

Abydos (1000) - Full Description

On Tuesday 18th December 1894, the Abydos was lying alongside the Terminus Wharf, Glasgow, when she commenced to load a cargo of 1,536 tons of coal worth £500 for Savona, Italy. The cargo was loaded in the usual way by trucks. The coal came from the Auchinwraith and Bardyke collieries, the Carfin colliery, the Quarter colliery, and from the Newton and Hallside pits. Together with bunker coal the total weight of coal loaded into the Abydos was 1,808 tons. 250 tons was put into number 1 hold; 500 in the lower part of number 2 hold and 200 tons in the between decks. Number 3 hold had 200 tons while number 4 hold had 300 tons in the lower section, 200 tons in the between decks and 150 tons in the side bunkers. Sixteen men were involved in trimming the cargo and it was described as "well stowed". Crucially there were no shifting boards. They were not generally used in the Clyde at this time due to difficulties with trimming and the expense. However, contemporary expert opinion felt that any vessel outside of the coasting trade should be fitted with them to help prevent the cargo shifting in heavy seas.

At 5.30 a.m. on Friday 21st December 1894, the Abydos, Captain James Martin, master, left Terminus Pier, in charge of the licensed pilot, Thomas Martin. Later that morning at 8.15 a.m. Thomas Martin left the Abydos and the chief engineer, Robert Buchanan exchanged signals with his parents who lived at Gravel Park House. At 11.00 a.m. when the Abydos was off the Little Cumbrae Lighthouse, Robert Buchanan also exchanged signals with his brother James who was assistant lighthouse keeper there.

Later the same day she was caught off the west coast of the Isle of Man in the worst storm since 1839, the wind being reported as hurricane force west-northwest. She must have foundered at around 7.25 p.m. some miles northwest of the Calf of Man and all twenty-one crewmen perished. From the evidence taken at the Coroner's Inquests it seems like at least part of her crew had time to put on lifebelts and launch the lifeboat. It seems probable that the lifeboat overset at some point.

The first wreckage from the Abydos appeared the next day, Saturday 22nd December 1894, at Fleshwick, one mile north of Port Erin. There were three lifebelts and two lifebuoys, marked 'Abydos, of London.

The first two bodies of the lost crew were found at the back of Port Erin breakwater on Sunday 23rd December 1894. Both were wearing lifebelts and were without boots and both had died from hypothermia not drowning. Along with the two bodies was the wreckage of a lifeboat. Later on in the day, a third body was found washed up at Strandhall near Poyllvash. Again this man had died of hypothermia and not drowning.

On Friday 28th December 1894 an inquest was held at Port Erin by Mr J S Gell, coroner, concerning the death of the three seamen, whose bodies has been found. John Thompson, superintendent engineer for Messrs Raeburn and Co, who identified the bodies and wreckage, stated that other portions of wreckage, which did not belong to the Abydos were washed ashore at the same time and at the same locality. The three crewmen were identified as George Allan, first mate, Robert D Buchanan, first engineer and William J Phillips, boatswain (given as G Forbes in the Board of Trade Inquiry). The former two had been washed at Port Erin and the latter at Strandhall. The verdict confirmed the medical evidence of death from hypothermia. The bodies of Allan and Buchanan were taken to Scotland for interment. The full Inquest Report is further down.

On Wednesday 2nd January 1895, a body of a fourth crewman was found on the Calf of Man. The body was found above the highwater mark, and with the life belt unstrapped from him and lying along side on the ground. It was supposed that after being thrown on the shore he crept away a short distance before taking his belt off, and then being too exhausted to proceed further, he lay down and died of exposure or hunger.

A fifth body was found on the Calf of Man on Thursday 17th January 1895 and conveyed to Port St Mary.

The steam trawler Majestic, of Liverpool, arrived at Douglas on Friday 1st March 1895 and reported having fouled her nets on the wreck of the Abydos off Niarbyl in 30 fathoms of water, and recovering the body of a man, besides bundles of clothing and other goods.

On Tuesday 26th March 1895, the steam trawler Skart, of Douglas, picked up the body of a man about 7 miles off Niarbyl. From papers found on the body it proved to be that of an able bodied seaman, Duncan Finlayson.

