

# Crew died with safety <sup>183425</sup> 'yards away'

A SMASHED Grimsby fishing vessel on which three men died may have been yards from safety, an inquest heard yesterday.

For the 39ft. inshore boat First Chance grounded on concrete sea defences when it was driven ashore off Mablethorpe — and a sandy beach was nearby.

The Louth District Coroner, Mr. B. A. Sharpley, recorded verdicts of accidental death on Mr. Norman Beeley (44), of St. Nicholas Drive, Mr. Richard Thompson (35), of First Avenue, and Mr. Graham William Russell (27), of Milton Road, all Grimsby.

Death in each case was due to drowning, said Grimsby's consultant pathologist, Dr. J. M. Johnstone.

The skipper's wife, Mrs. Margaret Beeley, told the hearing that her husband was an experienced and qualified fisherman.

He had only just bought the First Chance — hoping to make his living as an inshore fisherman — when tragedy struck.

A coastguard at Spurn Point, Mr. William Gardens, described the desperate series of messages he received from the stricken vessel.

After the first, which reported a seized engine and request for help, the Humber Lifeboat was launched, and a Marine Rescue Unit Land-Rover was sent from Mablethorpe.

"Within a few minutes all rescue possibilities be sea and land had been set in motion," he went on.

But heavy surf and darkness prevented the launching of the Mablethorpe inshore lifeboat, and an RAF helicopter was scrambled from Leconfield.

At 7.23 p.m. the First Chance reported that it was

aground and bouncing badly.

And at 7.26 p.m. it said it was "taking a pounding." It was advised to stay in position, because a helicopter was just six minutes away, said Mr. Gardens.

But that was the last radio message from the vessel, and within half-an-hour rescuers found debris from the wreck and a body in the water.

"It is unfortunate that this vessel grounded on a part of the concrete sea defences, which may have contri-

buted to her total loss," the coastguard commented.

And he added that the boat's Decca positional guide may not have been working properly.

The Coroner did not want to "proliferate" arguments which would occur elsewhere.

"It may have been that if it came ashore on a sandy beach slightly further north this would not have happened. Who knows? I don't need to review the evidence," he felt.

It was plainly a case of accidental deaths.

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FLT LT JOHN SUTHERLAND  
MASTER NAV RON DEDMEN  
MASTER ALM ERIC AINSUE

APRIL 1983

- 1st. Flt.Lt. John Sutherland. Master Nav Ron Dedmen. Master ALM Eric Ainslie.  
A night job when a fishing vessel reported that not only had her engine failed, but that the anchor chain had snapped and she was drifting onto shore at Mablethorpe. Despite the fact that the helicopter was talking to the vessel 5 minutes before arriving on scene, when they got there it had broken up in the surf and no-one was recovered. 3 Died.
- 2nd. Flt.Lt. Paul Longden. Flt Lt Graham Clark. Master ALM Gordon Davies.  
The next night - and red flares were sighted in the same area - a search of the area was made but nothing found, and nothing later reported in trouble.
- 3rd. Flt Lt Andy Kirkup. Master Nav Ron Dedmen. Master ALM Eric Ainslie.  
If you are going to be ill on a French Tanker (the Venvemaire), then just off the Humber Light is a good place to choose!! A French seaman with head injuries taken to Hull R.I.
- 6th. Sqn Ldr Chris Paish. Master Nav Ron Dedmen. Flt Agt Steve Lynch.  
14 year old girl fell over the cliff at Silex Bay and broke her ankle - taken by stretcher to Scarborough Hospital.
- 16th. Flt Lt Andy Kirkup. Flt Lt Graham Clark. Flt Sgt Warwick Laken.  
The Coastguard reported two children on a rubber inflatable drifting out to sea at Skipsea (after all, it is a Bank Holiday!!) but they reached the shore under their own paddle power and our lads were recalled.
- 26th. Sqn Ldr Jeff Whitehead. Flt Lt Andy Miller. Flt Sgt Steve Lynch.  
There was this chap sitting in the back of this Hawk about 45 miles from Coltishall when he found himself hanging on the end of a parachute - known in the trade as an 'inadvertent' ejection!! He was actually picked up by our brother crew out of Coltishall (Yes, we are STILL there!!) so this crew merely spent an hour over the water getting nowhere.
- 28th. Flt.Lt. John Sutherland. Flt Lt Adrian Rule. Flt Sgt Warwick Laken.  
Getting John out of bed at 7 in the morning is difficult at the best of times, but on this occasion this Danish fisherman about 75 miles out had become separated from his finger. Off they went to the reported position in pretty lousy weather, and, behold, no boat. Eventually they found 10 in a line - and, yes, the one without the finger was on No 10!! Taken (with finger) to Hull R.I.
- 29th. Sqn Ldr Jeff Whitehead. Flt Lt Mark Hewitt. Sgt Terry Williamson.  
Middle of the afternoon and this ELT goes off - so do our crew. Going South they are then told of a cliff faller north of Scarborough. Turn round, pick up man with broken shoulder and take to Scarborough., back South and find a Tug towing a platform blasting out with an ELT. He switches off, our crew go home and do same.
- 30th. Sqn Ldr Chris Paish. Flt Lt Graham Clark. Flt Sgt Steve Lynch.  
Two boats hit each other in the North Sea., one sinks and puts out a Mayday Five minutes into flying out the 98 miles, we are recalled as the five crew are picked up by the other boat. The next day the lads from Coltishall had to go out at 8 in the morning to pick up the ELT still blasting away from the one which sank.. A mere 75 miles in May Day weather - Fog, Low Cloud, and xxxing rain..

## Fisherman airlifted

A HELICOPTER crew from RAF Leconfield airlifted an injured fisherman to hospital in Hull today from his vessel in the North Sea.

He was brought to Hull Royal Infirmary after severing a finger on board the trawler Hukene, 80 miles off Flamborough Head.

Flt.-Lt. John Sutherland said the call to help the Danish fisherman, Carl Jensen, was received just after 7 am.

He said it was a "straight forward" operation

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FLT LT	JOHN	SUTHERLAND
FLT LT	ADRIAN	RULE
FLT SGT	WARWICK	LAKEN