

(No. 7465.)

“TREVIDER” (S.S.).

The Merchant Shipping Act, 1894.

IN the matter of a Formal Investigation held at the Council Chamber, Penzance, Cornwall, on the 27th, 28th, and 29th days of June, before His Worship the Mayor (A. K. BARNETT, Esquire), J. H. BENNETTS, Esquire, and H. TREMBATH, Esquire, assisted by Captain W. H. SINCLAIR LOUTIT and Captain H. E. BATT, into the circumstances attending the stranding and loss of the s.s. “TREVIDER,” on or about the 27th April last, on the Haleas de Tosta Reef, about two miles E.N.E. of Cape Villano Lighthouse, North-west Coast of Spain.

Report of Court.

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 stranding and loss of the s.s. “Trevider” were caused by the default of the master, Mr. William Guppy, setting a course from an uncertain position at noon of the 27th April last, and continuing to steer it without observing the necessary precautions in misty or hazy weather, whereby his vessel grounded on the Baleas de Tosta Reef, two miles E.N.E. of Cape Villano Lighthouse.

The Court hereby severely censures the master for his default, and warns him to be more careful in future.

Dated this 1st day of July, 1911.

A. K. BARNETT,
J. H. BENNETTS,
HENRY TREMBATH, } Judges.

We concur in the above Report.

W. H. SINCLAIR LOUTIT,
H. E. BATT, } Assessors.

Annex.

This Inquiry was held in the Council Chamber, Penzance, in the County of Cornwall, on the 27th, 28th, and 29th days of June, 1911. Mr. W. H. Borlase appeared for the Board of Trade, Mr. E. A. Digby for the owners, Mr. W. H. Dodd for the second mate, whilst the master appeared in person.

The “Trevider,” Official Number 115641, was a single screw steamer, built of steel at South Shields in 1902 by Messrs. John Redhead & Sons, and registered at St. Ives. She was owned by the Hain Steam Ship Company, Limited, of St. Ives, Cornwall, the management of the vessel being entrusted to Sir Edward Hain, of St. Ives aforesaid, as per advice received under the seal of the Hain Steam Ship Company. She was propelled by one set of triple-expansion direct-acting engines, the diameters of the cylinders being 24 inches, 40 inches, and 64 inches respectively, length of stroke 42 inches, and giving a nominal horse-power of 300 and an indicated horse-power of 1,200, designed to give a speed of 10 knots per hour. She had two steel boilers having a working pressure of 160 lbs. per square inch. The engines and boilers were constructed by Messrs. John Redhead & Sons at the same time as the vessel was built. They were placed amidships.

The dimensions of the “Trevider” were as follows:—Length, 323 feet; main breadth, 47 feet; depth in hold, 23·6 feet; gross tonnage, 3,082·16; net tonnage, 1,989·92 tons.

She had two masts and was rigged as a fore and aft schooner. She had five bulkheads, five cargo holds, and six water ballast tanks with a total capacity of 763 tons. On the main deck there were four cargo hatchways, two on the fore deck and two on the after deck, the dimensions of these hatchways were:—No. 1, 20 feet x 17 feet;

No. 2, 24 feet x 17 feet; No. 3, 23 feet x 16 feet 9 inches; No. 4, 20 feet x 16 feet 8 inches; the coamings of these hatchways were 3 feet 6 inches in height. There was also a cargo hatchway on the poop deck measuring 8 feet x 8 feet, the coamings being 1 foot 9 inches in height.

The “Trevider” was a single-decked vessel, with a full poop used as cargo space, and a top-gallant forecastle in which the seamen and firemen were berthed. She had a bridge deck amidships and on this deck was situated the cabin house, the master, officers and engineers being berthed therein. The wheel house and chart room were on the top of this cabin house. In the wheel house was a wheel and a compass in a binnacle before the wheel, the ship, however, was steered by steam from the top of the wheel house. The steam steering engine was at the after end of the bridge deck. The officer in charge of the deck kept his watch on the bridge on a level with the chart room and wheel house, and below the level of the helmsman.