This was the seventh and final body recovered and it was landed at Douglas. The full Inquest Report is further down.

The cause of the Abydos's loss was never established. At the Board of Trade Inquiry held on Wednesday 20th March 1895 at Glasgow, the view of Captain John Castle, Inspector for the Board of Trade, was that in the atrocious weather conditions she would not have been under control, and from the fact that other wreckage was picked up at the same time and the same place, he was of the opinion that she may have collided with another vessel and that both of them foundered. The other vessel was later surmised to have been the steamship Vito, but no evidence has been found to substantiate this theory as the Vito did not in fact sink in 1894 and the more likely cause of the Abydos's demise was her cargo shifting in the monstrous seas causing her to capsize and sink.

At the enquest into the death of William Phillips whose body was washed ashore at Strandhall on 23rd December, the Coroner of Arbory stated that, *"It is thought that the vessel foundered off the 'Corner' at the Calf and the bodies and articles recovered would be scattered by contrasting currents which prevail there. That would account for the buoys and other things found on the west coast and the body (of William Phillips) found to the eastward of Poolvash. There has been very little wreckage, however, thrown up."*

The crew of the Abydos was:

ALLAN, George, age 32, Mate, 104 Eaglesham Street, Glasgow;
ANDERSEN, Peder C, age 41, Carpenter, c/o Tabell, 2 James Watt Street, Glasgow;
ANDERSON, George, age 45, Cook, 152 Perth Street, Glasgow;
ANDERSON, Joseph, age 30, Fireman, 57 Richard Street, Glasgow;
BROWN, Emalie, A, age 24, Second Engineer, 23 Aspley Place, Glasgow;
BROWNE, Gavin, age 17, Mess Room Steward, 53 Park Street, Plantation;
BUCHANAN, Robert D, age 26, First Engineer, Garvel House, Greenock;
COLLINS, James, age 31, Able Seaman, 1 Counstenhill Street, P'shaws;
FINLAYSON, Duncan, age 28, Able Seaman, 9 Scotia Street, Glasgow;
GORDON, George H, age 21, Second Mate, 29 Minerva Street, Glasgow;
GRINDLAY, T, age 30, Donkeyman, 43 Stobcross Street, Glasgow;
HAMILTON, Hugh, age 29, Able Seaman;
KERR, Peter, age 35, Fireman, 154 Garngad Road, Glasgow;
LANG, Peter, age 42, steward, 97 Cedar Street, Glasgow;
MARTIN, James, age 46, Master, 27 Milton Road, Birkenhead;
McBRIDE, James, age 31, Fireman, 17 Kelvinside Street, Glasgow;
PHILLIPS, James, age 34, Able Seaman, 69 Clyde Street, Glasgow;
PHILLIPS, W J, age 30, Bosun & Lamps, 43 Stobcross Street, Glasgow;
SEATON, James, age 24, Second Engineer, 479 St Vincent Street, Glasgow;
SPENCE, Benjamin, age 34, Able Seaman, 23 Underwood Road, Paisley;
WARNER, Matt, age 33, Fireman, 41 Richard Street, Glasgow.

Board of Trade Inquiry in Full

*“(No 79)
ABYDOS (SS)*

The Merchant Shipping Act, 1894

In the matter of a preliminary Inquiry held before Captain John S Castle, Inspector for the Board of Trade, into the circumstances attending the supposed loss of the steamship Abydos, which has not been heard of since leaving Glasgow for Savona, on or about the 21st day of December 1894.

Report

In pursuance of my appointment dated the 2nd day of March 1895, at the Waterloo Rooms, Glasgow. Mr McNiven appeared for the Board of Trade, and Mr Wylie represented the owners. Having heard and carefully considered the evidence, I beg to report as follows:

The Abydos, official number 65,566, was a British steam vessel, built of iron at Govan, county of Lanark, in 1871, by the London and Glasgow Engineering and Iron Shipbuilding Company Limited, and in 1882 she was lengthened at the Pontoon Victoria Docks, London, and was then registered at that port, and her dimensions were as follows: Length 260 ft, breadth 31.4 ft, and depth of hold 21.8 ft, whilst her tonnage was 1388.96 gross and 908.27 tons net register. She was rigged as a schooner, and was fitted with two compound inverted engines of 150 horse-power combined.

