

Virgine (1983) – Full Description

On Friday morning 5th February 1869, the *Virginie* left Liverpool where she had been undergoing repairs during the previous four months. She was bound for Buerno Ayres with a cargo of between 700 and 800 tons of coal. The master was Captain D Van der Steene, a young German of twenty seven years, and the crew consisted of nine Germans and one Englishman, Charles Ellerd.

Later that evening at 7.00 p.m., the *Virginie* struck rocks at Dreswick Point, Langness, very near to the place where the *James Crosfield* and *Symmetry* were lost. Out of the crew of ten men, only two survived, Gustavus Ladenthen, boatswain, and George Robinsky, able seamen, both Germans. The two men were saved more by good luck than by any efforts of their own, as neither of them could swim. The two men had secured lifebuoys, though the boatswain lost his and saved his life by grabbing hold of a spar. Robinsky was washed up on the rocks and when he came around he found the lifebuoy under his arm. He was seriously injured and unable to walk, but contrived to creep painfully on his hands and knees to the landmark, where he lay down as he thought he was to die, being in a destitute state and likely to have been suffering from hypothermia and exposure. Fortunately for him he was spotted by several occupants of the nearby farmhouse (to which the boatswain had got to, imagining himself the only survivor). They carried him to the farmhouse, where he was kindly treated, and a messenger immediately set off for Castletown for medical assistance and spare clothing. Two suits of warm clothing, with some brandy and provisions were sent, and Dr Wise was in immediate attendance. The two crippled men were removed the next morning to the "*Shipwrecked Mariners Home*", the home of Mrs Brine.

The *Virginie* was a wooden vessel compositely sheathed with iron, but still quickly became a total wreck in hours with the Rocket Brigade helplessly looking on.

On Saturday 27th February 1869 an inquest was held by the High-Bailiff of Castletown, on the body of one of the crew of the *Virginie*, which was discovered at Langness the evening before, at low water. The body of the unfortunate man was found close to where the vessel was wrecked, partly covered with coal, with which she was laden; it was partly clothed, and very much cut. From some papers found in his pocket he proved to be the Englishman - all the other part of the crew were foreigners; his name was Charles Ellerd, and was born at Southampton in 1851; he was an ordinary seaman, and a very stout, tall young man. The body was conveyed to Castletown, and placed in the Union Hotel where the jury assembled; they then adjourned to the Court House, where the witnesses were examined who found the body:

"Joseph Hogg, sworn : I am an innkeeper in the town of Douglas. I bought the wreck of the barque *Virginie* from Lloyd's agent, which was wrecked a fortnight last night. I was at Langness at five o'clock yesterday evening, when a man employed by me told me that a body had been found in the Gullet. He was incumbered by coals. I told the men that we must have him ashore, if it would be 12 o'clock at night. The body was covered with water, and its only clothing was a pair of drawers, trowsers, a belt, and boots. He had black hair. In one of the pockets there were some papers and a purse. The body was this day brought from Langness to the Union Hotel yard.

Dr. Wise, sworn: I have this day examined the body. It seems to be that of a young man about five feet eight inches in height. The body was partially decomposed.

By a Juryman: I think it is probable that this is *one of the crew of the Virginie* lost on Langness.

Richard Harrison, sworn: I live at Derbyhaven. I was employed by Joseph Hogg in saving the wreck of the barque Virginie. We were at low water out in the Gulleys fishing for ropes, copper, etc. I saw something white in the water, and put my boat-hook down, but it would not grip it, then it struck me that it was a dead body. I then called to William Bell and John Cannell, who put down their boat-hooks, and took him up. He was held down by a quantity of coal over his legs. The vessel, I hear, was loaded with coals. There was between three and four feet of water over the body.

At this point the inquest was adjourned to Monday morning, at 11 o'clock.

The papers found in the possession of the deceased proved to be two certificates. We append copies:-

CERTIFICATE OF CHARACTER.

Character for ability in whatever capacity | V.G.

Character for conduct | V.G.

Sanctioned by the Board of Trade, May, 1855, in pursuance of 17 and 18 Vic., c. 104. 92.

I certify the above to be a true copy of so much of the report of character made by the said master on the termination of the said voyage as concerns the said seaman.

Dated at Liverpool this 23rd day of January 1869.

Signed. J WALLS, Master of the ship,

P R MOOREE, Shipping Master.

Charles Ellerd x his mark

CERTIFICATE OF DISCHARGE.

Name of Ship. Zigzag

Official number. 2203

Port of Registry. Liverpool.

No. 92. Registered Tonnage. 119

Description of voyage or employment. Foreign.

Name of Seaman. Charles Ellerd.

Capacity. OS.

Place of Birth. Somerset.