The vessel was supplied with two lifeboats and a jolly boat standing in chocks on the bridge decks under davits, a Walker cherub log, a Wigzell’s sounding machine, a hand and deep sounding line and leads. Her life-saving appliances fulfilled the requirements of the Board of Trade. She was classed 100 A 1. The “Trevider” left Newport, Monmouthshire, about 3.30 p.m. on 24th April last with a cargo of 4,416 tons of coals for Palermo, and in addition she had 850 tons of bunker coals, drawing 21 feet 1 inch forward and 21 feet 2 inches aft. Her crew consisted of 27 hands, including the master, Mr. William Guppy, who holds a certificate as ordinary master No. 028835. At noon, 25th April last, the Wolf Rock bore S.E. ½ E. distant two miles, from whence a course was set S.W. ½ S. magnetic, and so continued with the engines at full speed, about seven knots. The weather between noon of the 25th and noon of the 26th was described as fine with a moderate W.N.W. wind. The sea being moderate at noon of 26th, the ship’s position was determined by observations of the sun and found to be latitude 47° 12’ N., longitude 7° 27’ W., and the distance run from the preceding noon 177 miles. It appears that the patent log registered 11 miles less than the distance run between noon of the 25th to the position at noon of the 26th, as determined by observations on the latter date. The same course, S.W. ½ S. magnetic, was steered from noon of the 26th, and so continued until noon of the 27th. The wind during the night of 26th, 27th shifted to W.S.W. and S.W. and freshened, but at no time was strong; the head sea also increased, and it became overcast.

No observations of the sun were obtainable on the 27th to determine the ship’s position, the position at noon was, therefore, calculated by dead reckoning and was said to be latitude 44° 44’ N., longitude 8° 49’ W.; the distance run from the previous noon being 149 miles by log, and an allowance of 11 miles added to this, for the log’s under-registration, making a distance of 160 miles run. The master stated that he, as an extra precaution, set his course as from a position about 7 or 8 miles to the E.S.E. of the dead-reckoning position, and set a course from thence of S.W. ¼ S. magnetic, a quarter of a point more to the westward. This course was continued until the stranding. From noon of the 27th to the time of stranding, the wind continued moderate from the S.W. with a moderate head sea. Towards midnight it became more overcast and later banks of fog drifted over the ship, so that it was clear at times, and misty or foggy at times, the clear intervals between the fog drift being only a few minutes and the fog lasting only a few minutes. The master remained on the bridge until about 11 p.m., when he went below having left orders with the mate, who was on watch, to call him (the master) if Cape Villano Light was sighted or if the weather became hazy, and in any event at 1 a.m., at the same time instructing the mate to pass these orders on to the second mate when he took charge of the deck at midnight. The mate did not call the master as Villano Light was not sighted, and he considered the weather clear but overcast. On the second mate relieving the deck the master’s orders were passed on to him. The watch on deck from midnight up to the time of stranding was Mr. F. W. Kemp, second mate, who kept the watch on the bridge; Clarence Prosser, an apprentice, who had the look-out on the forecastle head; Edward Edwardson, A.B., at the wheel; Edward Moore, A.B., and Francis Ryan, apprentice, standing by. The vessel was continued on at full speed and on a course of S.W. ¼ S. magnetic