The Abydos was owned by Mr William Hanny Raeburn, of Glasgow, and Mr John B Verel, the former being the managing owner.

The vessel was built under the three-deck rule, to class 100 A1 at Lloyd's, and had three tiers of beams and two decks laid, these decks being constructed of wood. She had a short top-gallant forecastle, in which the crew lived, and a bridge house for the master and officers.

There were five cargo hatchways, of the following dimensions:

No. 1, 12ft by 8ft 10in

No. 2, 23ft 11in by 9ft 9in

No. 3, 7ft 11in by 9ft 9in

No. 4, 19ft 11in by 7ft 11in

No. 5, 6ft by 7ft 9in

No. 1 hatchway was fitted with one strong fore and after.

No. 2 had two iron shifting beams and three fore and afters.

No. 3 had one fore and after.

No. 4 one iron shifting beam and two fore and afters.

The whole of the hatches were made of 3-inch deals, and they were supplied with three sets of tarpaulins, which could be secured in the usual manner by battens, cleats and wedges. There were four bunker hatchways, two on each side of the decks, about 2 feet each; they had wooden coamings, hatches and tarpaulins. The engine-room and fidleys had an iron casing, 7 feet high, with iron doors on each side, and a teak skylight over the engine-room, and iron gratings over the fidleys, which also had iron shutters and canvas covers. There were six iron ventilators fitted with cowls, standing about 5 feet above the deck, and shipped on iron coamings which were about 2 feet 6 inches high; these were fitted with wooden plus and covers.

She had four bulkheads and two water-ballast tanks; these tanks could also be used for carrying some descriptions of cargo when required, the cubical contents of the former one being 2,400 feet, equal to 70 tons of water, and after tank 3,200 feet, as 91 tons of water.

The capacity of the holds was as follows: forehold, 30,200ft; fore between decks, 13,700ft; after hold 13,600ft, and after between decks, 13,100ft.

There was also a spare space in forward lower hold for coals, 9,640ft.

In May 1891 the British Corporation for the Survey and Registry of Shipping approved, on behalf of the Board of Trade, the position of the disc on this vessel, the centre of which was placed at 4 feet below the statutory deck line, with an additional 3 inches of free board for winter voyages.

In 1889 the vessel was supplied with new boilers and new decks, and then passed her survey at Lloyd's. She had three boats, two of which were lifeboats, and they were stowed on the chocks near the engine-room and under davits, with the tackles rove ready for use; the third, a working boat, was carried further forward, and the vessel was supplied with life saving appliances in compliance with the statute. Mr Henry Willoughby, Surveyor of the Board of Trade, has stated that he inspected the boats, life-saving appliances, ventilators, etc., and found them

all in good order, the lifebelts being kept in two boxes on the bridge, ten in each box, and six in the starboard lifeboat.

Prior to sailing, Mr Raeburn, the owner, valued the Abydos at £10,000, but taking into consideration the age of the vessel, it appears to be in excess of her market value; she was, however, insured for that amount, and the freight, which amounted to £460, was insured for £500, but no insurance was effected on outfit or disbursements.

On the 18th of December 1894, the Abydos was lying alongside the Terminus Wharf or Quay, when she commenced to load a cargo of coal for Savona, this coal being tipped into the vessel, in the usual manner from the trucks. It was composed of about 1,536 tons worked from the Auchinwraith and Bardyke Collieries, the Carfin Colliery, the Quarter Colliery, and from the Newton and Hallside pits. Mr J B Atkinson, Government Inspector of Mines for the Eastern District of Scotland, told me he did not think the coal shipped from his district was liable to spontaneous combustion, and that it was principally worked with open lights.

