



# THE MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1894

## REPORT OF COURT

(No. S.461)

### s.t. "Ella Hewett" O.N. 185862

In the matter of a Formal Investigation held at The Town Hall, Fleetwood, on the 14th and 15th days of May 1963, before John Roland Adams, Esquire, Q.C., Wreck Commissioner assisted by Captain J. E. Cooper, O.B.E., Captain T. White, O.B.E., and Mr. W. J. Wood, into the circumstances attending the stranding on a wreck off Rathlin Island and the subsequent total loss of the British Steam Trawler "Ella Hewett" of London, Official Number 185862.

The Court having carefully inquired into the circumstances attending the above-mentioned shipping casualty, finds for the reasons stated in the Annex hereto, that the said stranding and subsequent total loss were caused by the wrongful act or default of her skipper, William Storm Gregson, and of her second hand, James Rixom, as appears in the same Annex and suspends the certificate of the said William Storm Gregson for a period of three years from the date hereof and cancels the certificate of the said James Rixom.

Dated this sixteenth day of May, 1963.

J. ROLAND ADAMS, *Judge*

We concur in the above Report.

J. E. COOPER }  
T. WHITE } *Assessors.*  
W. J. WOOD }

#### ANNEX TO THE REPORT

1. Shortly after 1830 hours on Friday the 2nd November 1962, the steam trawler "Ella Hewett" struck some part of the wreck of H.M.S. "Drake" lying in Church Bay off Rathlin Island and was held by the obstruction until some hours later she filled with water, capsized and sank. At the time the trawler struck the wreck the weather was fine and clear and the conditions of wind and sea were tranquil. Church Bay is well covered by visual aids to navigation in the form of lighthouses exhibiting lights of considerable power, and the wreck of the "Drake" itself is marked by an unlighted bouy. It was the task of the Court to determine why, in these ideal conditions, this valuable trawler was allowed to

strike an obstruction whose presence was well-known to those on board her and why, as was the case, no significant steps were taken to extricate the vessel from her predicament before she filled with water.

2. The material particulars of the "Ella Hewett" are set out in Appendix A which forms part of this Report. The relevant aspects of the earlier history of the voyage are covered by the Questions and the Court's answers thereto. It will be sufficient for the purposes of this Annex if the story is taken up when at about 1530 hours on the 2nd November the trawler, then being a few miles to the eastward of The Maidens, the skipper, William Storm Gregson, ordered the second hand, James Rixom, to make for Church Bay in order there to land the cook who had sustained injuries due to a fall while the trawler was bunkering at Heysham. The Court accepts the reason given by the skipper for his choice of an unlikely place such as Rathlin Island for the purpose of obtaining medical attention for a member of his crew, which was that owing to a grave lack of discipline amongst some of his engine-room personnel he feared to enter any port or harbour at which the unruly members of his crew might be able to desert. This may not reflect very favourably upon the conditions aboard the trawler, but it at least makes sense.

3. Having decided to make for Church Bay, the skipper thereafter left the whole of the navigation in charge of the second hand, who was himself the holder of a skippers certificate. No difficulty was encountered up to 1830 hours, at which time Rue Point, which is the southern extremity of Rathlin Island, was abeam. From that moment until the vessel struck the second hand navigated her without reference to any chart, without taking bearings of any light and relying wholly upon Radar observations of the coastline of the island and of the wreck buoy which latter he, at a very late moment, picked up in the beam of the vessel's searchlight. The Court heard testimony from the man who was at the wheel during this approach and from the second hand himself, and save that from moment to moment the course was altered 2 or perhaps 3 points to starboard so as to bring the vessel on to a more easterly heading it is impossible to discover how she was conned round into the bay. This is a bay which can be entered perfectly safely

in clear weather by proper observation of the lights and by paying proper attention to bearings. It is unnecessary and therefore improper to rely upon Radar for the purpose of accomplishing this piece of navigation. The second hand freely admitted in evidence that he wholly relied upon the Radar and was inclined to suggest that there was something wrong with the set. Neither he nor any other witness ever gave positive evidence that there was anything wrong with its operation, and the skipper said it was in good order. Just as the successive changes of course and the distances run on each course are impossible to determine from the evidence, so is the speed at which the "Ella Hewett" entered the bay difficult to ascertain. The second hand was standing in towards the shore for the purpose of anchoring in or about an anchorage marked as such on the charts, and he had sent the bo'sun forward to prepare the anchor for dropping. The evidence, obscure as it is, would seem to indicate that at the time she struck the wreck the "Ella Hewett" must still have been doing substantially more than her half speed of about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  knots.

