.30 a.m. Strong gale, heavy cross sea; shipping green sea; wind slightly abaft Starboard beam.

Vessel shipped an extra heavy sea close to No 3 hatch on the Starboard side. Vessel hove-to, and extra lashings fitted to No 3 Hatch. Lashings, 2½" manilla - hove fairly tight. First lashings athwartships, Second fore and aft. Extra lashings also fitted to No 1 and 2 hatches.

Towards 9 a.m. Found both tarpaulins No 3 hatch ripped along the Starboard side fore end. All hands engaged nailing tarpaulin down; fitting extra lashings but did not succeed in getting lashings on before the forward corner hatch starboard side was found to be missing. The hatch was seen floating around. Vessel listed to Starboard shortly after. The Rope lashings were still holding, but the tarpaulin was ripped where the hatch came out.

Went to the boat deck to get a spare hatch cover, (2 on board) but this would not fit as owing to the width of the cover not being a divisor of the width of the hatch the outside covers were not of standard size and no suitable spares were aboard.

In a few minutes more hatches were washed away the sea continually coming aboard and water entering No 3. The rope lashings were still intact. The tarpaulins were ripped clean away for 3 parts of the hatch only

the port side being intact. The vessel took on a heavy list to starboard of from 20 to 30 degrees.

No 4 hatch was not started; the covers could be seen heaving but the tarpaulins were intact even when the ship was abandoned. The only place water could be seen entering the ship was on the starboard side of No 3 hatch.

Fireman came up on Boat Deck - 4 Arabs, of whom only one spoke English.

9.30. Ordered to stand by lifeboat on starboard side. The sea was coming over the poop and No 3 hatch was full of water.

Wireless message sent:- "Vessel near at hand stand by. about to abandon ship."

Rifefackets served out.

Arab cut Davit guy. Boat swung out quickly and one seaman consequently lost overboard.

Boat got clear of ship. at that time the starboard bulwark and hatch coaming were underwater and the Boat Deck level with the sea.

Note. During the luncheon interval Mr Carmichael, one of the Assessors, said to me in private conversation:- "they had nearly decided to call Mr Gilmore" & I took him to mean that the question had been raised amongst the Assessors - probably by himself as the only one likely to know Mr Gilmore - and that it had been dropped.

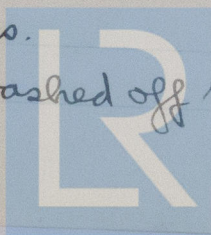
Mr Carmichael also asked a few questions, but, in the circumstances, did not receive replies containing any information.

First survivor's story continued

The lifeboat's gunwale did possibly catch under a plate of the steamer.

The lashings of No 3 Hatch stretched and were slack and practically useless.

He was continually washed off the upturned



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boat as he had only the keel to hang on to.

Regarding rope lashings these had been fitted to some hatches on two previous voyages.

The turn up of the tarpaulins was rather short at the ends of No 1, 2, and 3 hatches, being only about $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. Owing to the raised deck between hatches the stretching of the tarpaulins was rendered more difficult.

In reply to a question from the Owner's Solicitor witness stated :- "The donkeyman informed the Chief Officer at 4 a.m. on the day of the disaster that the vessel was making water in the bunker and he did not know where it came from."

From questions asked it would appear that this bunker was half full of coal and that unless sufficient water got into the bunker to flow over the coal doors it would be impossible to see it. The bunker hatch was intact to the last, and the ventilator goes through to the bridge deck.

The question of this water was shortly afterwards overshadowed by No 3 Hatch; and as the Court only had hearsay and nothing concrete the matter was dropped.

Witness stated that when he first saw the rip in No 3 tarpaulins the ship was home-to

Witness also stated that when the rip was found it was also found that the after part of No 3 hatch on the starboard side had also lifted a little, and the tarpaulin was slack. Some wedges were loose and one or two washed away.

This tarpaulin was got into place and re-wedged, but it was found that some of the wedges were too small.

The tarpaulin was nailed to the hatch board which was first lost, and it may be that wind got under the tarpaulin and caused this board to be

displaced.

Both tarpaulins were ripped in the same place right at the edge of the hatch coaming.

— " —
Witness:- Second survivor.

Joined the vessel at Barry on her final trip.

Witness was at the wheel till the last. The course was frequently varied and on some courses it was impossible to keep the ship in the desired direction.

Looking at the ship from the lifeboat witness saw that No 4 hatch had partly gone, and water was pouring into both 3 and 4 hatches.

— " —
Mr Cairns, Shipyard Manager Smith's Dock, recalled.

<u>The area of hatch</u>	was Forward 51 percent
<u>Total area of Deck in Well</u>	Aft 50.25 " "

Admiral Bosty:- "Have any calculations been made with the ship as she was loaded with ship full of water. I mean, would she sink?"

Mr Cairns:- "We will investigate this matter if the Court desires."

Mr Carmichael:- "We had ~~neither~~ had a Lloyd's Surveyor or Board of Trade. Would you tell the Court to whom you would refer if you wanted approval of hatch fittings and weather qualities of hatches?"

Mr Cairns:- For the structure of the Hatch-Lloyds,
 For Equipment - The Board of Trade.