Mr G M Robertson, Government Inspector of Mines for the Western District of Scotland, has stated that the coal worked from the Newton and Hallside pit is liable to spontaneous combustion, and it also gives off fire-damp. Carfin Colliery coal is also liable to spontaneous combustion, but gives off very little fire-damp. These coals contain large quantities of pyrites, which are picked out by hand, as it passes over the screen by men and boys. The coal was loaded and trimmed under the supervision of Thomas Egan, foreman, coal trimmer, and he has stated the whole cargo, including bunkers, amounted to 1,808 tons, and that it was stowed in the following manner:

In No. 1 hold, 250 tons.

No. 2, 500 tons in the lower hold, and 200 tons in the between decks.

No. 3, 200 tons.

No. 4, 300 tons in the lower hold and 200 tons in the between decks; and 150 tons in the side bunkers.

All the holds were full with the exception of a space for about 20 tons in the forward between decks, where it sloped down from the fore hatchway forward; and in the after between decks the coal was stored in the same manner, leaving a space of from 18 to 20 tons. Sixteen men were engaged in the trimming of this coal, and I have been told that it was well trimmed up to the sides of the vessel; and after comparing the cubical contents of the hold with the cargo, it is evident that it was fairly stowed.

There were no shifting boards, and the different witnesses in this case have stated that it is not usual to use them in the stowage of coal cargoes on the Clyde, nor in their opinion is it necessary to do so; and there appear to be great objections to the use of them; the first is the difficulty with the trimmers and secondly, the extra expense. I am of opinion, however, that shifting boards are very necessary, and that all ships should use them when going outside of the coasting trades.

On the 21st December 1894 the Abydos left the Terminus Pier, bound for Savona, in charge of Thomas Martin, a licensed pilot, her draught of water being about 18 ft 4 in forward and 19 ft 8 in aft, and the vessel would rise about four inches getting into salt water, and as far as her hull and equipments were concerned she was in a good and seaworthy condition. She was under the command of Mr James Martin, who held a certificate of competency No. 92,380, and had a crew of 21 hands all told, as follows: 1 master, 2 mates, 1 carpenter, 1 boatswain 5 able seamen, 3 engineers, 4 firemen, 1 donkey-man, 1 steward, 1 cook, and 1 mess room steward. The pilot left the vessel at 8.15 a.m. on the same day; since then she has neither been seen or heard of, but portions of wreckage and equipment and three bodies, which have been identified, have been washed ashore near Port Erin, Isle of Man.

The following report relating to the same has been put in,

'Castletown, Isle of Man, 5.30 p.m., 22nd December, three lifebelts, two lifebuoys marked 'Abydos, London,' found at Fleshwick, one mile north of Port Erin; about 10 a.m., 30th December (should be 23rd December), three bodies picked up and identified as those of Mr George Allen, chief officer; Mr W Buchanan, chief engineer; and Mr G Forbes, boatswain.'

Mr John Thompson, superintendent engineer for Messrs Raeburn and Co., who identified the bodies and wreckage, has stated that other portions of wreckage, which did not belong to the Abydos, were washed ashore at the same time and in the same locality.

I have not been able to ascertain the actual cause of the loss of the ship, but from the evidence of Mr Duncan McGregor, agent for the Meteorological Department at Glasgow it appears that on the 22nd a furious westerly gale was prevailing in the Irish Channel. At 8.00 a.m. on that day the barometer at Holyhead was down to 29.20, the wind blowing from the west at hurricane force, with a tremendous sea, and at Fleetwood, during the height of the gale, for three hours the velocity of the wind was 105 miles per hour, with a pressure of 55 lbs per square foot. In a gale of this description, the Abydos, whose speed in fine weather was only seven or eight knots per hour, would not be under control, and from the fact that other wreckage was picked up at the same time and place, I think it very probable that she may have collided with another vessel and both of them foundered.

With regard to spontaneous combustion, I am of opinion that sufficient time had not elapsed from the time of loading up to the wreckage having been washed ashore for that to have taken place, neither do I consider that the loss can be attributed to an explosion, as the holds were properly ventilated, and it is very improbable that any of the hatches would be taken off, or a light taken below, during a gale.

*John S Castle,
Inspector.
20th March 1895."*

"THE INQUESTS.