4. The difficulties of the Court have been added to by the complete absence of any form of log or other record kept either on the bridge or in the engine-room of this vessel. The witnesses who gave their testimony orally were hopelessly unreliable both as to their recollection and as to their grasp of what they were talking about, and it is not possible to come nearer to the truth about this deplorable incident than to say that the second hand blundered on to the wreck of the "Drake" without any real appreciation of what was necessary and easily available to keep him clear of this and all other local dangers. It is noteworthy that the second hand at no time during this approach consulted a chart, took a compass bearing or made use of any sounding device. By these failures, he showed himself to be wholly unsuited to have the sole charge of a valuable piece of property and a number of lives.

5. Before passing to the equally important and equally deplorable failures on the part of the skipper after he discovered that his ship had been placed in peril by the blunders of the second hand, the Court must consider the grave error of omission on the part of the skipper which allowed the vessel to be in charge of the second hand while approaching an anchorage selected by the skipper himself. The evidence appeared to be that the skipper had been into Church Bay on several occasions including two occasions when the second hand had been at the wheel and the skipper himself in charge of the navigation. Both of these occasions were in daylight. It is the view of the Court and very strongly the view of the Assessors that the master or skipper of a ship ought to be on the bridge and in charge when entering or leaving a port or anchorage, and it is impossible to stop short of a finding that skipper Gregson's failure in this respect was a contributory cause of this casualty. The skipper in effect said so himself.

6. As soon as the trawler struck the wreck the skipper rushed to the bridge. Unfortunately it cannot be said that he "took charge" in any real sense of that expression. He described himself as being "in a flat spin", and save for one or two rather futile attempts to move the vessel by working her engines ahead and astern he did nothing potentially useful or even

reasonably imaginative towards attempting to extricate the trawler from her predicament. He admitted that later he thought of a number of things he might have done, but went on "But when you have to make a decision there and then you just . . ." and left it at that. Although the trawler was well supplied with charts and other publications from which he could have ascertained precisely the tidal conditions, he cherished for some hours the futile and unchecked hope that the tide might rise sufficiently to float his vessel off. In fact the rise and fall to be expected at this place is not much better than 2 feet, and the skipper did nothing himself to establish what was the state of the tide at the moment of striking. In this connection the skipper made the following replies to questions by the Court: "(Q): You tell us that you, a certificated man, thought it was about low water? (A): Yes. (Q): A certificated man immediately thinks 'How much more water may I expect in about six hours'? (A): Yes. (Q): And there are easy, ready-made, ways of finding that out? (A): Yes, I realise that. (Q): Did you do that? (A): No, I did not, sir. (Mr. Stone: Q): What information or experience were you relying on when you thought you would get about two fathoms? (The Commissioner): Hope, perhaps. (A): That's quite correct, sir. (Mr. Stone: Q): But not from your experience of any place you had ever been in in this vicinity? (A): No. (The Commissioner): Well, of course, there are places less than a hundred miles away where there is 15 or 16 feet. (A): I don't know what the state of the tide is now. I knew all about it when I got my ticket, but I don't know now. (Q): Principally your job is to find fish? (A): Yes, that's right, sir."