Mr Burton (Solicitor Board of Trade):- "Regarding the question of calling Surveyors I may say the Board of Trade Surveyor is here, but as there appears to be no question of deficiency of equipment involved I have not considered it necessary to call him, but ----"

The President:- "I agree, it is not necessary"

Mr Cairns:- The Bilge and Ballast Pumps to the after hold had a total capacity of 164 tons per hour.

— " —
This concluded the evidence. The Court was then addressed by the Owner's Solicitor and then by Mr Burton, for the Board of Trade.

The only point of interest was Mr Burton's remarks, and the President's concurrence therein, that everyone had given their evidence in a very straightforward manner and that there was no implication resting on anyone. It was a very straightforward case.

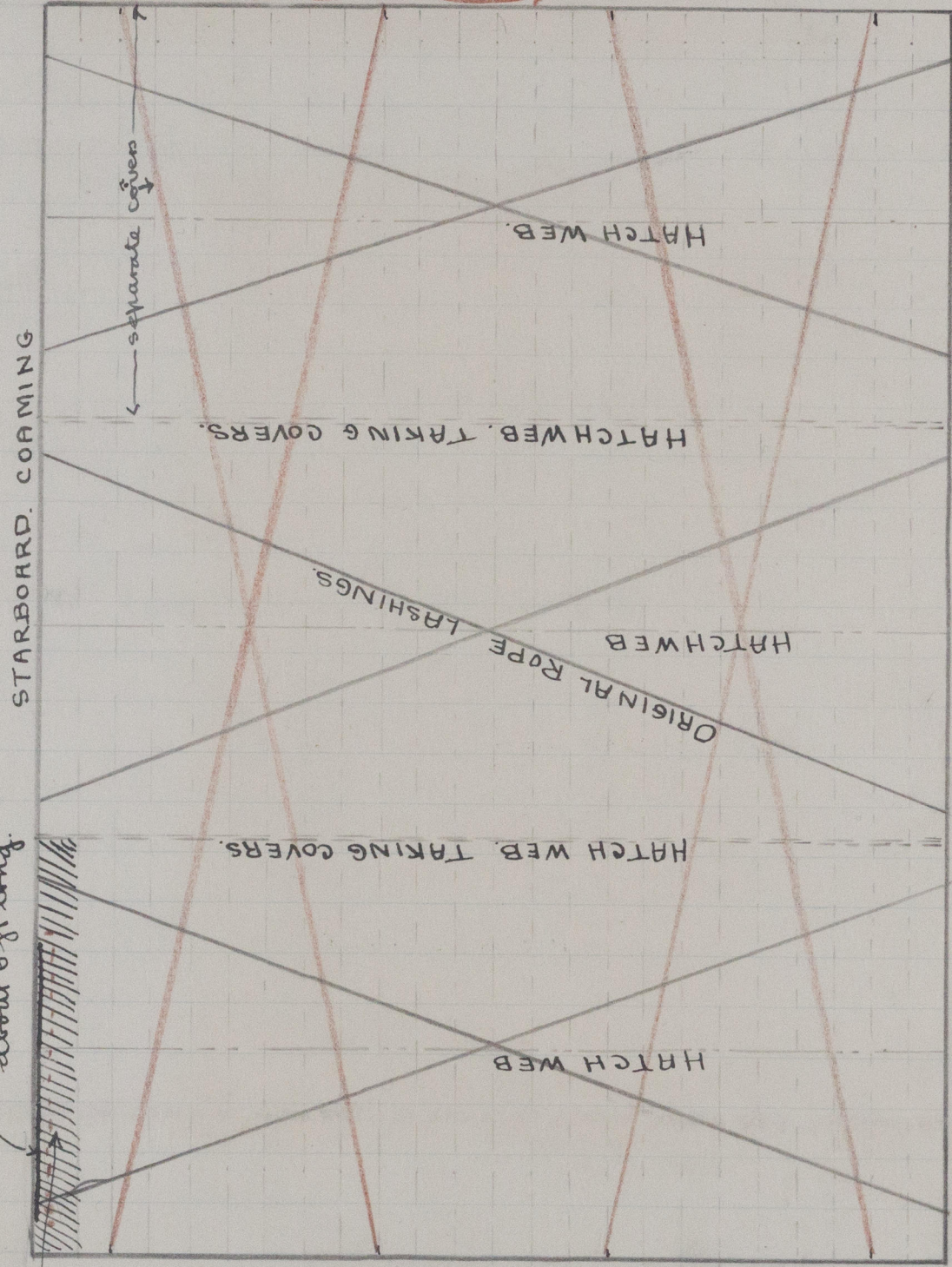
— " —
The Court decided to hold a private view of the S.S. "Ellenwater", a sister ship nearing completion, at Messrs Smith's, sometime on Monday, and deliver their findings possibly on Wednesday.

Colin Bartlett?
17. 1. 1925.

CAUSE OF DISASTER

First hatch to be washed overboard.

Rips in both tarpaulins about 6 ft long.



Size of hatch covers about 11'0" x 11'3". approx: 96 covers per hatch.

Lashings fitted at 6.30 a.m. --- wedges tightened up or removed. Tarpaulins nailed to hatch AFTER cover COAMING.

Stems in red done after rip in tarpaulins first found.

NOTE. This diagram is not to scale, and is base on a glance at a chart handed into the court.

Nº 3 Hatch.



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