

STAR OF SCOTIA

An iron full-rigged ship built in 1864 by Harland & Wolff, Belfast, at Yard No. 24. Dimensions 64,66x9,79x6,65 meters [212'0"x32'1"x21'8"] and 999 GRT, 999 NRT and 971 tons under deck. Launched January 1864 at the shipyard of Harland & Wolff, Belfast, for J.P. Corry & Co., of Belfast and London. Assigned the official British Reg. No. 47190 and signal VMNW. Employed in the Indian jute trade.

1873

Sailed from London to Calcutta in 90 days under command of Captain E. Hughes.

1887

Sailed from San Francisco 27 April bound for Cork or Falmouth under Captain Cotter with a cargo of wheat.

1887 June 27

Struck on the shore of the south-west of Bull Point, Falkland Islands and became a total wreck.

1887 June 28

The crew left the ship in two lifeboats at 8am as the sea was running high. Eight of the crew drowned when one of the lifeboats containing 11 men capsized in the surf. [H40] The survivors spent the night in a tent. [H42; 146]

NAME	DATE OF DEATH	TYPE/ LOCATION	NOTES
FRASER, John	1887 Jun 28	DROWNING	Chief mate of Star of Scotia stranded at Bull Point 27 Jun 1887 11pm
BURTON, Arthur or Walter	1887 Jun 28	DROWNING	Apprentice of Star of Scotia stranded at Bull Point 27 Jun 1887 11pm
ANDERSON, J	1887 Jun 28	DROWNING	AB of Star of Scotia stranded at Bull Point 27 Jun 1887 11pm
PARKINSON, D	1887 Jun 28	DROWNING	AB of Star of Scotia stranded at Bull Point 27 Jun 1887 11pm
WILLIS, A	1887 Jun 28	DROWNING	AB of Star of Scotia stranded at Bull Point 27 Jun 1887 11pm
TURNER, J	1887 Jun 28	DROWNING	AB of Star of Scotia stranded at Bull Point 27 Jun 1887 11pm
CASEY, E	1887 Jun 28	DROWNING	AB of Star of Scotia stranded at Bull Point 27 Jun 1887 11pm
ROBERTS, D	1887 Jun 28	DROWNING	AB of Star of Scotia stranded at Bull Point 27 Jun 1887 11pm

Six bodies were washed ashore; two on the Island and four on the Mainland. The four on the shore were buried eight days after they were washed up by the Captain and the Cook.

1887 June 30

The shepherd Jaffray found the men and took them to his house.

1887 July 08

The FIC's boat the *Hornet* was dispatched to Fanny Cove to collect the survivors of the crew. FIG paid £50 for the service. [H42, 14; D20, 153]

1887 July 11

The master, M COTTER, requests an enquiry into the loss of the ship. ON47190 of the Port of Belfast. [H42, 8; D20, 154, 155, 156]

1887 July 14

The Governor writes suggesting that due to numerous casualties a lighthouse is erected at Bull Point. Seven ships & 13 lives lost on or near Bull Point since 1880. [B21, 307]

THE LOSS OF THE STAR OF SCOTIA.

THE Nautical Assessors have made an inquiry under Ordinance No. 3 of 1882, into the circumstances attending the loss of the British Barque "Star of Scotia," which occurred on the 27th June last. The barque "Star of Scotia," of Belfast, Michael Cotter, master, belonged to James P. Corry & Co., of Belfast and London, and sailed from San Francisco, California, on the 27th April, laden with a cargo of wheat. The "Star of Scotia," which was 999 tons register, and was laden with a cargo of wheat, struck on the shore on the South-West of Bull Point, on the South Coast of the East Falkland Island, on the 27th June, 1887, and became shortly afterwards a total wreck. The vessel was heading up at the time N.N.E., by compass, to enable the master to clear the Islands, having had the last observations at noon on the 25th June. After carefully investigating the evidence given by Captain Cotter, the Second Mate, Steward, and two of the crew, the Court have come to the conclusion that the loss of the "Star of Scotia" was due to the following circumstances:—
1st. That soundings were not sought to verify the position of the ship, although such could have been obtained, the lead not having been hove once.
2nd. That the First Mate, W. Fraser, was to blame for not showing greater activity when the land was sighted.
3rd. That the loss of life was caused by negligence displayed in the management of the Mate's boat after they left the ship. That the Court is therefore of opinion that Mr. Cotter, master of the barque "Star of Scotia," is not to blame for the loss of the said vessel, and his certificate is therefore returned, but he is cautioned for the future to give the Falkland Islands a wider berth, as there is nothing to be gained by homeward bound ships in keeping too close to these Islands. We have great pleasure in returning the certificate of Walter Johnson, the Second Mate, whom, together with the survivors of the crew, we acquit of all blame in the matter. As this inquiry was applied for by Captain Cotter, of the late barque 'Star of Scotia,' the cost of the same, amounting to £6 6s, will have to be borne by the ship."