7. It was not until 2210 hours that it was discovered that water was entering the ship in substantial quantities. In the absence of any log entries it is almost impossible to determine the progress of the increase of water in the vessel, but it is probable that an appreciable entry was observed by the chief engineer in the bilges in the after part of the vessel about two hours after the stranding. From then on the chief engineer made the best possible use of his available pumps, but the water gained and at 2210 hours the skipper made his first communication to the outside world in the form of a link telephone call with his owner's agents in Belfast in the course of which it seems likely that he was asking for a tug. It was through the Belfast agents and not from the skipper himself that the owners got their first news of the casualty. The situation continued to deteriorate, and at somewhere about 2230 hours the chief engineer, who had found fuel oil accumulating on the top of the water in the stokehold, decided that the requirements of safety demanded that the fires should be drawn, which led not too long afterwards to a failure of the steam necessary to drive the pumps. Pumping being no longer possible, at 0052 hours on Saturday the 3rd November a May Day message was sent out asking for immediate assistance. There was a prompt response from the Portrush lifeboat which was mainly concerned with the saving of life and at least two steamers replied to the distress signal. Neither apparently was able to render effective assistance, and neither, in fact, came close to the casualty.

8. Meanwhile, the representative of the owners at Fleetwood, Mr. Robert Peter Graham Hewett, who had heard of the casualty at somewhere about 2300 hours on the 2nd, had informed the represent-

ative of the Fleetwood S Insurance Company of the casualty and apart from message to the trawler had apparently done nothing. He was asked "From the message received from your Belfast agent that the vessel was in some way stranded until she was abandoned, what did you do to obtain assistance by way of salvaging the vessel? (A): I personally did not do anything. I had contacted Mr. Outhwaite, who knows the people and the area, and upon himself to ring round the vessels in the area. (Q): So the matter in the hands of the vessel? (A): Yes; I was during the time". Whatever the availability of potential assistance, the first few hours after the vessel appeared to the Court that the skipper was of lethargy about the whole matter, assisted by experienced men, in the opinion that greater vigour and energy in the way of suggestions to the vessel and appeals to other vessels might have been of some use. (Q): Any positive action being taken to save the vessel, if necessary, beach the "Ella Hewett"?

9. At about 1100 hours on the 3rd November the starboard list of the vessel was observed to an extent that it was thought that the members of the crew to be taken to the lifeboat, and these were landed on the lifeboat afterwards. The lifeboat remained on stand by, and at 2115 hours the vessel was of the crew having been taken to the lifeboat, the "Ella Hewett" heeled over and sank.

10. The Court is unable to say whether which the skipper could have done, but it is probable that they might have been a number of courses might have been a number of courses equipped with a kedge anchor and the lifeboat was quite robust enough to have engaged the trawler and it may well be that a tug might have disengaged the trawler and the wreck she was sitting on. It is probable she had plenty of water in the bilges, part of her length, being 100 feet long. There was indeed evidence that the vessel over an arc of about 2 points, and the wind and slight swell. It is probable some consideration was given to the possibility of getting rid of the water of fresh water carried in the bilges of the vessel, probably immediately after at which the vessel was heeled over. It was control and command on board the vessel was done and no positive action was taken. Evidence that the skipper was of lethargy to the shifting of weights on board the vessel by way of attempting to get rid of the compartment or get rid of the water of the vessel. The Court is unable to say none of the time-honoured methods of a practical seaman has been tried. (Q): Of this kind was attempted?

11. In the circumstances, the Court will mine how best to make a

ative of the Fleetwood Steam Trawlers Mutual Insurance Company of the nature and position of the casualty and apart from making further link calls to the trawler had apparently done nothing more. He was asked "From the moment that you learned from your Belfast agent that the 'Ella Hewett' was in some way stranded until the time that she was abandoned, what did you do about getting any assistance by way of salvage assistance? (A): I personally did not do anything, sir. I immediately contacted Mr. Outhwaite of Fleetwood Insurance who knows the people and I don't and he took it upon himself to ring round and find out what assistance was available. (Q): So the answer is 'I placed the matter in the hands of Mr. Outhwaite and I left it there'? (A): Yes; I was in consultation with him during the time". Whatever may in fact have been the availability of potentially useful salvage craft in the first few hours after the "Ella Hewett" struck, it appeared to the Court that there was an atmosphere of lethargy about the whole situation. The Court, assisted by experienced nautical Assessors, is of opinion that greater vigour and resourcefulness by way of suggestions to the skipper as well as by appeals to other vessels might have resulted in effective action being taken to disengage and thereafter, if necessary, beach the "Ella Hewett".