Date of Birth. 1851.

Date of Entry. 10.12.1868.

Date of Discharge. 22.01.1869.

Place of Discharge. Liverpool

I certify that the above particulars are correct, and that the above seaman was discharged accordingly. Dated this 23rd January, 1869.

P R Mooree, Shipping Master.

J Walls, Master of Ship.

On Monday the following evidence was taken:

John McMeiken, sworn: I am honorary agent to the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society. I am aware that a wreck took place on Langness on the 5th February, the name of the vessel proved to be the Virginie. She struck on a place called Dreswick. Two men out of a crew of ten were saved, named Gustavus Ladenthen and George Robinsky. These two men left the Island on

Friday morning. As agent for the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society, I supplied them with medical aid, board, and lodging, and franked them to the Belgium Consul in Liverpool. One of the survivors told me that there was only one Englishman on board, and that they were all young men and unmarried. As agent I have forwarded a memorial myself to the Commissioners of Northern Lights, praying that a lighthouse may be put on Langness, respecting the loss of this vessel, and have received a reply from the secretary that it has been received, and that he was ordered to forward the memorial to the Board of Trade. Similar memorials have also been sent to the Board of Trade and the Trinity Brethren from the inhabitants of Castletown district. The two survivors made a statement to me, that they saw no light or land, only when they were cast ashore, when they saw the Castletown lights, and made towards them.

John Cannell, sworn: I am a fisherman, and reside at Derbyhaven. I have been well acquainted with the coast about Langness all my days, and I am about 60 years of age. I was present when the body was found at Dreswick Point on Langness on Friday evening, between four and five o'clock, where the vessel was wrecked. Langness is a very bad place for vessels, but Dreswick is the worst. I remember the wreck of the Race Horse on Langness, and any person would be surprised when I could point out to them the number of graves there are on Langness. In some graves there are three bodies. A light should be on Langness, and I hope to see the day when one will be on. The land lies very low, and in thick weather you cannot see Douglas Head or the Calf lights, and on Langness, they must come, for a vessel gets in low, and perhaps as they are not ready on board to heave too, she gets among the breakers, and on Langness she leaves her timbers. I have no doubt in my mind that if there was a light on Langness this vessel would not have been wrecked, for they would have seen the light and known where they were, and they would have heaved the vessel about.

William Corlett, sworn: I am a master manner, and know the coast of Langness well. The water at the point is very shallow, and we have to give it a wide berth. I consider a light there to be necessary, for if there had been a light on Langness, the Virginie would not have been there. The land lies very low, and if you were at sea, you would think it was a wave. It is very difficult to make. In thick weather the Calf lights are no good, for they are covered. I have been sailing out of Castletown for 30 years. The crew of the Virginie would have seen a light on Langness seven or eight miles off.

William Condon, sworn: I am master of the Ida, trading from this port to Liverpool. I know Langness very well. I have been 44 years at sea. Dreswick is the most dangerous place on Langness. There should be a light on Langness; it is the most southerly point in the Isle of Man. Langness lies very low, and our guiding lights are always hid from us in thick weather. The tide runs upwards of seven miles an hour with these spring tides. The Calf lights are of no use in thick weather. I have been coming these the last five years from Liverpool, and very seldom made the Calf lights. Sometimes you have to lie too half channel. You cannot make the Calf lights till you are close in to the land.

By a Juryman: Sometimes Douglas Head light is hid in thick weather. I have had many narrow escapes myself on Langness.

William Corlett came forward, and said: A light on the Chickens would be no guide for Langness, because you could see it over Langness, coming from the eastward, and a vessel running for that light would sure to go on Langness, no matter how low the light would be on the Chickens.

William King, sworn: I have been at sea for 18 years, and have been master of the schooner Wallachia. I am well acquainted with the coast about Langness, it is a very dangerous place for vessels. Dreswick point is the most dangerous place. It is there the Virginie was wrecked,

in my opinion it is the worst place in St. George's Channel and the Irish Sea, for want of a light. If a line would be stretched from Douglas Head light to the Calf light, it would leave five miles of Langness seaward to the direct line of course. Dreswick Point is a reef of sunken rocks, and at that point, in spring tides, the tide runs at the rate of six or seven knots an hour. The lowness of Langness makes it very dangerous, the high land in the distance behind it prevents mariners from noticing it. A light on the Chickens would not, in my opinion, do any good for Langness. A great deal of evidence of a similar nature was taken.