BOARD OF TRADE (MARINE DEPARTMENT), LONDON, S. W., 1887.

Madam—In compliance with the request contained in your letter of the 6th inst., I am directed by the Board of Trade to transmit to you the accompanying copy of the evidence taken at the official enquiry, held in the case of the "Star of Scotia." A printed copy of the report of the Court is also enclosed herein.

I am, Madam, your obedient servant,
THOMAS GREY.

Mrs. J. M. STUART,
Glenada, Newcastle, Co. Down.

[COPY, M 16211.]

POLICE COURT, STANLEY, FALKLAND ISLANDS,
13th of July, 1887.

An enquiry, held by direction of His Excellency, Governor Kerr, at the request of Captain Cotter, respecting the wreck of the British barque "Star of Scotia," official No. 47190 of the Port of Belfast, 999 tons register, iron built; owned by James P. Corry & Co. of Belfast and London, and bound from San Francisco, California, to Cork or Falmouth, for orders, with a cargo of wheat, which vessel was lost on the 27th of June, 1887, on Bull point, South coast, East Falkland Islands. Before Henry B. L. Jameson, Acting Police Magistrate.

LEWIS LAMBERT,
Master of Ship, Beston Hall, Assessor.

G. G. TATE,
Master of Ship, Approbite, Assessor.

Michael Cotter sworn—I was the master of the late ship "Star of Scotia," number of my certificate, 33659 (certificate handed in). We were bound from San Francisco to Cork or Falmouth for orders. We left San Francisco on the 27th April last. The vessel was strong and well found leaving San Francisco. We had a gale of wind on the 23rd June from the Eastward. The Log Books were lost coming on shore.

By Captain Lambert—We were a little to the S.E. of Cape Diego, Ramirey, when we met the Easterly gale. Cape Diego, Ramery, was sighted on the 22nd—Easterly gale experienced on the next day. On the 22nd Cape Ramirey bore N.N.E., true about six or seven miles. The weather was very cloudy, greasy-looking, threatening weather. On the 25th we got a meridian altitude of the sun. The position at noon was Lat. 57°50' S. Long. 67°30' W. (piece of the chart produced), this was the last observation. We were on the starboard tack. Wind unsteady from E. to S.E. We used no patent log. The distance run in the 24 hours was about 160 miles. On the 26th Cape St. John bore N.N.W., about 65 miles (judging from the distance run), we did not sight the Island. On the 27th the wind was N.W. in the fore part of the day (whole sail breeze), afternoon, hauled round to the South, with snow. It was very cloudy and hazy; we tried to make a N.E. course, true. At noon, on the 27th, we were steering N.N.E. by compass. Deviation, 13° Easterly, true course, N.E. by E. Part of the evening we steered N.N.E., $\frac{1}{4}$ East, and I changed the course again to N.N.E., when I found the wind steady to the South. In the night the wind was S. to S.S.E., with snow; it threatened to freshen to a gale, so I took in top gallant sails, and shortened sail. There was no indication or sign of land; we looked for Beauchesee Island, but could not see it. The chief officer was in charge of the deck; there was a good look-out kept, as far as I know; the ship struck about 11 p.m., on the S.W. point of Bull Point, we went right stem on. The day before we sighted Cape Ramirey, we swung the ship and found the following deviations:—N.E., 10° Easterly, N.N.E., 13° ditto, N., 13° ditto, 21st June. When I found we were on shore I provisioned the boats and made preparation to land. The Carpenter had sounded more than once; the main pumps were choked up with wheat. The wind when we struck, was between S. and S.E. There was no more water than usual in the fore-compartment. We did not try and get her off again; the sea was breaking over the stern (heavy surf), and I did not think it prudent to remain by the ship after day-light. We left her about 8 a.m. on the 28th, in two life boats. I had charge of the Starboard and the Mate had charge of the Port. The Mate was drowned. I do not know the particulars except from the survivors of the boat. We used the regular hand-log, it was carefully attended to. I was on deck all day and turned in about 9 p.m.; I had ordered the Mate to change the course

