

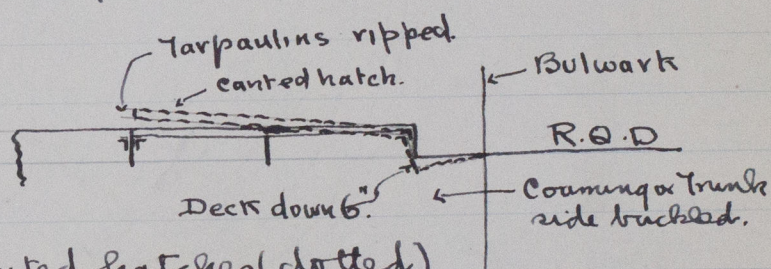
# S. S. "John Harrison" Inquiry.

## Fourth day.

Witness:- Cpt: Thomson - continued.

Extracts from log:- midnight Jan 1<sup>st</sup> and Jan 2<sup>nd</sup> - Hurricane, shipping solid water over all.

What had given way in No 2 locking bar to No 1 hatch? The hook through the eyebolt had drawn out. In the case of No 3 the Port side unslipped. The tarpaulins on the fore part of the after section were ripped & this decides previous uncertainty in 3<sup>rd</sup> day's evidence & but remained in position held by the side bars and wedges and the after hatches canted. All hatch covers were intact. The after end of the hatch with the part of the trunk which is really the fore end of the R. Q. D. was forced down about 6 in. The coaming sides buckled. There was no opening in the Upper Deck which permitted water entering the holds.

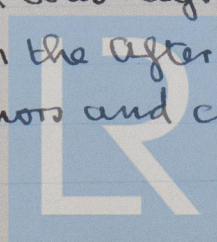


Rough sketch of canted hatches (dotted)

Could water get down the hatch underneath the tarpaulins? - Yes.

You were 40 or 50 miles from the S.S. "Hartley" when she was lost? - Yes, but we did not leave her.

I understand that you painted part of your bottom by listing when the vessel was light ship, in the Furness basin? - Yes, with the after peak full, no bunkers, no cargo, 50 tons of anchors and cables gave a list of 4 degrees.





From the position in which the 'John Harrison' lifeboat was found the vessel was probably lost near the Dutch Coast? - I think so.

You do not think the cargo shifted? - No.

Did she probably take the outer course from Hamborough Head? - I think so.

The ship might have hit a sandbank, a wreck or a mine? - Quite possible.

The Chief Boatswain was here interposed and declared emphatically from his knowledge of the Captain and Chief Mate that they would have taken the coast route as being safer. (Note - Later evidence shows that when the vessel arrived at Hamborough Head the weather was not bad, therefore the Captain might have thought it safe to take the direct route and not hug the coast.)

The difference in distance between the two routes is small. Yes. about 5 miles.

Questions by Mr. Alexander (Assessor).

Does the absence of sheer tend to make water surge to and fro on the R. & D.? - I hardly think so.

The suction to No 1 hold were not choked in the well but at the valve? - That is so.

What was done to support the deck at Doves? - Additional angles (probably means angle-shaped brackets) were fitted underneath the part of the R. & D. forced down.

If those (angles) had been there originally the deck would have stood? - It might or might not.

What was done as a final repair? - Substantial brackets were fitted.

Questions by Cpt. Tait.

You had a crew of 19. Was this excessive? - We could have dispensed with one ordinary seaman.



It would be impossible to keep effective watches with 5 men? - Yes.

What about a spare set of tarpaulins? - It would be impossible to stretch them at sea, but we have a spare set.

The pumps choked. You had no limbers - No, Sir.  
 Cpt Tait → That is always the danger. In trying to satisfy trade you lose a little safety. A number of lines would not have a straight tank top.

You had no rise of floor? - 1 inch.  
 Cpt Tait:- That is a new fashion.

You freeboard was 5'-5" - How did you manage to steal that extra inch. A shipowner's dodge I suppose.

{Note:- Here and at other times the Stipendiary stopped Cpt. Tait whose remarks were becoming discursive, quite irrelevant, and, at times, somewhat derogatory.}

What was the freeboard in way of the fore deck? - 14".  
 Cpt Tait:- 14 in between you and Davy Jones' locker.

With such a freeboard you require a good substantial bow - That is so. Cpt Tait:- There was not enough bow in this vessel.