9. At about 1100 hours on the 3rd November the starboard list of the vessel had increased to such an extent that it was thought wise to allow 13 members of the crew to be taken off in the Portrush lifeboat, and these were landed at Ballycastle shortly afterwards. The lifeboat returned and continued to stand by, and at 2115 hours the remaining members of the crew having been taken on board the lifeboat, the "Ella Hewett" heeled over on to her beam ends and sank.

10. The Court is unable to say that the measures which the skipper could have taken would have been successful, but it is strongly of opinion that they might have been and that several different courses might have been adopted. The trawler was equipped with a kedge anchor which her own lifeboat was quite robust enough to carry out and drop, and it may well be that a good pull on a wire would have disengaged the trawler from whatever part of the wreck she was sitting on, since it is known that she had plenty of water under her for the greater part of her length, being held only on the port side aft. There was indeed evidence that she was swinging over an arc of about 2 points under the influence of the wind and slight swell. It is right to record that some consideration was given by the second hand to the possibility of getting rid of some of the weight of fresh water carried in tanks in the after part of the vessel, probably immediately above the point at which the vessel was held, but such was the lack of control and command on board the vessel that nothing was done and no positive orders given. There is no evidence that the skipper himself gave any thought to the shifting of weights within the vessel whether by way of attempting to add weight to any forward compartment or get rid of weights in the after part of the vessel. The Court was indeed advised that none of the time-honoured practices to which a practical seaman has recourse to in an emergency of this kind was attempted.

11. In the circumstances, the Court has to determine how best to make an example of the failures

which it has found so as to bring home to the mariners concerned and to others the serious nature of the carelessness, slackness and lack of imagination which led cumulatively to the loss of this trawler. It has come to the conclusion that the second hand, James Rixom, who is 52 years old, ought not to be held out to the world as a person competent to command a fishing vessel and cancels his skipper's certificate, at the same time recommending to the Minister that he be granted a second hand's certificate at the Minister's discretion. The skipper, who is 35 years of age, showed himself to be gravely deficient in the qualities of a commander, but at his age he may well learn from this tragic lesson. His faults are manifestly defects of character which he may learn to overcome. In these circumstances the Court suspends his certificate for three years and orders that he pay £200 towards the cost of this investigation which was made necessary by the loss of this valuable trawler.

12. The Court formed a strong impression that the hand of management lay lightly upon those who took to sea this valuable piece of property and 19 lives, and recommends a general tightening up in the relations between these owners, their skippers and crews.

13. Unhappily, this case affords yet another example of too much reliance being placed on radar.

#### APPENDIX A

##### STEAM TRAWLER "ELLA HEWETT"

OFFICIAL NUMBER 185862

PORT OF REGISTRY, LONDON

##### DESCRIPTION OF SHIP

###### *General*

The "Ella Hewett" was a single screw steam trawler, built of steel and having a single deck.

###### *Dimensions and tonnages*

The registered dimensions were: 170.1' x 29.2' x 14.5'.

The tonnages were:—

Gross 594.52  
Underdeck 426.03  
Nett 217.43

###### *Bulkheads*

The vessel had eight oil and watertight bulkheads separating the following compartments:—

Fore peak tank,  
Chain locker, feed tank and store rooms,  
Fish room,  
Cofferdam,  
Oil fuel bunkers,  
Engine and boiler spaces,  
Aft peak tank with accommodation over,  
Steering engine compartment,  
Cod liver oil storage tank.

###### *Propelling machinery*

The machinery consisted of a triple expansion steam engine supplied with steam by one cylindrical multitubular boiler. Engines and boiler were made in 1953 by Charles D. Holmes & Company Limited, Hull.

### Compasses

The vessel was equipped with a 9" overhead liquid compass in the wheelhouse, and a similar compass on a pole on the fore side of the wheelhouse. Both compasses were adjusted on 25th August 1962 and a deviation card issue.

### Life saving appliances

The vessel was provided with:—

- Two 21 ft. wood lifeboats each for 26 persons.
- Two inflatable liferafts each for 10 persons.
- Four circular cork lifebuoys.
- Nineteen standard M.O.T. lifejackets.
- Schermuly Supreme line throwing appliance.
- Twelve parachute distress rockets.