Mr J. S. Gell, High-Bailiff of Castletown, and Coroner of Inquests for the district held an inquiry on Monday afternoon (24th December 1894), at the Falcon's Nest Hotel, on the bodies of two of the men washed ashore, and which had been laid in the coach-house of the hotel. The jury consisted of Messrs John Cain, William Kelly, William Fargher, Joseph Christian, James Cregeen, Robert Cregeen, John Cregeen, Thomas Harrison, Leopold Maddrell, William Maddrell, James Coole and Thomas Cregeen.

After the jury had viewed the body, the Coroner said: It is a sad inquiry we are engaged on this afternoon. We all recognise the fact that on Saturday last a gale blew such as no one here has experienced for a great number of years; and from the bodies and the wreckage which have come ashore, there is every probability that a large steamer foundered off Port Erin during the gale. There are the bodies of two men, as to whose death we have to inquire into; and I propose that you should view them both at the same time, for though the inquiries will have to be separate, the same evidence will apply in each case. We know little at present with regard to the facts of the wreck, if a wreck there has been; but from the papers found on the first body which came in yesterday, it would appear that the man in whose pocket these papers were found belonged to a steamer called the Abydos, which was apparently registered in London. The man seems by these papers to have been the captain of the vessel, because among them is a letter from Messrs Killoch and Co., of Liverpool, informing him that they have been engaged to discharge the vessel, and directing him to proceed to the Huskisson Dock. Taking advantage of there being a one o'clock boat, I wrote fully to Messrs Killoch yesterday with a view to giving time before this inquest was held for a telegram to be sent to say whether or not this vessel had arrived in Liverpool. Up to now I have heard nothing from Liverpool. Looking through the papers found upon the man I gather that the vessel was about 800 tons register, with a capacity for carrying from 1,300 to 1,400 tons, and I suppose a vessel of that tonnage would have a crew of twenty or thirty men. It seems that this vessel, in all probability, foundered off Port Erin during Saturday's gale; and I should not be surprised if we have within the next few-days several bodies turning up. This afternoon I propose to go no further than to take evidence as to the finding of the bodies and as to the papers, and then adjourn the inquiry in order to give time to hear from the relatives, or the owners of the vessel, or anybody else interested. Suppose we closed this inquiry this afternoon, and you found a verdict that they were the bodies of men unknown, who had been found drowned, if I would be monstrous hard on the relatives, should they turn up within the next two or three days, and wish to identify the bodies and bury them; but if we do not close the inquiry this afternoon, but adjourn it for two or three days, it will enable the relatives to come over and identify them, and clear up the mystery. We do not at the present moment know, whether the vessel has arrived at Liverpool or not. I am afraid it has not, but we do not know. Therefore, I will not close the

inquiry. The case is a sad one in every way, but I do not think there is the least difficulty in leaving the bodies where they are till the day after tomorrow. I am so satisfied that the body at the Strand Hall is one of the crew of the same vessel that I do not intend to hold an inquiry there this evening, which I should have done had I thought it to be the body of one of the crew of another vessel.

The following witnesses were then called:

William Watterson: I am a fisherman at Port Erin. I went for a walk over the brows yesterday in morning in the direction of the breakwater, and - looked all along the beach. I also looked over the precipice called the Black Hole, about 800 yards the other side of the breakwater. I fancied I could make a man out lying on the rocks. I called Philip Watt, who was with me, to see if he could make it out to be the body of a man. He thought it was but as it was not quite daylight we waited for about half an hour. It was then daylight, and we came to the conclusion that what we saw lying on the rocks was the body of a man. We called the attention of the Harbour Master to the object and he also thought it was the body of a man. We then manned a boat and brought the body into Port Erin. The man had an oilskin coat on, and a lifebelt over it properly fastened. He was fully dressed, except that he had no boots on. He could not have put on the lifebelt in the water as he had it fastened, but he might have taken his boots off in the water. The body from the appearance of it could only have been a short time in the water, probably about 21 hours. On Saturday morning there was a great gale, as bad a one as I remember. There have been pieces of wreckage picked up along the shore. I saw myself the stern of a small boat that had 'London' on it, and I heard another man say that he saw another portion apparently of the same boat which had 'Abydos' on it.