from midnight until she stranded. At 1 a.m. the second mate called the master who came on deck but did not go on the bridge and gave orders to the second mate "to keep the same course until 3 a.m. and call him again," but if any shore lights were seen previous to 3 a.m. he was to be called. The master enquired if the lights of the following steamer had been seen, and was answered in the affirmative. The master then went below again. At about 1.30 a.m. 28th April last the ship struck heavily. The engines were stopped, the master came on deck immediately, and all hands were called. The vessel "bumped" heavily on the rocks and appeared to be settling down, the water rose so rapidly in the engine-room that the engineer was unable to put the pumps on or close the stop valves, &c. Seeing the condition of things the master prudently ordered both lifeboats to be lowered, which they very promptly were, the crew getting into them safely. From the time the ship struck until all hands were in the boats and clear of the ship, an interval of about 10 minutes was said to have elapsed, and at this time the vessel's fore deck was under water. None of the ship's papers were saved and the crew lost all their effects. The master took charge of the port lifeboat, the mate of the starboard lifeboat. They pulled clear of the vessel and stood by, and whilst in this position the steamer, the lights of which had been observed astern, was seen approaching dangerously near the rocks, the mate pulled towards the steamer to warn her of the danger, but she kept on her course, and eventually stranded a mile or so to the southward of the "Trevider." At daylight a fisherman's boat was seen and the boats of the "Trevider" were towed into safety by the fisherman and the crew landed at a village near the scene of the wreck. Before leaving the neighbourhood of the "Trevider" she was seen to have broken in two. There was some considerable discrepancy in the evidence as regards the state of the weather two or three hours before and at the time of the casualty and as to its effects on the visibility of Cape Villano Light, some witnesses describing it as fine and clear, whilst others declared it to be misty or foggy. The declaration signed by the chief, and chief engineer of the Villano Lighthouse, taken by the H.B.M.'s Consul at Corunna on the 22nd day of May last, proves conclusively that a fog prevailed on the night of the 27th April last, and on the morning of the 28th idem, and that the light was kept burning at full power—the words of the declaration are "That on the night of the 27th April, 1911, the two steam engines and the two magnetos were at work and on account of the dense fog, produced a four-circuit light. That this light was kept burning until 4.50 a.m. on the 28th April. That both the electric light and the engines worked perfectly during the whole of this night." The master expressed his belief that the light was not properly exhibited during the time that his vessel was within his radius, but the above declaration negatives this assumption.

After a careful analysis of the evidence it is evident that the above-named light was not seen by those on board the "Trevider," because of its being enveloped in fog. The look-out kept on this vessel during the hour and a half preceding the casualty was distinctly faulty; an apprentice lad of only six months' experience at sea, being placed on the fore-castle on that duty, and the second mate who was in charge of the watch was not as alert and vigilant as he should have been. Some time before the vessel struck, able-seaman Moore, standing on the fore-castle, but not on the look-out, saw two or three times what he described as a strange and funny fog bank some six points on the vessel's port bow, which he thought in his own mind was land, and would have reported if he had been on the look-out. To this faulty look-out and to the omission of the master to make sufficient allowance for the inset of the current when in the neighbourhood of Cape Villano, this casualty is undoubtedly due. As to the compasses—the deviation appears to have been frequently and correctly ascertained on the standard—the last observation was taken for it by a bearing of Polaris at 10 p.m. of the 27th April last, a few hours before the vessel grounded, during a momentary break in the clouds, confirming the amount of error allowed by the master on the course the vessel was steering. No record of any adjustment of the compasses was produced since the vessel left the builder's hands new in 1902, and the compass-deviation book, and all other books and papers, were lost in the vessel, which sank her fore deck level with the water some ten minutes after striking the reef, but from the statements of the master and officers, it is apparent that sufficient solar and stellar observations were made when practicable to determine the vessel's

position. As some confirmation of the inset of the current which deflected the "Trevider" from her course, it may be added that an Italian steamer, which had been in her company some two or three miles astern during the night of 27th April last, shared the same fate, as she grounded on a reef shortly afterwards a mile or two further to the south, and also became a total wreck.

