

## "John Harrison" Inquiry.

### Third days evidence.

#### M<sup>r</sup> West - Chief Boatswain - Evidence continued

On the voyage Blyth to Bayonne the hatches were not damaged.

The forward well was never quite clear of water in heavy weather.

On the above voyage the locking bars to No 1 hatch had worked a little.

When the covers were taken off at Bayonne the coal had settled about 1 foot bodily in each hatch. A certain amount of water was found aft in the store above the after peak. The vessel shipped a sea down the Engine Room skylight, off Bayonne, when hove-to.

The ship had no look-out because there were only 5 seamen. The B. of T. rules required 6, and that was why he was engaged on as Chief Boatswain.

#### Questions by Cpt. Yait & Assessor 4

Did you notice that the cleats for battening down hatches were 2 ft. apart? - I consider that not unusual.

Were the boats stowed in a safe position? - As safe a place as could be found.

#### Questions by M<sup>r</sup> Alexander (Assessor)

The seas frequently came right over the fore-castle and dropped on to No 1 hatch! - Yes.

With open rails the water would probably have come through and struck the side of the hatch, and not pitched on the top of the hatch? - That is so.

#### Further questions by Cpt. Yait.

What is your opinion regarding the loss of this ship? - I disapprove of the groeneko, I also think the steering gear carried away due to its



exposed position.

Do you think the water got into the fore peak? especially as no one was there, and the vessel was generally trimmed by the head? - That may be so.

Would it be better if the tonnage openings in the fore-castle front were riveted up? - They were quite strong and tight in the ship.

The wood plugs in the goosenecks are liable to be knocked out and lost? - That is so.

Regarding the steering gear what are your views? - I thought the chains were too light. - Well, according to Lloyd's Rules they were so at one time but I think that has been cured now.

You are not suspicious that the hatch webs were not strong enough? - No.

You had no auxiliary gear except tackles? - No, but there was a brake to the quadrant.

Were the blocks and tackles in proportion? Yes

Witness:- M<sup>r</sup> R. Yeasdale. Donkey man.

Joined the vessel when new, and took a watch.

The Chief found water in the bilges at Bayonne, and ordered that all bilges should be pumped out once a day.

On one trip a good deal of water was found on No 3 lower top. Apparently a grab had caught the well grating and small coals entered choking the strum box. The water came from the wet coal.

The vessel was never wounded so far as witness knew.

The ship was generally down by the head.

Water did not get away quickly from the fore well.

The vessel was not as good a sea boat as some, but was quite lively.

Ashes were dumped overboard after each watch.



He did not sail in the vessel on her last voyage because it was impossible to work the fires due to the accumulation of ashes in the stokehold. He did not consider the ship in a seaworthy condition because she was down by the head. But the ashes was the main reason, and he did not think it was playing fair to pass the firemen off for two days. He himself was kept on but gave notice to leave and left at 1. a. m. on the day of sailing.

At that time the ashes were still there and it would take 4 firemen 4 or 5 hours to get rid of them. They interfered with the striking of the ship as they were level with the bottom of the furnace and covered the stokehold flat except for a small walking space.

Questions by Chf. Tait.

A steam ash hoist would have made the work of clearing the ashes much quicker? Yes.

As it was you were fitted with what is known as 'Armstrong's patent'? Yes.

Witness further stated that all ballast tanks were pressed up with the pump until the water overflowed at the top of the filling pipes every time these tanks were filled.

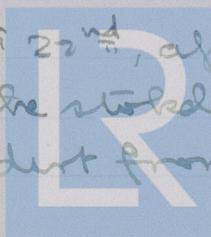
Ash shovels were provided, but were too heavy and never used.

— " —

Witness:- J. W. Gardner Fireman.

The vessel, on one occasion, slipped 2 or 3 seas down the door in the fidley casing into the stokehold.

He signed off on Dec<sup>r</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup>, after banking the port boiler. At that time the stokehold flat was covered with ashes and dirt from the boiler.



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He left the ship because he thought he had been treated badly in being paid off, and also thought the ship behaved badly in heavy weather.

He considered it would take 3 hours to clear the accumulation of ashes.