The life saving appliances were last inspected by a Ministry of Transport Surveyor on 13th February 1962, and a record of inspection (Surveys 183A) issued.

### Radio or Radio Telephone apparatus

The vessel was fitted with:—

- W.T. transmitter Marconi Transarctic II with type 993 receiver.
- Receiver—Marconi type C.R. 300/2.
- Receiver—Marconi type 1060D with D.F. Loop type 542A.
- R.T. Transmitter & Receiver. Redifon V.H.F. type G.R. 286.
- Receiver—Eddystone V.H.F. type 770 R.

### Electronic navigational equipment

The vessel was equipped with:—

- Radar—Decca type 12.
- Radar—Decca type 404 with variable range marker.
- Depth recorder—Marconi Seagraph II.
- Depth recorder—Kelvin Hughes type M.S. 29 F.
- Electric log—Walkers.

The vessel was also provided with two hand leads complete with lines.

### Classification

The "Ella Hewett" was classed 100 A1 (Trawler) with Lloyds Register of Shipping. The classification certificates for hull and machinery were issued on 21st September 1961, and the most recent periodical survey to maintain class was made on 20th August 1962.

### Pumps

The types and capacities of the pumps on board "Ella Hewett" were as follows:—

- (i) Two engine driven ram displacement bilge pumps—2 $\frac{3}{4}$ " diameter, 15" stroke. Capacity of each 10 tons per hour, i.e. 20 tons for both.
- (ii) Two engine driven Feed Pumps, details as above, such being solely for feeding water into the boiler.
- (iii) One Circulating Pump of Centrifugal type, suction and discharge 7" diameter capable of expelling water from stokehold (per engine room) and from engine room at 90 tons per hour.
- (iv) One Bilge Ejector 3" diameter of a capacity of 24 tons per hour to expel water from the bilges of any compartment in the ship.

(v) One Haywood Tyler horizontal steam Duplex pump—fuel transfer up to 15 tons per hour into any fuel tank except diesel tanks or overside.

(vi) One General Service vertical Duplex Pump—steam Holmes, 7" x 5" x 6" of capacity of 35 tons per hour from bilges of any compartment.

(vii) One Feed Pump 7" x 5" x 6" similar to above of capacity of 35 tons per hour used for pumping water into boiler.

(viii) 3 deck hand pumps 1 of 4" diameter serving the engine room, 1 of 6" diameter serving the fish room and 1 of 6" diameter serving the fore hold.

All these pumps are manually operated.

### Tanks

The capacities of the ship's tanks and the quantities of fuel and water in the tanks at the time of sailing are as follows:—

(i) 5 boiler feed tanks, viz.

- (1) Centre forward 16 tons capacity.
  - (2) Port forward double bottom 11 $\frac{1}{2}$  tons capacity.
  - (3) Starboard forward double bottom 11 $\frac{1}{2}$  tons capacity.
  - (4) Starboard aft double bottom 16 tons capacity.
  - (5) Port aft double bottom 16 tons capacity.
- All were full on sailing from Fleetwood.

(ii) Cod liver oil storage tank 11 tons capacity. It was empty at the time of sailing and would fill on the voyage as the commodity was extracted from the catch.

(iii) Domestic fresh water tanks

Port and starboard saddle tanks in tunnel such being mated of a total capacity 12 tons. They were full on sailing.  
Port deep wing tank 11 tons capacity.  
Starboard deep wing tank 11 tons capacity.  
Both full on sailing from Fleetwood.

(iv) Fuel Deep tanks 7 in all, viz.

- No. 2 Port forward side. 27 $\frac{1}{2}$  tons. Full on sailing from Heysham.
- No. 3 Starboard forward side. 27 $\frac{1}{2}$  tons. Full on sailing from Heysham.
- No. 1 Port aft side. 26 $\frac{1}{2}$  tons. Full on sailing from Heysham.
- No. 4 Starboard aft side. 26 $\frac{1}{2}$  tons. Full on sailing from Heysham.
- No. 6 Centre forward. 65 tons containing 38 tons on sailing from Heysham.
- No. 5 Centre aft. 60 tons. Full on sailing from Heysham.
- No. 7 Diesel oil tank on forward engine bulkhead centre athwartships. 5 tons. Estimated contents on sailing from Fleetwood 4 tons.