The Jury returned the following verdict: That the body of the said man was found dead on the shore at Langness, in the parish of Malew, and was, when found, covered with the sea, and had no marks of violence on it. That it does not appear to the said jurors that there is any clear direct testimony as to how the said man came by his death, or what his name was; but, from the evidence given, the jurors believe that he was a hand on board of, and perished in the wreck of, the barque Virginie, when she struck on Dreswick, part of Langness, on the evening of 5th February, 1869, and, from certain certificates found on the body of the said man, they believe that his name was Charles Hillard, or Ellerd. The said jurors deem it their duty to express their unanimous opinion that if there had been a lighthouse on Langness Point the barque Virginie would not have been wrecked, and the lives of those who perished on that melancholy occasion would have been saved. It appears to the said jurors that in consequence of the lowness of the land and the dangerous character of the coast at Langness, a lighthouse on that point would be the only effectual safeguard against its perils; and the jurors are of opinion that the failure of the efforts hitherto made to obtain the erection of a lighthouse there is deeply to be regretted. The jurors express a desire that the High-Bailiff of Castletown should forward to his Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, a copy of this their verdict, and that he will request that his Excellency will be pleased to transmit a copy of it to the Board of Trade, a copy to the Trinity House, and a copy to the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses.

After the verdict was returned, the body, having been placed in a coffin, was interred the same evening at Malew Church.

Gustavo Ludenthen and George Robinsky, the two survivors, tendered their grateful thanks to the whole of the inhabitants of Castletown, and especially to the agent of the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society, to the Rocket Brigade, and also to Messrs Jones and Duck, for their humane and kindly treatment and attention to their wants. They also thanked Mrs Brine, at whose house they stayed, and where they received the kindest attention. The subscriptions received from the inhabitants of Castletown amounted to £3 18s; there was also a quantity of clothing gifted to them.

The following letter was later received from George Robinsky. It was addressed to Mr James Stowell, and was been translated from the German language (in which it was written) by a young lady in Castletown:

"March 15, 1869. - Dear honoured Mr Stowell, Mr Partridge, Mrs Taylor, and all friends in Castletown, - I thank you most heartily for all the good which you have done unto me, and I am glad to let you know that, in spite of adversity, I arrived at my mother's house on the 11th of March. When I arrived in Liverpool, neither the German nor the Belgian consul would do anything for me, and I was obliged to appeal to a German Society of Friends of Foreigners in distress. They forwarded me first to Hull, and then to Hamburg, and when I arrived at my mother's, to my great joy I was quite recovered. I am quite well, and hope you all are the same. My feet are better, and on the 1st of April I shall go to sea again. When I come to England I

shall pay you a visit. I am sorry that I have not been able to pre-pay this letter. Please answer this letter directly, and send me your photograph. The other one who was saved, sends you kind remembrance. - GEORGE ROBINSKY. - P.S. - I have sent a small photograph for uncle, and if I come again to England or America, I shall send you some more photographs. Here they are so expensive."

***"The Castletown Life Brigade.
BOARD OF TRADE INQUIRY.***

Mr Hughes, inspector under the Board of Trade, sat at Castletown on Tuesday (16th March 1869), to conduct an investigation into a charge which has been made against the Castletown Life Brigade by the Receiver of Wreck. The nature of the charge may be gathered from the following correspondence:

Board of Trade, Whitehall, Feb. 23, 1869.

SIR,—I am directed by the Board of Trade to inform you that they have received a report from the Receiver of Wreck at Castletown, relating to the loss of the barque Virginie at Langness, on the 5th instant. It appears from that report that, on leaving the wreck, the members of the Castletown Volunteer Life Company took from the beach, concealed in the rocket apparatus cart, a cask of spirits, and conveyed the same to the storehouse. It appears further that the possession of the spirits was not communicated to the representative of the Receiver of Wreck on duty at the wreck, and it was not until repeated demands for it had been made, by the Customs' officer, that the cask was delivered to him, when it was found that some of the contents had been abstracted, and it is stated that you admitted having taken two quarts of the spirits, which you had distributed amongst the volunteers. I am to point out to you that, in neglecting to report the possession of the cask to the Customs' officer on duty, and in abstracting a portion of the spirits, you have committed serious offences under the Merchant Shipping Act as well as against the Customs Laws; and the Board of Trade will be glad to receive any explanations you may wish to offer relative to your proceedings before taking further steps in the matter.—I am sir, your obedient servant, THOMAS GRAY.

*To the above letter Mr Partridge replied as follows:
Castletown, 26th Feb., 1869.*

SIR,—I am just now in receipt of your letter of the 23rd Feb., and beg leave to state that in the report made to you by the Receiver of Wreck, Castletown, the truth is so utterly distorted that I think I cannot do better than give you an account of my proceedings with regard to the cask of spirits saved from the wreck of the Virginie, and I trust you will institute an inquiry into the matter on the spot by some one unconnected with this division.