Can you tell me the size of the steering gear chain? -  $\frac{3}{4}$  in.  
 Do you consider the chains strong enough? - Yes.

What type of lashings do you prefer? - Wire rope.

Witness:- Mr. Butterwick recalled.

About this 71 ton discrepancy in cargo. What does it mean? -  $3\frac{1}{2}$  in in draught. The draught would not be 16'- $1\frac{1}{2}$ " instead of 15'-10". The freeboard-draught is 16'-4".

Note: A discussion took place on this question of the 71 ton discrepancy, but eventually after a good deal of misunderstanding the President ruled that the point was unimportant.



In view of the "Vale of Pickering" damage and the "John Harrison" casualty have you considered amending your specification for this type of ship? — No, not in any particular manner. A ship can now be designed to the new Rules of Lloyd's Register which permit of the extra buoyancy, incorporated in a design by fitting a complete deck, being allowed for in the scantlings. Lloyd's Rules now give an allowance for buoyancy not needed for freeboard.

Note:- I knowing Mr. Buttenwick I had a friendly word with him later and pointed out that his remarks were scarcely consonant with the fact that the Rules of Lloyd's Register permitting scantlings in conformity with freeboard were at least four years old. }.

Mr. Burton:- I want to keep to a question of fact. Have you decided on any definite alterations? — We presume the Classification Societies get the reports of casualties and thus embody them in their Rules.

Up to the present nothing has been done! — No.

I note:- I think Mr. Burton's last question referred to action by the Furness Shipbuilding Co. only; Judging by the tone of his questions.

Mr. Alexander-Assessor:- Regarding the design of this ship with a well forward I am glad to hear that the Classification Societies rules now permit you to design a ship of any capacity.

I presume the straight line sheer causes the vessel to have more freeboard! — That is so. The total excess buoyancy is 169 tons, of which 72 tons is forward. The total buoyancy of this ship is 4,921 tons. Displacement 3533 Tons. Reserve buoyancy 1,388 tons or 39.3 per cent. On the last voyage the



reserve buoyancy was 46 per cent.

Could you say what the rule reserve buoyancy is? - No.  
At the time the vessel was designed the amended rules were not in force? - In the sense that the ship could not be sunk to her marks.

Owing to Lloyd's scantlings and the Board of Trade rules you gained by dropping the deck level in the well? - That is so.

Under the new regulations conditions are easier? - There is still a penalty, but not now so great.

{ Note:- I consider this evidence given above scarcely included 'the whole truth', required by the oath sworn }

Have you ever thought of fitting steel hatch covers? They have disadvantages.

In the 'Vale of Pickering' the hatch covers were single 9" wide? - That was a special Owner's requirement.

It is suggested that the absence of a passage across the deck prevents the escape of water? - It would be possible to connect the wells.

Cpt. Tait: In view of what has been heard about dipping forward do you not consider it advisable to have a load line at the bow? - It would be advantageous, a 5 ton truck in the after hatch instead of forward alters the trim  $3\frac{1}{2}$ ".

You have heard of the extra brackets fitted to the 'Vale of Pickering' Was any such thing done on the 'John Harrison'? - No, the hatch was differently constructed.

Regarding the repairs to the 'Vale of Pickering' was any alteration made to the structure? - The repairs were carried out at Smith's Dock under Lloyd's and the Owner's Superintendent.

Reports were then handed in showing that



other vessels passing down the North Sea at the same time as the 'John Harrison' encountered heavy weather, and two ran to the Humber for shelter.

The reports for four other self-timber lost including the 'Hartley' and 'Rawlinson' were handed in.

Mr Graham, Naval Architect then gave evidence on the Owner's behalf confirming Mr Butterwick's calculations.

Cpt. Yait asked Mr Graham some questions but was again stopped. The questions were the same as previously put regarding buoyancy forward, straight tank and rise of floor.

Witness:- Cpt Jones of the S.S. "Timberham", a sister ship.

Witness consider his ship a good one. He shipped very little water on the R.Q.D. No cargo had ever shifted in his ship. He had never seen shifting boards in colliers in 20 years experience. His crew consisted of 17 all told.

Generally the cargo settled 5 or 6 ins: in the hatches. He did not think the ashes had anything to do with the casualty.

This concluded the evidence.  
Reports were handed in re: finding of lifeboat.

The Court will report their findings on Thursday next.



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