### APPENDIX B

The following appeared at the Inquiry:—

For the Ministry of Transport:

Mr. R. F. Stone (instructed by the Treasury Solicitor).

For Heward Trawlers:  
Mr. Jeffreys  
Hill Dickinson

For the skipper,  
Mr. B. R. D.  
John Whittle.

For the second,  
Mr. F. Robb  
Clegg & Crow

The following  
Inquiry:—

Mr. Robert P.  
Manager of H.  
Hewett Fishing

Mr. Thomas C.  
Heward Trawling  
Company Limited

Mr. Edward C.  
Hewett".

Mr. Harold M.  
the s.s. "Isolda"

Mr. Russell J.  
Hewett".

Mr. William  
Hewett".

Mr. Robert  
Hewett".

Mr. John Rich  
Hewett".

Mr. Harold H.  
"Ella Hewett"

Mr. Edward J.  
Hewett".

Mr. Brian Jan  
of the "Ella He

Mr. James R.  
Hewett".

Mr. William S.  
Hewett".

Mr. John A.  
Surveyor at Li

### QUESTIONS

Q. 1. By who  
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Q. 2. Where,  
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Q. 3. Did th  
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A. Yes.

For Heward Trawlers Limited:  
Mr. Jeffreys Collinson (instructed by Messrs. Hill Dickinson & Company, Liverpool).

For the skipper, Mr. William Storm Gregson:  
Mr. B. R. Duckworth (instructed by Messrs. John Whittle, Robinson & Bailey, Preston).

For the second hand, Mr. James Rixom:  
Mr. F. Roberts of Messrs. Charles Ingham, Clegg & Crowther, Fleetwood.

#### APPENDIX C

The following witnesses were called at the Inquiry:—

Mr. Robert Peter Graham Hewett, Fleetwood Manager of Heward Trawlers Limited and the Hewett Fishing Company Limited.

Mr. Thomas Cato, Superintendent Engineer to Heward Trawlers Limited and Hewett Fishing Company Limited.

Mr. Edward Chard, Ship's Husband for the "Ella Hewett".

Mr. Harold Munro McClenahan, second officer of the s.s. "Isolda".

Mr. Russell John Harvey, cook of the "Ella Hewett".

Mr. William Bond, deckhand on the "Ella Hewett".

Mr. Robert Taylor, deckhand on the "Ella Hewett".

Mr. John Richard Stewart, deckhand on the "Ella Hewett".

Mr. Harold Huntingford, chief engineer of the "Ella Hewett".

Mr. Edward James Chilvers, bo'sun of the "Ella Hewett".

Mr. Brian James Hind, wireless telegraphy officer of the "Ella Hewett".

Mr. James Rixom, second hand of the "Ella Hewett".

Mr. William Storm Gregson, skipper of the "Ella Hewett".

Mr. John Arthur Hampton, Senior Nautical Surveyor at Liverpool.

#### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. 1. By whom was the "Ella Hewett" owned at the time of her loss and who was her designated Manager?

A. Heward Trawlers Limited of 11 St. Mary at Hill, London, E.C.3.: Robert Scott Hewett of the same address.

Q. 2. Where, when and by whom was the "Ella Hewett" built?

A. Beverley, Yorks: 1953: Cook Welton & Gemmell Limited.

Q. 3. Did the "Ella Hewett" leave Fleetwood on her voyage to deep sea fishing grounds off Iceland on the 2nd November 1962 at 0145 hours and did she shortly afterwards put into Heysham for bunkers?