The cask of spirits was found by a man who, seeing that the bung was put in with a piece of rag round it, took the bung out to ascertain if the cask contained water, as it is not usual to secure spirits in this way, though commonly done with water. Finding what the contents were, he sent a man to tell me, which man spoke in the hearing of a number of people, volunteers and others, who were searching for the eight missing sailors belonging to the barque.

As there was no Custom House officer present, and a crowd had collected round the cask, asking for some of the contents, they being all thoroughly soaked from falling in the gullies while prosecuting the search (during which one old man was with difficulty saved from

drowning), I consulted with Lloyd's agent, who was present, as to what was best to do under the circumstances, and we both thought that, to avoid excesses, the best course would be to promise the men that if they would safely convey the cask from the place where it then was (which was very difficult of access) to the field above, they should, on the completion of the search (which lasted a couple of hours, on a most exposed coast, during a gale of wind) have a small quantity of the spirits, and this promise was kept by me, to the extent of threefourths of what a zinc case, sent to us with blue-lights, would hold - in fact, about three parts of a wine glass-full to each of the men who worked.

On leaving the ground I again consulted Lloyd's agent (no Custom-House officer being present, or having been seen on the ground that night) as to what was best to be done with the cask of spirits. We thought it would be injudicious to leave it in the field with no Customs' officer in charge, and, no other mode of conveyance being available, we decided on placing it on the Rocket Cart for conveyance to Castletown, in order to give it up in the morning to the Custom House authorities. Certainly it did not occur to me that I should find any of the Customs' men about, as they were not at the wreck, and never are at the Watch-house at night, tide time or other.

I beg particularly to call attention to the fact that the cask was placed uppermost on the cart, and by no means 'concealed,' and it was so placed in the presence of some 60 or 70 persons. I placed two of the volunteers, who are what are called teetotallers, on the cart in charge of it, and ordered them not to allow any one else on the cart.

On arriving at the cottage where the two surviving sailors of the *Virginie* were afforded shelter, I went in, accompanied by the two other officers of the company, to attend to the men's hurts and see to their wants, as there were only three women in the house, and one of them very ill. This detained us about twenty minutes, and when we overtook the cart. I found others on it beside those I had placed there. I told them to get off, and found amongst them a Custom House boat-man. Hearing that, on his first getting into the cart he had seized one of the men in charge by the neck and accused him of being 'at the cask,' I desired the officer to follow the cart with the Rocket Company, where he could as well keep charge of the cask as in the cart. He did not ask to have it taken out of the cart, nor, of course, I demur to his having charge. When we reached our storehouse, I reported to the Excise Officer of Customs, who joined us there, that we had saved a cask of spirits, and requested him to report it in my name at the Custom House in the morning. He said that my giving it into his charge was sufficient. At the same time I reported to him that I had taken about two quarts of the spirits, and for what purpose. I did not 'admit' it for the simple reason that, as he did not know it until I told him, he was not in a position to elicit an admission. As it was now about midnight, I asked the Excise officer if it was necessary to take the cask off the cart that night, or if he would seal it and leave it until morning. He said he would take it then, and as soon as I had taken down the names of the volunteers who had been at the wreck, I ordered the cask to be taken off the cart and delivered to the Customs' men; and I believe some of my men helped them to take it to the Watch House.

I beg to say that, with regard to the allegations contained in your letter, you will see:

Firstly, that I caused the cask of spirits to be 'taken from the beach,' because it would have been a dangerous thing to have left it in the power of all comers, in a place intersected with fearful gullies, where one false step would cost a man his life, and there was no representative of Customs to take charge of it.

Secondly, that there was no 'concealment' whatever in the matter.

Thirdly that I could not communicate the position of the spirit to 'the representative of the Receiver of Wrecks on duty at the wreck,' as there was no such individual.

Fourthly, that it was unnecessary to do so to the Custom House boatman, as I found him in charge of the cask when I overtook the cart on leaving the cottage.

Fifthly, that no demand whatever was made upon me for the cask, and that I did no demur to the boatman taking charge; and that upon voluntarily delivering it up, and reporting it and the abstraction to the Excise officer, I gave him the choice of leaving it at the storehouse for the night sealed, if it would be a convenience to him.

Sixthly, that it was not found that some of the contents had been abstracted, but that this fact was promptly and officially reported by me. So there were no admissions to make. Further, I beg to call your attention to the fact that the spirits were distributed indiscriminately amongst those who searched for the missing sailors, and not amongst the volunteers alone.

I trust that there will be as little delay as possible in testing the accuracy of my statement, as I feel it due to myself that my motives and actions should not be misrepresented. —I am, sir, yours obediently,

RICHARD HAWKER PARTRIDGE.

Thos. Gray, Esq., Assistant Secretary, Board of Trade.