At the conclusion of the evidence the following questions were submitted by the Solicitor for the Board of Trade for the opinion of the Court:—

- (1) What number of compasses had the vessel, were they in good order and sufficient for the safe navigation of the vessel, and when and by whom were they last adjusted?
- (2) Did the master ascertain the deviation of his compasses by observation from time to time, were the errors correctly ascertained and the proper corrections to the courses applied?
- (3) Was the vessel supplied with proper and sufficient charts and sailing directions?
- (4) Were proper measures taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel at or about noon of the 26th April last? Was a safe and proper course thereafter steered, and was due and proper allowance made for tides and currents?
- (5) Was the position of the vessel accurately ascertained at or about noon of the 27th April last? Was a safe and proper alteration then made in the course, and was due and proper allowance made for tides and currents?
- (6) Having regard to the state of the weather at and after midnight of the 27th April last,
 - (a) Was the vessel navigated at too great a rate of speed?
 - (b) Was the lead used, if not, should it have been used?
- (7) Was a good and proper look-out kept?
- (8) What was the cause of the stranding and loss of the vessel?
- (9) Was the vessel navigated with proper and seaman-like care?
- (10) Was the loss of the s.s. "Trevider" caused by the wrongful act and/or default of the master?

Mr. E. A. Digby having addressed the Court on behalf of the owners, Mr. W. H. Borlase for the Board of Trade—

The Court gave Judgment as above and returned the following answers to the questions submitted:—

- (1) The vessel had three compasses, viz., one on the roof of the chart room used as the standard by which the vessel was steered and navigated, one in the wheel house in front of the wheel, and one spare one also in the wheel house not in position. They were in good order and sufficient for the safe navigation of the vessel, and were adjusted by Messrs. Wilson & Gillie, of South Shields, when the vessel left the builders hands new in the year 1902. No record was placed before the Court of any subsequent adjustment or examination.
- (2) The master did ascertain the deviation of his compasses by observation, from time to time; the errors were correctly ascertained, and the proper corrections to the courses applied.
- (3) The vessel was supplied with proper and sufficient charts and sailing directions; but in regard to the latter the Court is of opinion that the Admiralty Sailing Directions for the West Coast of France, Spain and Portugal are much to be preferred to those in use by the master.
- (4) Proper measures were taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel at or about noon of the 26th April last. A safe and proper course was not thereafter steered, in so far that insufficient allowance was made for currents, and none for leeway. No allowance was made for tides, nor was any then necessary.
- (5) At or about noon of the 27th April last, owing to the prevailing conditions of the weather, the position of the vessel was not then accurately ascertained. The master assumed his position by dead reckoning to be 44° 44' north latitude, and 8° 49' west longitude, and from this, gave a margin of eight miles to the eastward for inset during the preceding 24 hours, with a distance run from noon of 160 miles.

From this position a safe and proper alteration was not made in the course which was shaped for the vessel to pass 15 miles west of Cape Villano, as due and proper allowance was not made for currents and leeway.

(6) (a) Having regard to the state of the weather at and after midnight of the 27th April last, the vessel was not navigated at too great a rate of speed.

(b) The lead was not used and it certainly should have been.

(7) The Court is unable to say that a good and proper look-out was kept between the hours of 12 midnight and 1.30 a.m. when the vessel grounded, as during that time a young lad of only six months' sea experience was keeping the look-out on the forecastle head, who failed to observe or report what was described by another witness (an A.B. seaman) "as a strange looking and a funny looking bank of fog some six points on the vessel's port bow," and which the A.B. seaman referred to would have reported had he been on the look-out.

(8) The stranding and loss of the vessel were caused by the master setting a course at noon of the 27th April last from an uncertain position, and continuing on it in misty and hazy weather until his vessel grounded on the

Baleas de Tosta Reef about 2 miles E.N.E. of Cape Villano, the light on which was at the time obscured by fog.

Contributory causes to the stranding were: The absence of the master from the bridge since 11 o'clock p.m., his neglect to use the lead, and the faulty look-out kept by the second mate, Mr. Kemp, on the bridge, and by the apprentice boy, Prosser, on the forecastle.

(9) The vessel, for the reasons stated above, was not navigated with proper and seamanlike care.

(10) The loss of the S.S. "Trevider" was caused by the default of the master, Mr. William Guppy.

A. K. BARNETT,
J. H. BENNETTS,
HENRY TREMBATH, } Judges.

W. H. SINCLAIR LOUTIT, } Assessors.
H. E. BATT,

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the
21st day of July, 1911.)