P.C. Richard Duke deposed: Yesterday morning, about nine o'clock, I met the last witness, and received the body from him and took it to the place where the jury have just viewed it. The body had on an oilskin coat and a life-belt over it. The life-belt was so tied on that I do not think the man could have fastened it himself. The body was apparently that of a man 30 years of age, black hair, dark brown moustache, and about six feet in height. I searched the body, and found various papers in the outside Jacket pocket. There is a letter dated December 13, 1894, addressed to Captain True, steamship Abydos, from Killock & Co, from which it appears that the Abydos was bound to Liverpool. There is also a receipt for some drums of oil paid for in Glasgow on the 20th December, 1894: also four accounts from John Shearer & Son, Glasgow, dated 20th December, 1894. made out to the steamer Abydos; also a memorandum book and two memoranda as to the cargo, from which it appears that the cargo consisted of different varieties of coal from Scotland. I also found in the pockets a waterbury watch which had stopped at 7-24: a key, a pencil, two pocket handkerchiefs, and 9s 1/2d.

The Coroner (addressing the jury): If you are satisfied as far as we have gone. I do not think it advisable to take any further evidence now in regard to this body, but to await further information from across the water. The following evidence was then taken as to the finding of the second body:

Henry Cregeen, fisherman, said: This morning, between 12 and 1 o'clock, my son and I found the body about a mile from the breakwater. My son was with me. We were looking if we could see anything on the water, and we saw a life-belt floating. On going up to it, we found that it was round the body of a man. We took the body into the boat and brought it ashore. It was fully dressed, except boots. When we reached the shore I sent word to PC Duke, who came and took it out of the boat, I should think the body had been a couple of days in the water. I do not think the wrecked vessel could have been more than between two or three miles off the coast, judging from the way the wreckage came in and the washing in of the bodies.

PC Duke: My attention was called to the body of a man being found at half-past twelve, and I went down and met Cregeen's boat. I removed the body to where it now is and where the jury viewed it. I found 5s 9d in the left side pocket of the trousers. Two buttons on the coat had on them the words 'Gulf Line.' The body appeared to be that of an engineer. It was the body, apparently, of a man about 30 years of age. about five feet eight inches in height, with a black moustache and no whiskers. The Coroner (addressing the jury: I do not think we can get further than this. I do not think it would be wise to go further, because we have got all the facts we can at present get in both cases. There was a big gale, and these bodies were pitched up. You have seen the bodies, and you have seen what is on them, and I do not think it would be wise to go any further this afternoon with our inquiry. The better plan. I think, would be to leave, the bodies where they are till the day after tomorrow, and by that time, no doubt, we shall get some information from the other side of the water which will enable us to come to

some definite conclusion The inquiry was, accordingly, adjourned to Wednesday, when it was again further adjourned till Friday.

Mr J S Gell, High-Bailiff of Castletown, and Coroner of Inquests for the district, resumed the inquests at the Falcon's Nest Hotel, Port Erin, yesterday (Friday 28th December 1894), upon the bodies washed ashore there. The inquests had been adjourned with a view to give an opportunity for some of the friends of the deceased seamen reaching the Island to identify the bodies. The Coroner had put himself in communication with the owners of the wrecked vessel with the result that their shore superintendent (Mr Thomson) and Mr Chalmers, who was the first mate of the Abydos till the last and fatal voyage, came to the Island on Thursday and identified the two bodies lying in the coach house of the Falcon's Nest Hotel and that lying at the Shore Hotel, Strandhall. It turned out that the body supposed to be the Captain of the Abydos was that of the first mate; the other body, recovered at Port Erin, being that of the first engineer: that found near Poolvash and taken to Strandhall being identified as the body of the boatswain. It seems that Captain True was not on the vessel at all. He had stayed at Glasgow to undergo an operation and his place was taken by another master, Captain Martin, whose body has not yet been recovered. We append to this report the copy of a letter recovered by the Coroner from Mrs Martin, as it may aid in the identification of the body, should it be recovered. It is a remarkable coincidence that it was the first voyage in the Abydos of the first mate as well as the captain. Mr George Chalmers, who came over to identify the discovered bodies, was, as we have already stated, the first mate of the Abydos till this voyage. He had left the ship the day before she sailed, to undergo, in Glasgow, his examination for a captain's certificate; and he was to have rejoined the vessel the next voyage, his place having only been temporarily taken by his ill-fated substitute.

