

WRECK ON MOUSEHOLE ISLAND

GALLANT RESCUE BY MOUSEHOLE FISHERMAN

PENZANCE LIFEBOAT CALLED OUT

Shortly before eight o'clock on Friday evening news reached Penzance that a vessel had gone ashore on Mousehole Island. Lifeboat rockets were fired, and the boat was smartly got out of the house, and ready to take the water. A deplorable delay then occurred, which prevented the lifeboat getting afloat for nearly three-quarters of an hour. This was due to the awkward position of the launching slip and the shallowness of the water, it being about one hour flood. During this time the crew and launchers and some volunteers were floundering about in the icy-cold water endeavouring to get the boat afloat. It was nearly nine o'clock when the lifeboat passed the pierhead. Smartly handled she made a short tack to the eastward, and then made direct for Mousehole.

The vessel proved to be the ketch *Baltic*, of London, from Cowes to Newlyn, with cement for Newlyn pier. The master (Capt. Langford) had his wife and daughter on board.

One of our representatives writes as follows :

Soon after seven on Friday night some boys at Mousehole observed a bright light in the vicinity of the Island, and at once informed the Coastguard. Another flare was then seen and a rocket signal was at once fired calling the members of the Rocket Brigade together and in a very short time the crew were on the scene and soon after Commander Cartwright from Penzance arrived. By this time between seven and eight hundred people had congregated. There was a very strong wind blowing from the South East, and in consequence of which the "baulks" had been put down at Mousehole harbour. The fishermen realized the danger of those at sea and Mr. George Laity's 15 feet crabber was at once placed at the disposal of a crew consisting of Messrs. William Stanley Drew, Richard Thomas, Luther Harvey, Harry Harvey, Richard Harry and Charles Harry all being fishermen with the exception of Thomas. One of the crew of the crabber, Charles Harry, stated in an interview with our representative : "There was no difficulty in getting a crew to man the boat. We experienced great difficulty in getting the boat to sea as we had to get her hoisted over the pier. The seas were terrific. We had to do the best we could to get her off. We then rowed with all our might until we reached the Island, on nearing which we heard voices shouting "We are here." Mr. Stanley Drew shouted "Are you on the island or in the rigging," but we could not hear the reply on account of the strong wind and sea. When we got a little nearer the island we heard voices shouting "We are ashore" and we then knew that at any rate some of the crew were landed on the island. We at first tried the westward side of the island to land, but found this impossible as the seas were breaking over it, and having a small open boat we were liable at any minute to be upset. We at last managed to get in towards the western part of the island, when Drew at great personal risk succeeded after some trouble in landing, but in doing so a heavy sea struck him and again knocked him into the water, but we managed to throw a rope to him and this he was able to catch, and get ashore. Drew took the lantern that we had on board on to the island and one of our crew, Richard Harvey, followed him.

After some time Drew shouted to us that they had found some of the crew on the island, and that the party consisted of two ladies and three men. At this time it was blowing hard and the seas were washing over the island. We managed to get on shore and found the three men who formed the crew (the two ladies being the wife and daughter of the captain), were all clinging together in a shivering state. We took them on to our small boat, and it was with very great difficulty that we managed to get back.”

During the time the boat with the gallant six from Mousehole were engaged in saving the lives of those on board, preparations were being made on shore for the rocket apparatus to be fired in case of necessity.

By the time the boat with the crew reached Mousehole both piers were crowded with people from all parts and on the old pier the crew were landed by means of rope ladders over which they came up to the pier. One by one they were landed amidst rounds of cheers and taken to various homes by Mousehole folk who are ever willing to give food and lodging to those in trouble. The Captain and his wife were taken care of at the home of Captain Sincock while Mr. Owen Trembath and his wife looked after the wants of the captain’s daughter. The two seamen were taken to the homes of Mr. Frank Blewett (harbour master) and Mr. Burton Williams.

One of the crew in an interview with our representative said :- “We left Salcombe at six o’clock on Friday morning. Our destination was Newlyn. We passed the Lizard about 5.30 when the weather had moderated a little. We found, however, upon approaching land, that it was much worse. We were making Newlyn and we did not see or hear of any danger until we found the vessel had grounded. We were on the rocks before we knew it, and the seas began to break over us. Seeing the position of the vessel we at once burnt flares but could not get any oil as it was in the forecastle, which was swamped. We however, burnt a couple of blankets and some sheets for a flare, but this was only after we had struck about half an hour, and we could not get anything to burn before that on account of the weather. We were much relieved to see a rocket fired. We decided if possible to get ashore and clambered down over the bowsprit on to the rocks. We did not know that was the island off Mousehole. The captain handed me over his daughter whom I got ashore and then Mrs. Langford. The other seaman then got ashore and the captain followed, being the last man to leave. We remained on the island till help came from the shore, when we were taken on board a small boat and landed at Mousehole, where the kindness of the villagers will never be forgotten.”

Transcribed from newspaper cuttings by D & I Flaxman