A. Yes.

Q. 4. (a) With what compasses was the "Ella Hewett" fitted?

A. See Appendix 'A' to Annex.

Q. (b) When were the compasses last adjusted?

A. 25th August 1962.

Q. (c) Were the compasses in satisfactory working order on the 2nd November 1962?

A. Yes.

Q. 5. (a) With what other navigational aids was the "Ella Hewett" fitted?

A. See Appendix 'A' to Annex.

Q. (b) Were all such navigational aids in efficient working order during the voyage up to the time of her stranding?

A. Yes.

Q. 6. Was the "Ella Hewett" supplied with adequate charts and publications for her last voyage?

A. Yes.

Q. 7. How many crew did the "Ella Hewett" carry on her last voyage and who was in command?

A. 19 all told: skipper William Storm Gregson.

Q. 8. Was the "Ella Hewett" in all respects seaworthy when she sailed on her last voyage?

A. Yes.

Q. 9. (a) While at Heysham did the cook injure himself by falling down an open grating?

A. Yes.

Q. (b) Was the injury considered serious by the skipper?

A. No.

Q. (c) Did the vessel sail from Heysham at about 0530 G.M.T. without the cook having received medical attention?

A. Yes.

Q. 10. What orders were given by the skipper to the second hand at about 1530 G.M.T. on the 2nd November and for what reasons?

A. "Pull her down to Rathlin": for the purpose of entering Church Bay to land the cook.

Q. 11. (a) What was the approximate position of the ship at about 1830 G.M.T. on the 2nd November?

A. Off Rue Point.

Q. (b) How was this position ascertained?

A. Visually.

Q. (c) Who was in charge of the watch at this time?

A. The second hand, James Rixom.

- Q. 12. How was the vessel navigated immediately after 1830 G.M.T.?
- A. See Annex.
- Q. 13. (a) Was the echo of the Drake Wreck Buoy seen on the radar?
- A. Yes.
- Q. (b) At what distance and bearing was the echo when first seen?
- A. No reliable evidence.
- Q. (c) What was the vessel's course at this time?
- A. No reliable evidence.
- Q. (d) Were any alterations of course made after the echo was first seen?
- A. Probably.
- Q. 14. (a) Was the wreck buoy subsequently illuminated by the vessel's searchlight?
- A. Yes.
- Q. (b) At what distance and on what bearing was the wreck buoy sighted?
- A. No reliable evidence.
- Q. (c) Were any alterations of course made after the buoy had been sighted?
- A. Probably.
- Q. 15. Was the wreck buoy in its charted position?
- A. Yes.
- Q. 16. (a) Where and when did the "Ella Hewett" strand?
- A. On the wreck of H.M.S. "Drake": soon after 1830 hours.
- Q. (b) What was the course and speed of the vessel at stranding?
- A. Course unknown: probably not less than 7 knots.
- Q. (c) What was the state of the weather, wind, sea, tide and visibility at the time of the stranding?
- A. Fine; E.S.E. 2 to 3: smooth with a slight swell; no significant tide; clear.
- Q. 17. (a) Was (i) the skipper  
(ii) the second hand  
(iii) any other person  
under the influence of alcoholic drink to such an extent as to be incapable of exercising their duties properly before, at, or after the time of stranding?
- A. No.
- Q. (b) If the answer in respect of (i), (ii) or (iii) above is in the affirmative did this contribute to the stranding and/or subsequent loss of the vessel?
- A. Does not arise.
- Q. 18. After the stranding were all proper steps taken by the skipper for the preservation of his vessel and crew?
- A. As to the vessel: No; as to the crew: Yes.
- Q. 19. How and when were the crew rescued?
- A. By the Portrush lifeboat.
- Q. 20. What was the cause of:
- (a) the stranding?
- A. Negligent navigation (see Annex).
- Q. (b) the subsequent total loss of the "Ella Hewett"?
- A. Failure to take timely and adequate steps to free the vessel (see Annex).
- Q. 21. Was the stranding and/or subsequent total loss of the "Ella Hewett" caused or contributed to by the wrongful act or default of:
- (a) her skipper, William Storm Gregson?
- A. Yes.
- Q. (b) her second hand, James Rixom?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Any other person or persons?
- A. No.

J. ROLAND ADAMS, *Judge*.

J. E. COOPER }  
T. WHITE } *Assessors*.  
W. J. WOOD }