Subsequently Mr Partridge wrote as follows :- Castletown, 28th Feb., 1869.

SIR, - With reference to my letter of the 26th, I beg to add the following particulars, which I have ascertained since writing to you, which will prove to you that the Customs statements with regard to the cask of spirits were not only untrue, but knowingly so. Mr Mylchreest (Lloyd's agent), who did not accompany the Rocket Cart on his return from the wreck, tells me that he met the Custom House Excise Officer and the boatman whom I afterwards found in the Rocket Cart, coming out of the cottage where the two shipwrecked men were, which is about three-fourths of a mile from the wreck. These officers had, I understand, been in this cottage some time, and had not approached nearer to the wreck. You already know that it was with Mr Mylchreest I consulted as to how to proceed with regard to the cask, and he told them what we had decided as to the mode of conveying the spirits to the Customs; but he did not, I believe, mention that any of the spirits had been taken out of the cask, as he did not think it of any importance, or, at least, that, under the circumstances, there was anything wrong in it.

The Receiver of Wreck had the whole circumstances related to him, by Mr Mylchreest, before he made his report to you.

He also examined a man (Richard Caveen) who was one of the men who found the cask, asking him why he did not come and report it to him; and, in reply, Caveen told him he had reported it to his own officer (myself), and that he heard me, on reaching the rocket stores, immediately report it to the Examining Officer; and, as he heard that officer say that was sufficient, he thought no further about it; or words to that effect.

It is, therefore, I think, evident that the truth was perverted in the report of the Receiver of Wreck; and from the language used by that gentleman in the Custom House, to myself and second officer, since the formation of our company, on several occasions, I have reason to know that he has been strongly opposed to the Castletown Volunteer Corps, and, as far as I can understand, for no other reason than that it made extra work for which he was not paid. You will excuse my pressing for an early inquiry, as my position is this: - I have recently invested a considerable amount of money in the purchase of the patent for sinking the Abyssinian Wells on the Island, and am on the point of going to reside in the north of the Island; and as I have

not hitherto been connected with any business, the commencement of this enterprise in a neighbourhood where I am not so well-known as I am here, with so serious a charge impending over me, would be highly injurious to my prospects. - I am, sir, yours obediently,
RICHARD HAWKER PARTRIDGE.

I trust it will be asked if any of the Customs officers approached the wreck of the Virginie before seven, a.m., the morning after the night she was wrecked.

As above stated, the inquiry was opened on Tuesday. The following is a copy of the charge:- 'A statement of facts connected with the abstraction of spirits from a cask belonging to the barque Virginie, wrecked at Langness on Friday night, the 5th of February, 1869:- On hearing a rumour of a wreck above mentioned, the Assistant Examining Officer, taking with him an out-door officer, proceeded to the spot, and there found the vessel broken up, and two of the crew saved. He then proceeded to a house on Langness, and there met with some members of the Volunteer Rocket Corps and Lloyd's agent. After staying about half-an-hour conversing about the wreck, the members of the corps left, upon which Lloyd's agent stated that, to his knowledge, they had in their possession a cask of spirits. The Assistant Examining Officer immediately sent the out-door officer to look for the cask, and, on overtaking the cart belonging to the corps, got upon the cart. After proceeding some distance, he was ordered off by the officer in command of volunteers. On arriving at the wooden bridge, one of the members of the corps asked if the cart was not to be driven to the Custom House. The reply made by the second officer was, that it was not. It was then driven to the Rocket Stores, and, after twenty or twenty-five minutes' delay, it was given to the Assistant Examining Officer; several of the corps having before this refused to assist in its removal from the cart. During the time the delay took place in handing over the cask to the Customs at the stores, the officer in command stated, in the hearing of the Customs authorities, that he had taken some of the spirits out of the cask, and he did not care who knew he had done so; or words to that effect.
R Q CRELLIN.

The following witnesses were examined:- R Q Crellin: I am Receiver of Wreck. The Assistant Examining Officer proceeded to the wreck, and saw Mr Mylchreest at Langness House. He reported that the volunteers had a cask of spirits on the cart. He only heard a rumour that there was a vessel on shore at Langness. Sent T Champion, who is the senior out-door officer, to the Assistant Examiner's to direct him to proceed at once to Langness. I knew no more of the affair until the following morning. He then told me what had occurred the previous night. On the morning of the 6th Feb., the cask was gauged in my presence. I found it to be a 22 gallon cask, containing 19 gallons. 16tenths, perfectly sound. I have not been in the habit of attending the drill of the company. The Rocket stores are supplied through me, and I am responsible for the same to the Board of Trade.