from N.N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ E., to N.N.E. ; I looked at the chart and reckoned we were sufficiently to the East of the Islands to keep the N.N.E. course by compass. The reason I give for the accident was, the deviation of the compass must have altered. Off Cape Diego, Ramirey, sights were taken, and the error of the chronometer was found ; there were two chronometers on board. I noticed a strong current setting to the S. and E. of Cape Ramirey. We had no opportunity of taking observations after the 25th. I noticed that when the ship was lying on the beach, at noon (by the course we were steering the sun should have been 4 points on the port-bow), it did not seem to bear more than two points. The Leads and Lines were not on deck as we did not judge we were near enough to the land to require their presence on deck. We took every opportunity of ascertaining the deviation of the compasses (several times each day as we approached the land) ; and I looked after the navigation of the ship carefully. Two compasses were on deck.

Signed,
HENRY B. L. JAMESON, M. COTTER,
Acting Police Magistrate.

Walter Johnson sworn—I am the Second Mate of the late ship "Star of Scotia" (certificate handed in), No. 342. I joined the ship on the 23rd May, 1886, at Sydney, New South Wales. Her cargo was wheat. She was bound from San Francisco to the United Kingdom. The ship was well found. The 1st Mate was on deck when the accident occurred—it was his watch.

By Captain Lambert—The Chief Mate kept the Log Book ; I did not keep a log myself. I took observations very seldom, and none for some days previous to the accident. The log was hove every two hours. I was on deck from 6 to 8 p.m. ; the course steering was N.N.E. I go forward occasionally when on deck to see if the man on the look-out is keeping a good look-out. The idea crossed my mind at the time, of getting the ship off, but it would have been impossible ; I consider we left the ship just at the right time. I had nothing whatever to do with the navigation of the vessel. The Lead and Lines were not on deck. The orders of the Captain were always carried out in my watch.

Signed,
HENRY B. L. JAMESON, WALTER JOHNSON,
Acting Police Magistrate. Second Mate.

Patrick Drummond sworn—I was an A. B. of the late ship "Star of Scotia ;" I was on deck when the ship struck ; I joined her on the 23rd April, 1887, in San Francisco. It was a stiff breeze ; very dark astern when the vessel struck. I was walking forward on the starboard side when the Mate sang out "Land right a-head." The weather was clear a-head. All hands were called on deck ; about five minutes after they came on deck the vessel struck. As soon as she struck the upper topsails were lowered down ; lower topsails and foresail and mainsail clewed up. I do not know what was done with the helm. Arthur Burton, the apprentice, was at the helm. The ship was in good order when she left San Francisco. I left the ship in the First Mate's boat ; there were ten of us in the boat ; the boat was capsized by the sea ; we were all thrown out ; six of us got in again, and she was capsized a second time ; she was capsized four times, and the last time there were only four of us got into her. Willis fell overboard, and there were the Mate, Davies, and myself left. The boat drove ashore. I think it was the cold and wet killed the Mate. All the bodies were buried, except two washed ashore on the Island.

Signed,
PATRICK DRUMMOND.

HENRY B. L. JAMESON,
Acting Police Magistrate.

David Davies sworn—I was an A. B. of the late ship "Star of Scotia." I was on deck at the time of the accident. I joined the ship at San Francisco. I was down on the main deck at the time of the accident ; I heard the Mate singing out "Do you see the land right a-head," just as the Mate was singing out the man on the look-out was singing out too. The Mate gave orders to let go the main sheet, and lower down the main top sail. Nothing more was done until the watch came on deck. The watch came on deck ten minutes after the ship struck. The apprentice Burton was at the wheel. I heard the Mate give no orders to the man at the wheel. I came ashore in the Port life boat. The First Mate was in charge of the boat ; the First Mate was steering ; he did not steer her at all ; there was no rudder, he had only an oar to steer with. The boat upset because there was no one to steer her in the trough of the sea ; I hung on to the boat. The boat capsized four times, six bodies were washed ashore, two on the Island and four ashore. The

6

four on the shore were buried eight days after they were washed up. The first night we lived in a tent; the next day the shepherd came down and took us up to his house.