The Chief Engineer told him in conversation that he "wished his time was up as the vessel was a death trap"

That concluded the 'John Harrison' case, but the Board of Trade solicitor stated that he had been instructed by the Board of Trade to lay before the Court details regarding the S. S. "Vale of Pickering".

Witness :- Mr. Butterwick, Furness Shipbuilding Co.

The "Vale of Pickering" was classed 100 A1? - Yes.

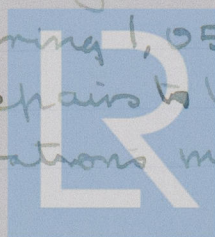
What are the principal differences between the two vessels :- The Vale of Pickering had a slightly different disposition of bulkheads; the after peak was larger; the machinery space was larger; No 1 hatch was built on a trunk and the hatch was not so wide; and the vessel had rails instead of a plate bulwark in the forward well.

Why did you trunk the hatch? - Because it gave 1 in extra draught.

In the 'Vale of Pickering' the hatch covers were single width and not 2 planks bolted together.

The Horse Power of the 'John Harrison' was 900, and the 'Vale of Pickering' 1,050.

In the course of repairs to the ship were any structural alterations made?



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know. The repairs were carried out by Smith's Dock.

Why has the fore peak in one case 4 tons more capacity than in the other? - I know of no reason, but will make inquiries.

The log books of the 'Vale of Pickering' were handed in.

Witness:- Cpt. T. R. Thomson. Captain of the Vale of Pickering

↑ Note: It is understood that this witness is somehow connected with the Furness Co., the builder, and possibly his evidence should be viewed accordingly. CB.

Witness requested the substitution of rails instead of bulwarks because the ship freed herself more readily.

Do you consider ships of this type safe ships? —  
Yes. I am missing a trip to give evidence but shall rejoin.

The ship is a good sea boat? Very

Did the ship trim by the bow? - Never, the draughts on various loaded voyages, without ballast were as follows.

Fore	16'-0"	16'-5"	16'-0"	15'-9"	15'-9"	16'-6"
Aft	17'-3"	17'-0"	16'-2"	17'-2"	16'-3"	16'-11"
	16'-1"	16'-2"	16'-2"	15'-11"	15'-9"	
	17'-4"	17'-4"	17'-4"	17'-3"	15'-11"	

The total complement was 19 of note:- 'John Harrison' 17 by signing a mate as Chief Boatswain to make up the complement of seamen, and a donkeyman in lieu of a 3rd Engineer.



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Referring to the day of the damage.

at 9.30 a.m. with the ship hove-to 65 miles W by S of Beadly Head. Wind W.S.W. force 10. Two extra heavy seas, one right behind the other came right aboard. The ship seemed to be underwater. The seas came on like a bore, and could be described as seas on seas.

The following damage was sustained:-

Wire reel torn off 4'le deck port and washed overboard.

Ship's bell gone.

Rails at after end 4'le smashed.

After port No 1 Hatch or bunk set down.

Hatch covers not broken. 1 channel locking bar fore end No 1 Hatch in place. The second bar was found on the deck, and the after bar was fastened at one end and wrapped round a ventilator near the foremast.

The tarpaulins were not damaged beyond chafing but the after tier of hatch covers were slanting upwards in the forward direction.

The bulwark at the fore end of the R. A. S. was twisted and the deck draft bulwarks set down.

The after channel had ripped the tarpaulin and the after hatch covers were set up and water got into No 1 hold. Note:- This contradicts a previous statement, but is probably correct.

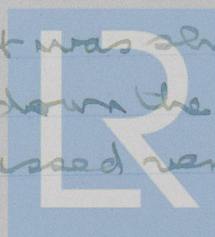
The Bridge house front was set back 1 in.

The wheelhouse on top of the bridge was full of water.

The Port lifeboat was shifted.

Some water went down the E. R. skylight.

After these seas passed very little more



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water entered the ship. The vessel was well down by the head and the forward well was underwater but not to the top of the hatch coaming. The vessel had a slight list to Port.

The pumps were put on but difficulty was experienced in working them owing to small coal constantly caking in the valves and pump.

The divisional bulkheads in holds were of steel, not wood.

Third day concluded.

etc



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