Patrick Duffy deposed: I am Assistant Examining Officer in her Majesty's Customs. On the evening of the 5th February, about nine o'clock, I received a communication from the collector, stating that he understood there was a wreck upon Langness Point. I told him to go to the Watch House and trim the lantern, and I would come after him. I followed immediately, and we proceeded to Langness. We were met by three or four men coming from the wreck. It was then quite dark. The men acknowledged they had been to the wreck. They said there was no remains of the wreck, as the vessel had gone to pieces long before they arrived. They said that two of the crew had been saved, and were staying at the farm house on Langness. I said I must proceed to the farm house. [Witness here detailed a conversation he had with the two

rescued mariners.] I then proceeded to trim my lantern, and went out on my duty. I met Mr Mylchreest, who had just left the house, he said 'Mr Duffy, are you aware that the rocket brigade has a cask of spirits in the cart.' I was quite surprised, and I thanked him for the information. I gave instructions to my out-door officer to proceed as quickly as possible one way whilst I went the other. I told him to keep by the cart. I overtook the rocket cart on the Green, and I followed the cart to the rocket stores, and assisted to get it into the stores. When I got there I asked Mr Partridge to give me up the cask of spirits. He replied, 'Oh, it will do very well where it is.' I said, 'No, I cannot allow it to remain. I must take it to the Queen's warehouse.' Mr Partridge told me he had taken about two quarts out of it, and had given it to his men. I told him I did not want to hear that, and in a very loud tone he stated he had done so. He then went upstairs, and also the men. I and the other out-door officer remained by the cart, and in about a half an hour they came down again. I demanded the cask from one of the company, and was resisted. Then Mr Partridge told me that the men would let me have it, and I placed it in the Queen's warehouse. I examined the cask before locking it up, and I saw no leakage. On the following morning I made my report to the collector. On the next morning I gauged the cask. There were in it 19 gallons and 16-tenths of foreign spirits called Geneva. It has had no water mixed with it. The Rocket Brigade usually go to wrecks, and I never interfered with the company.

To Mr Crellin: No member of the company reported the finding of the cask of spirits.

To Mr Partridge: I arrived at Langness about 10.00 p.m. I saw Mr Mylchreest. I remained there about two hours. I saw Mr Partridge at the bottom of the stairs; he was binding up the sailor's leg. It was Mr Mylchreest who reported the spirits to me, and I thought it was reported as if it was concealed. In fact, he led me to think so. I was not at the wreck when the company were there. The company arrived at the stores about half-past eleven o'clock.

Examination continued on behalf of the Crown: None of our officers reached the wreck that night. The farm house would be about three-fourths of a mile from the wreck. I did not go further than the farm house, because I had received information relative to the spirits, and I was afraid the cask would be tampered with. I had no idea that they intended to run away with it; but I thought that, if the company had the chance, they would have taken the spirits if they could. I do not mean to say that the company have the reputation of being smugglers, and I never heard of them being smugglers. - To Mr Partridge: I have no recollection of a cask of rum being unprotected on Langness by the Customs, from the wreck of the Colonist. I do recollect one of our officers, Cubbon, going to Langness, with instructions to spill a puncheon of rum.

Thomas Champion, out-door officer of Customs, deposed: I remember the night of the 5th of February. I went out to Langness in company with Mr Duffy. It was dark. We met some parties who spoke of the wreck, and I was present whilst Mr Duffy took the particulars from the two seamen. I did not see any of the corps in the farm house at that time. Afterwards the rocket brigade came in. We remained in the house all the time they were there. I did not see the rocket brigade cart then. There was a conversation between Mr Duffy and the second officer, Mr Peake; but nothing was said about the cask of spirits. I was present when Mr Mylchreest told Mr Duffy that a cask of spirits had been found, and it was then upon the cart. I received orders to follow the cart, and to take charge of the cask. I obeyed orders. The cart was then at the 'Big Cellar,' about a mile from the wreck. It was standing, and several men were upon it. As the night was dark I did not see the cask well, but I could perceive a man leaning over it. I got upon the cart to protect it. I inquired if it was leaking, and found it was not. After staying about ten minutes the cart drove on to town. After proceeding a short distance, Mr Partridge

arrived, and as soon as he came he ordered all down from the cart with the exception of one man. All left the cart. I said 'I am in charge of the cask.' He repeated his order for all hands to come down from the cart, and said I could protect it as well by walking as riding. I thought it prudent to come down and follow the cart to the stores. When Mr Duffy asked Mr Partridge for the cask, Mr Partridge replied, 'It would do where it was.' Mr Duffy said, 'It must be conveyed to the Queen's warehouse.' Mr Partridge then gave it up. Mr Partridge went up stairs and left us by the cart. Several of the members came down stairs, and Mr Duffy asked them to help to get the cask out of the cart, but they would not assist. Afterwards Mr Partridge came down, and Mr Duffy asked him again for the cask, and he directed some of the men to give it to us. I suppose Mr Partridge knew me and my superior officer, as we were in uniform. The whole of the corps must have known that we were Custom House officers. I am quite sure Mr Partridge must have seen Mr Duffy at the farm house.