The Coroner, in resuming the inquests at the Port Erin Hotel yesterday, said: I am glad the jury agreed with me the day before yesterday for the further adjournment, for we now have present representatives of the owners of the vessel, who will be able to identify the bodies. I have received a letter from Mrs Martin, wife of the master of the vessel, giving me full particulars as to her husband I have also a letter from Mrs Philips, the wife of the man whose body lies at the Shore Road. The latter is in response to a letter which I had addressed to Miss Arabella Griffiths, which was Mrs Philips' maiden name, and which was on the first page of a Bible picked up on the shore.

The evidence as to identification of the body first found was then taken, the first witness being

John Thomson, who deposed: I am superintendent of the firm of Messrs Raeburn & Verel of Glasgow, shipowners. I have viewed the body in question in this inquiry and I identify it as that of George Allan, who was the first mate of the steamship Abydos. He lived at Culross in Fifeshire and had a wife and family. Messrs Raeburn and Verel were the managing owner of the Abydos, which was an iron steamer of 900 tons registered tonnage, her port of register being London. She left Glasgow on Friday morning last for Savona and Genoa, with a cargo of coals. The Abydos carried a crew of twenty hands the master being Captain James Martin. She was thoroughly well founded in every way. Before she sailed it was pointed out by the Board of Trade surveyor that there were only twenty life belts on board, so another was supplied, making the number up to twenty-one. It was Captain Martin's first voyage in the Abydos, but he was very highly recommended to us by his last employers, and he was a thoroughly competent mariner. I saw a part of the boat, which had been picked up on the beach with the letters 'Abydos' on it and I have no doubt it was the lifeboat of the Abydos. I have seen other wreckage which I identify as portions of the Abydos.

George Chalmers deposed: I live in Glasgow. I was first mate on the Abydos till the Tuesday before she sailed, the 18th December. I identify the body I have seen as that of George Allan, the first mate. I was nearly eighteen months on the Abydos. I agree with the last witness that she was a thoroughly well-found boat. I knew Captain Martin, but I had not sailed with him, as he had just joined the vessel as I left, this being his first voyage in the Abydos.

This concluded the evidence as to the first mate and similar evidence was given by Mr Thomson and Mr Chalmers in the other case, the body being identified by them as that of George Buchanan, first engineer, who was a single man.

The Coroner, addressing the jury, said: Well gentlemen, I do not think it is necessary to go further into these inquiries now. I think you will be satisfied that the matter has been sifted as far as it is possible to do so, or as far as there is any occasion to do so. We have taken evidence as to the body of George Allan, the first mate of the

Abydos, and as to the body of Robert D Buchanan, the first engineer of the same vessel. From the evidence given, there is not the slightest reason to doubt that the vessel was thoroughly well found. She left Glasgow, it appears, on Friday; and on Saturday morning encountered the full fury of the gale. As to whether she foundered by stress of weather or whether by collision there is not the least occasion to inquire into at present, and in fact, there is no evidence whatever by which we can come to a conclusion as to that. There is no doubt the vessel did founder, and there is not the slightest doubt that the two bodies are those of the first mate and the chief engineer of the foundered vessel. I do not suppose, gentlemen, that any of you will think is necessary to carry this inquiry any further.

The jury found a verdict to the effect that the deceased died of exhaustion caused by exposure and cold.

At two o'clock, the inquiry was resumed at the Shore Road Hotel, as to the body of the seaman picked up on the shore in that neighbourhood. The inquiry was opened on Wednesday, when

Charles Crowe, who lives at Balladoole. in the parish of Arbory, deposed that on Monday, at about half-past nine o'clock, he and four of his companions found on the shore the body, fully dressed, that the jury had viewed, and the police subsequently took charge of it.

Police Inspector Clague, who had taken charge of the body, said it was apparently that of a man between 30 and 33 years of age.