Signed,

HENRY B. L. JAMESON,
Acting Police Magistrate,

DAVID DAVIES,

Alexander Gordon sworn—I was the Steward of the late ship "Star of Scotia," I joined the ship at Sydney, New South Wales. I was below at the time of the accident; I was coming up the companion as she struck. Hearing the Chief Officer call the Second Mate, I came on deck, the Second Mate was up before me. The Chief Mate and Captain were on the poop when I came up. I heard the Captain singing out to the man at the wheel, to put the helm hard up. After the ship struck, the Captain went below to dress himself. I went to see after provisions for the boats. I came ashore in the starboard boat (Captain's boat). About twenty minutes after we left the ship, we pulled down towards the other boat; the Captain thought he could only see three men, afterwards thinking they were all there we pulled for the shore. We had a steering oar fixed in our own boat. Davies was entangled helpless in the Mate's boat when she drifted on shore; Drummond was hanging on the outside of the boat. He staid under the tent that night. About 4 p.m. next day we went to the house. On the 8th July the schooner "Hornet" arrived and took us into Stanley. Jefferies is the name of the man who looked after us after being wrecked. The Captain and the Cook went down and buried four or five bodies that were washed up.

Signed,

HENRY B. L. JAMESON,
Acting Police Magistrate.

ALEXANDER GORDON,

Captain Cotter sworn—After we got near the shore we went round behind the Island to look for the Mate's boat; we saw the boat in smooth water; I thought there were only three men in her, but the other people said they were all there. I sang out and waved my hand for them to follow us, and then pulled for the shore. We stayed that night on the beach under a tent. We saw the shepherd at about 4 or 5 p.m., that day.

7

I did not like to leave the two men who were not sufficiently recovered. About a week afterwards we buried four bodies found on the beach. The men all behaved well all the time.

Signed,

HENRY B. L. JAMESON,
Acting Police Magistrate.

M. COTTER.

In publishing the foregoing Report of the loss of the "Star of Scotia," as given at Stanley, Falkland Islands. My reason is that the Public may judge how far the President and assessors of the Court referred to, were justified in introducing clause 2 into their report, which reads:—"That the first Mate W. Fraser was to blame for not shewing greater activity when the land was sighted," and which report was published in the Public Press of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in September last.

The Board of Trade have given that report; I have now given the evidence on which that report was based, and it will be perceived that nothing in the evidence gives the slightest grounds for clause 2. On the contrary Mr. Fraser shewed all care and foresight, and action, when called on by the circumstances. It is shewn that there were regular observations taken; that the ship's position was verified by sighting Diego Ramirez, and Mr. Fraser had a perfect ground to assume the land to be thirty miles distant (West of him), and was supported in this by the action of Captain Cotter changing the course from N.N.E. $\frac{1}{2}$ E. to N.N.E.; and up to 9 o'clock on the night of the accident, there certainly was no sign of land, nor any indication of danger; and when *something* appeared in view a-head, Mr. Fraser was perfectly justified in being *fully* assured it was *land* or something *tangible* ere he took any steps to avoid it, and the evidence conclusively shews he did. The evidence of the man Daves is, that Mr. Fraser gave orders to let go the main sheet, and lower down the main topsail; and, whilst this man could hear the orders given to the Watch, he, being on the main deck, could not hear what was said at the stern. The wind was from S. to S.E. The ship struck *end on* to the sea, thus placing her head in the direction of N. or N.W., being SIX points off her course. Query—was there any lack of "activity" or judgment shown here? It seems very convenient for Nautical

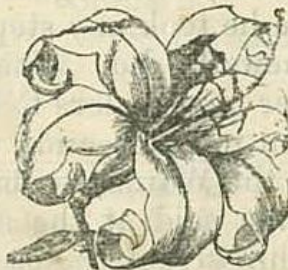
Assessors to make careless statements, or at any rate, questionable statements, and, unfortunately, the First Mate, the man on the look-out, and the man at the wheel, in this lamentable case are not alive to give *their* version. Enough, however, is known from the evidence to say that the official report does not in the clause referred to above receive any support therefrom, and with regard to the "mismanagement" of the boat, do the assessors mean to hold the Steersman wholly responsible? When a boat gets on the crest of a wave and takes a sheer, can the Steersman in EVERY CASE keep it straight; are there not instances occurring in our own vicinities, almost daily, in which the best boatmen in the world are unable to prevent a catastrophe? and in saying Mr Fraser was "Not steering at all," Davies does not say WHY; and I have heard seamen say that on the CREST of the wave is the danger, not in the trough of the sea, and when the boat was upset, was it the fault of the STEERSMAN ONLY? There is no evidence to shew MR. FRASER WAS THE CAUSE of the loss of the boat's crew.

In thus publishing this letter, with the other communications referred to above, I do so that the aspersions on the character of the Mate, W. Fraser, my nephew and my adopted son, may be placed in their true light.

Yours Truly,

October 20th 1887.

J. M. STUART,
Glenada, Newcastle, Co. Down.



J. REED, PRINTER, VICTORIA STREET, BELFAST.