Mr Partridge then called the following witnesses:-

Mr Mylchreest deposed: I am the representative of Lloyd's agent. About half-past eight o'clock I received information of the wreck on Langness, and I sent a report to Mr Partridge. I assisted in the search for missing sailors, and afterwards my attention was directed to the noise of a bung being started from a cask. I went up to where the cask was. Mr Partridge appeared to be in charge of it. I had a short stick in my hand. I dipped it into the cask, and putting it to my mouth, I found it was pure Hollands. There was a great crowd around the cask, and many were very anxious to get some of it. The bung was replaced with some difficulty. Mr Partridge promised the crowd he would give them some if they would assist to remove it to a place of safety. It was a dark stormy night, and the cask was in a difficult place for removal. I was present when Mr Partridge had it placed on the main land, and, before he fulfilled his promise to the men, he asked me if it would not be advisable to give them a little. I told him I had no charge of it, but said I was afraid if he did not give them a little, some of them might stave in the cask. He then gave them about half a wine glass each. There were about 100 men present. I should think the quantity taken out was under a gallon. Afterwards the cask was bunged up, and put upon the rocket cart. There was no concealment. Subsequently I told them there was a cask of Hollands on the cart, and the cart was then moving off towards the town. Mr Partridge was then in the house. I think there is no want of zeal on behalf of this corps to assist at wrecks. I think the company is essential here, as it is a dangerous coast. - To Mr Partridge: I consider if Mr Partridge had not taken charge of the cask of spirits, it would have been broached by the crowd. He consulted with me what was to be done. The cask was put upon the cart in the usual manner. I did not see Mr Partridge with the Custom House officers. I knew they were there. I am aware Mr Partridge has proposed a system of signals to enable the Rocket Brigade and the Life Boat to be warned, and I have always heard of the corps turning out quickly. I have seen them twice drilled, and think well of their practice. They have always given me, as Lloyd's agent, every assistance. I have a recollection that on the week previous, on the night of the 29th of January, the corps turned out, but there was no wreck, and on the corps returning to town, there was some jeering from parties upon the wooden bridge; but upon this occasion there was no delays.

Richard Caveen, deposed: I am a member of the corps, and have been so ever since it was formed, three years ago. I attend regularly, and there are three officers and twenty-two men in all. I found the cask of spirits. At first I took it for water. There was a large piece of rag hanging from the bung. I opened the cask with a piece of timber, when I found it was spirits. I sent a report of it to Mr Partridge, who came immediately. He was the first to come. A crowd soon collected, and demanded some of it, and threatened to smash in the cask if they could

not get it. I believe if they had done so their lives would have been in danger. The rocket stores are opened every day, and all the officers have keys. The first person who comes lights the fire, and it is often opened all night, when we smoke, and some of us go on the look out. We have no orders from our officers, as we volunteer to stop, especially when it is stormy. I have been in the habit of keeping watch on stormy nights, and have not been paid for it.

James Peake, 2nd officer, deposed: I was present at the wreck. One of our men, Peter Chantler, told me he had passed over a cask of something as soon as he got upon the rocks. I took no notice, but went in search of seamen. I did not go near the cask until it was reported there was a crowd round it. I went into the farm house with Mr Mylchreest, where I saw the two Custom House officers. Mr Partridge went into the kitchen to dress the seaman's leg. It did not occur to me to report the cask of spirits to the Custom House officers; but I heard Mr Partridge tell Mr Duffy, at the stores, that there was a cask of spirits on the rocket cart, and he told them he had taken a small quantity out. The Examining Officer said there was no necessity to tell him. The men then went up stairs to take off their belts. Mr Duffy said 'Get their names down, and then assist me in getting the cask off.' I heard Mr Partridge give orders to get it off. He was at that time coming down stairs. There was no demur whatever in assisting to get off the cask, and some of the men helped to roll it up to the Queen's warehouse. I have often heard Mr Crellin say he wished there had never been a volunteer corps in Castletown, on account of the extra trouble it gave him. There has been no disagreement between the collector and the corps. The stores are never opened at night, except in stormy weather. Some of the men may be there during the day. When we meet at the stores we smoke, and sometimes have a little music; and sometimes we have some beer. I do not think it judicious to leave the stores open, as we have been accustomed to do. - To Mr Hughes: I think the reason why the collector wished there was no corps in Castletown was, because he might have had some objection to our management of the stores, and also our conduct. We always looked upon Mr Crellin as our superior officer. - To Mr Partridge: I remember a puncheon of rum taken out of the water, and the next morning there was only a few gallons in it. It was at the time of the sale of the wreck of the Colonist. I did not see any of the officers take charge of it.