Dr Clague deposed that he had examined the body, and there were no marks of any injury upon it with the exception of a few scratches on the face and hands: and in his opinion death was the result of exhaustion caused by exposure and cold. He did not think the body had been in the water more than a couple of days, and he thought death had taken place only a short time before the body came ashore.

On the inquiry being resumed yesterday, Mr Thomson and Mr Chalmers identified it as that of William J Philips, the boatswain of the Abydos. who lived at Glasgow, and was a married man with a family.

The jury found, as in the other cases, that, death was caused by exhaustion, the consequence of exposure and cold, which was in accordance with the doctor's evidence.

The following is the letter received by the Coroner from Captain Martin's wife:

27. Milton Road, Tramere. 26th Dec, 1894.

Dear Sir. I take the liberty of writing to you about my husband, James Martin, who was captain of the s.s. Abydos. He is 46 years of age, about 5 feet 7 inches, stout built, blue eyes, fair complexion, bald, grey hair and beard, heavy moustache, but no side whiskers. He wore a silver watch with gold albert and appendage, spade shilling gilded in glass. Mark of deep cut over the eye. If his body should be found at Port Erin on the coast, I would at once come to the Island. In any case please send me what information you can. The very painful intelligence has only reached myself and children this afternoon. Awaiting your kind reply. I remain yours sincerely,

Jane Martin.

The High-Bailiff of Castletown.

P.S. In all probability he would be wearing white flannel underclothing, a fawn striped shirt, and light brown long stockings."

The Wreck off Port Erin.

On Wednesday morning (27th March 1895) Mr S Harris held an inquest on the body of Duncan Finlayson, whose body was found off the Niarbyl on Tuesday evening by the trawl-boat Skart. It will be remembered that a steamer named the Abydos went down with all hands off Port Erin in December. According to his discharge papers, the deceased was an A.B. on board the Abydos.

William Shimmin deposed: I am at present master of the trawler Skart, of Douglas. Yesterday, we were trawling off the Niarbyl, between Peel and Port Erin. It was about midday. We were trawling for all sorts of fish. We had the trawl beam out and trawl net. When we brought the net up about that time of the day. I noticed there was the body of a man in the net, and when we discovered the dead body we took the fish out, and left the body in the pocket of the net. We then set steam and came round to Douglas. The body was that of a man. There was a pair of trousers, a guernsey frock, and a dungaree jacket of blue calico on the body. When we arrived in Douglas, about, 4.30 p.m. we reported the case to the police, who immediately took steps to remove the body to the mortuary. I took it to be the body of a sailor. I did not know the name of the deceased. William Lace, one of my crew was the first to notice the body. We have lost two days through it. I did not see the body searched.

William Lace: I am engineer on board the Skart. When we were hauling in the net, I was the first to notice the feet of a dead man in the pocket of the net. I informed the skipper. He has described what took place afterwards.

Dr McKenzie: I have made an examination of the body of the man at present at the mortuary. The body is very much decomposed, and presents the appearance of having been from two to three months in the water. Death in my opinion was due to drowning. The body has the appearance of a sailor.

PC J H Fayle: I am a police constable in Douglas. Yesterday afternoon I received information that the dead body of a man had been found in the trawl net of the trawler Skart. I along with other constables, immediately on hearing the case, brought the stretcher to the Victoria Pier, where the Skart was lying. He was wrapped in a sail. We then brought him to the mortuary. When the body was placed on the slab we examined it. The body was dressed in a white flannel singlet, a striped woollen shirt, grey worsted drawers, and stockings the same colour; neither boots or shoes: a Scotch tweed pair of trousers, a black-corded vest, a blue knitted guernsey, and a blue jacket, and a pair of oil-skin trousers. In the left hand trousers pocket we found a brown leather purse containing 8s 7d in money - one five shilling piece, one half crown, one shilling, and two halfpennies. In the same purse I found two certificates of discharge. The name of the man given in the certificate is Duncan Finlayson. A.B. of the Abydos, bound from Glasgow to the Mediterranean, his age being 28 years of age. The names of the crew appeared in the paper of the 23rd January, his name being among the crew of the above vessel, which was lost off Port Erin on or about the 22nd of December.

The jury returned a verdict that the deceased came to his death by drowning."