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**CLARE CHAMPION.**

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West Clare Shipwreck of 42 Years Ago

Foreign Crew Rescued By Local Men

THE sturdy cabin which once sheltered the intrepid captain of a gallant ship now harbours beasts of burden in the Spanish Point area and serves as a permanent reminder to the locals, on a fateful Tuesday morning in January, 1916, when "Kelp", a three-masted schooner, went aground on the savage rocks off the point.

*The cabin can still be seen about a mile from Spanish Point on a side road from Spanish Point to Quilty. Its steel frame is now pitted with rust and holes have been chewed into it by the winds and rains of many years that have swept it from the sea. It is about twenty feet in length, six feet in width and stands eight feet high. There is a door on one end and a porthole on each of two sides.*

Aboard the vessel were the cap­tain and nine of a crew, who had been at sea for ninety days, on their way from the Falkland Islands to London, with, a cargo of tallow and hides. Two of the crew lost their lives when the schooner was crushed by the ruth­less rocks but the captain and seven men were rescued by a brave band of West Clare folk, who risked death to bring the sea-farers to safety.

"Kelp" was the victim of a pro­longed gale which swept the white-topped waves against the coast line of Ireland and the ship was unlucky to catch the full force of the mighty blast.

The group of fearless rescuers was made up of Michael Quinn, James Boland, John Tracey, Mar­tin Griffin and Martin Morrissey. These men threw caution to the winds and placed themselves in the face of danger as they brought the wretched survivors ashore, wrapped them in thick, warm blankets and dosed them with brandy and scalding-hot soup. At one stage of the daring; rescue Mr Quinn was thought to be lost as he disappeared underneath the boiling surf, which splashed around the heaving vessel, but he had dived into the bubbling cauldron to grab the ship’s mate, who had flung himself over the edge. Mr Quinn was assisted by a customs officer, named Davis, and Sergt. Gallagher of Miltown Malbay. Be­tween them they managed to calm the threshing sailor and thus pre­vented an almost certain death, as the man recovered after artificial respiration.

Mr. and Mrs. Murrihy also came in for much praise for their endevours to help the shipwrecked men. In preparing beds and cloth­ing for the chattering men

**ARE STILL ALIVE**

Of the rescuers Messrs Quinn, Tracey and Morrissey are still alive. Mr. Murrihy received an appoint­ment in China shortly after the wreck and died there

Mr. Quinn. who is hale and hearty at 78 years of age, told our correspondent that it was a pity the captain of the vessel did not know of Liscannor Harbour, as "Kelp" passed it down-wind before striking the point of the cross at Spanish Point.

Going, back through the years he recalled that the crew obviously saw a big rock near the cross and intended to jump from the ship onto this massive platform, as the ship passed. Unfortunately an underwater reef sawed through the ship as it was slipping past the rock which was but twenty yards away.

The captain, Patrick Hanley, who was a Scot, later told the story of the ship's plight to interested local people. He was aged 75 years and had spent 60 of them at sea. On September 27. 1915, "Kelp\* left the Falkland Islands for London and all went well until they ap­proached the rugged Irish coast. Here a gale sprang up and buffeted the stout vessel until she was dashed onto the shores off Co. Clare.

The skipper continued: "We had some trouble with our gear but no­thing serious occurred, even though we lost our way, until Tuesday morning, when we could not steer the vessel. At about 9.30 a.m. we were stranded on the rocks off Spanish Point. The ship belonged to the British Government and the ship's papers are still on board. My crew consisted of eight men. whose nationalities included Danish, Fin­nish, Dutch, Canadian. Italian and Norwegian. Their ages range from 18 years to 65”

**JUMPED OVERBOARD**

Capt Henley, wiping away a tear, went on to describe how Wm. Johenson, a 30-year-old Dane, jumped overboard as the ship came in contact with the jagged cliffs and rocks This unfortunate youth quickly went below but one of his companions hurled himself into the full fury of the tide in an attempt to save him. However, he too perished in the surging whirlpool of spray.

The captain also remembered the help and aid given to his men by Dr. and Mrs. MacClancy. The doctor had to perform an emer­gency operation on a 65-year-old Canadian, M. Durkie, whose head smashed against a jutting rock while he was being rescued.

Another who was of great benefit to the men was Lieut Hinken, representing the Shipwrecked Mariners Society. The Lieut, was instrumental in having the men accommodated at the Central Hotel. Miltown Malbay, where they received every kindness from the proprietor and staff. Lieut. Hinken recalled that as the men left thei town, after three days, on their way to London, they were singing "It's A Long Way To Tipperary." The captain and a younger member of the crew remained at the Murrihy home.

William Bergavist, a 26-year-old ' Finn, remembered his dreadful experiences on the fateful morning. He saw, before the wreck, a light flashing on several occasions. He reported the matter but some time later the ship struck a rock.

**SUCKED UNDER SHIP**

Bergavist went on. "The deck which was being lashed by the angry seas, was heaving and throbbing. Men were running back and. forth and then I saw Valdame Stow, the boatswain, leap overboard and into the spluttering foam. Wm Johenson also jumped over the side' Both were never seen again. I think

Johenson was sucked under the ship. Capt. Hanley and five other crew members while grappling with the sea-sprayed rocks were rescued and brought ashore but two other men were still on the schooner."

He went on to say that several men made their way through the raging dsean to the ship and succeeded in grasping a line from the mate, who was yelling to the people as he balanced himself precariously on the rolling deck.

By this time the poor man was drenched to the skin by the angry waves. He tried to climb down the line hand over hand. However. through sheer exhaustion his numb fingers slipped off the rope and his body plunged into the sea. Several West Clare people pluckily dashed through the roaring waves and grabbing the mate by his jersey they hauled him onto dry land.

Another sailor, Italian Antonio Gelli gave this eye witness Account of the tragic happening “The ship swerved onto the rocks, smashing the boatswain against the cliff. That was the last I ever saw of him. The Dutchman lowered himself, into the water and headed to­wards the shore and the captain followed him. I was holding onto a rope with the skipper and the young men from the farms pulled us onto the beach."

The battered hull of "Kelp" stood off Spanish Point as a haunt for seagulls and as a warning to other seamen—to beware of the treacherous rocks off that part of the coast. She was removed by the Hammond Lane Foundry. Dublin, during the last war. and broken up for scrap.

The original name of the vessel was "Pax", which belonged to Germany. She was captured by the British during the battle of the Falkland Islands and Capt Hanley, who was about to retire, was asked to take the wheel.

The snip had no keel, drawing seven feet of water. It was difficult to navigate but safe at sea.