Mr Crellin explained that this was a cask of damaged rum. He had ordered it to be destroyed, as it was mixed with salt water, and was unfit for sale, and would not fetch the duty. He had the authority of the Commissioners of Customs to destroy it and four others.

William Killip deposed: I am a member of the corps, and have seen casks broached upon the shore, and a good deal of drunkenness, about 26 years ago; but I have not seen any lately, either on the part of officers or men, or the public. I was at Langness, and I saw this cask of spirits. It was down upon the rocks, and when it was brought up I tasted it, and I saw about half-a-glass given to each man. I did not see the officers till we were returning.

Henry Kelly deposed: I am a member of the rocket brigade. I received a charge from Mr Partridge to bring the cask to the stores. We should have been at the wreck one hour and a-half sooner if it had not been for a false report which had been given a week before. We were out then about three hours. The light we saw was a flash light, and when we returned, we were hooted by a lot of the rabble of the town. I did not see any officer till we came to the 'Big Cellar.' When I received information of this wreck, I was upon the quay, and I did not take much notice of it, on account of the fun that was made of us the week before. I rode upon the cart when it came to the town. I had to do so to keep the cask steady.

William Clague: I am one of the brigade. I first saw the Custom House officers when we reached the Big Cellar. I frequently attend drill; we are not a full company. Some are gone

away, and two or three left of their own accord. The apparatus could be worked by six men, but to work it properly it would take 25.

John McMeiken: I am treasurer for the corps. I have attended many of their drills, and as far as I can judge they have been very fair; and the corps always turned out in quick time when they are required. I have attended meetings at the stores, and I think they have been well conducted. I have understood that the corps have give an entertainment for the lifeboat institution, and also at Peel, for the benefit of a boy who was injured by the rocket apparatus; and they gave an entertainment for the benefit of Henry Kelly, who met with an accident at the launch of the lifeboat. I am aware that Mr Partridge has sent to the Board of Trade an application for signals, and also interested himself to get a light upon Langness. I have always found that the volunteers have given very valuable information and assistance to me, as the agent of the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society.

Richard Hawker Partridge deposed: With reference to the upper rooms at the stores, they were occupied by myself and others, during the preparation of entertainments as has been spoken; but lately they have not been used for that purpose. They may play a concertina; and the room is not now open daily. Our corps was inspected lately by Captain Wake, R.N., and in his report he stated that there was nothing that he could find fault with, either with regard to drill or stores. One great thing was that, when the men were at drill, they always were silent, which was not generally the case, and he was particularly satisfied with them.

Thomas Harper deposed: I am a resident of Castletown, and a member of the Rocket Brigade. I saw Mr Duffy and Mr Champion, Custom House officers, at the farm house. Mr Partridge went into the kitchen, and I was trimming my lamp. I was there about half an-hour, and when I came out I saw Mr Duffy still there. I cannot tell where Mr Partridge was in the interval. When the cart came to the wooden bridge in Castletown, I asked the second officer of the corps whether they were not going round to the Custom House to leave the cask. His reply was 'No.' I then went the nearest way to the stores, and was there when the cart arrived, and I saw Mr Partridge come in. I do not remember hearing Mr Duffy demand the cask.

This concluded the inquiry.

Mr Hughes stated that he should lay the whole of the evidence before the Board of Trade, and no doubt in a few days they would give their opinion upon it."

"RESULT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE INQUIRY AT CASTLETOWN

Mr Partridge, of Castletown, has received the following letter:- Board of Trade, Whitehall, London, 27th April, 1869. Sir, - I am directed by the Board of Trade to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th instant, stating that you intend to leave Castletown next month, and that you will be then under the necessity of resigning your command of the Castletown Volunteer Life Company, and that, before you do so, you hope the Board of Trade will pronounce some opinion on your conduct as affected by the late inquiry relating to the cask of spirits. In reply, I am to inform you that the result of the late inquiry by Mr Hughes has been, in the opinion of the Board of Trade, to exonerate you completely from blame, with respect to the charges brought against you in respect of the cask of spirits. With regard to your approaching resignation of the command of the Volunteer Life Company, I am to take this opportunity of thanking you, on behalf of this Board, for your services in connection with the Company.—I am, sir, your obedient servant, THOMAS GRAY. - To R. H. Partridge, Esq., Castletown, Isle of Man." - [The Board of Trade have come to a very proper conclusion with

regard to the trumpery charge which was brought against Mr Partridge and the members of the Castletown Rocket Brigade ED. I. M. T.]”