

# The Wreck of the Joseph Howe: a Fuller Story

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*Lloyd's Register of British and Foreign Shipping*



*A mid-nineteenth-century merchant brigantine, representative of vessels of the Joseph Howe's type – image from Wikimedia Commons*



*Cliffs at Faill na dTadhg, photo by Helen Riddell*

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**For readers who are short on time, each section ends with a summary that marks a turning point in the story.**

*“The facts speak only when the historian calls on them.”* —E. H. Carr 1961

## Introduction

The brigantine Joseph Howe was wrecked off Bere Island 150 years ago. It's not the largest ship to have been wrecked near the Island, or the wreck with the largest loss of life. But it's the one whose story gets retold the most. A poem/song was composed locally at the time. In 1937, five pupils in the senior classes in the Bere Island National Schools gathered five separate versions of the story from their parents and grandparents and submitted them to the Schools Folklore Collection. The principal of Lawrence Cove Girls School added one from a Castletownbere man “age 67, reared and spent his early manhood in Greenane and who remembers the incident even though only 4 years at the time.” Ted O Sullivan's 1992 book recounts several dozen shipwrecks but singles out the Joseph Howe for extra coverage. Each year, to mark Poetry Day Ireland, the poem has been posted to the Bere Island Facebook page. The story was added to the online Bere Island Community Archive in 2024. Later that year, one version of the poem and a lesser-known aspect of the story were included in an article in the online version of the Echo.

Our piece in the 2025 Bere Island Christmas Newsletter described the variations in the pupils' accounts of the numbers saved (four to six) and the even bigger disagreements about the numbers lost —from one (“only the little cabin boy”) to four. In his book, Ted had noted that “local knowledge says that four were drowned and four saved” while “Lloyd's List says that only two men were drowned.” Using accounts from newspapers of the time, we were able to clear up some of the confusion. The voyage began with eight; a total of four were indeed lost – two early on in the voyage, and two near Bere Island -- and four were saved. Asked to comment, Ted replied, “It shows that the folklore isn't always correct but rarely far wrong either.”

The poem immortalized the four survivors. However, internet-era-re-tellings, including the headline in the Echo story, have added a ‘dark’ post-rescue item concerning the captain and the boatswain. With the help of the descendants of the captain, and the newspapers of the time, this extended piece elaborates on this item: it involves two separate ‘overseers’, the Crown and the Board of Trade.

The item is a good example of how, once information gets ‘out there,’ a narrative takes on a life of its own, and isn't easily ‘un-told.’ We hope readers will examine the fuller account, and then decide for themselves what headline they would like to see used when the online accounts are updated.

The piece ends with some archival material about the heroes of the story, the two Bere Island men who rescued the four seamen.

***The story of Wreck of the Joseph Howe, which occurred 150 years ago on the southwest coast of Bere Island, continues to be retold. Recently, however, with the advent of social media and an online archive, the 'facts' of the rescue have been added to, and now include post-rescue 'developments' involving the captain and the boatswain. These darker add-ons to the story were not mentioned in the versions that the Bere island pupils collected in 1937, or in Ted O'Sullivan's book in 1992. With the help of the descendants of the captain, and the newspapers of the time, this piece gives a more complete version of these developments***

## Accounts of the wreck and the rescue

### In the newspapers that same month

The news of the loss reached Lloyd's on Friday the 18<sup>th</sup> of February, and on the Saturday, under the heading

LATEST SHIPPING INTELLIGENCE  
(FROM LLOYD'S, FEB 18.)  
WRECKS AND CASUALTIES

the London Times reported

"CASTLETOWN, BEREHAVEN, Feb. 18.-The Joseph Howe, brigantine, of London, from Minatitlan, with mahogany, for Queenstown or Falmouth for orders, was lost on Bere Island last night; two hands drowned."

The following Saturday (the 26<sup>th</sup>) the Cork Examiner had more details

"Two of the crew were drowned while attempting to land in a boat. The master and three others who remained on the ship were taken off next morning. She has since become a total wreck, and it is feared that very little of the cargo can be saved in consequence of the unfavourable state of the weather."

and yet more the following Tuesday (the 29<sup>th</sup>)

"THE LATE WRECK AT BERE - It is expected that the Brigantine Joseph Howe, of Belfast, will go to pieces in this gale and it is probable that the greater part of the cargo will float into Bantry. A hogshead of rum was washed ashore at Whiddy a few days since. It is at present in the hands of the Custom House officer (Mr. Delaney). A hogshead of brandy was broken on the rocks. - *Bantry Correspondent*.

### In the Schools Folklore collection in 1937

The four survivors were named in the pupil's versions of the poem, such as this one from Finbarr Murphy:

The four surviving mariners  
I now intend to name  
The captain, William Gompleton  
The boy's was the same  
  
The steward, Peter Legmowr,  
A kind good-natured man,  
The other was a seaman,  
And his name was Harry Grant

Most of the essays focused on the poem itself. One essay claimed that only one crew member ("the little cabin boy") was lost.

Two essays mentioned the names of the two rescuers, Dennis Harrington and Michael Shanahan of Greenane, while another essay made reference to a recognition that Dennis Harrington got.

#### **In Ted O'Sullivan's book on 1992**

The account in his book has it that when the ship was wrecked, "four survivors were thrown onto a ledge on the cliff and were spotted by a local man, Dennis Harrington. He, assisted by his neighbour Michael Shanahan, climbed down the precipice and rescued the stranded sailors one at a time. This heroic rescue was hailed at the time and the heroes were presented with certificates."

It also tells us that "the cargo was salvaged in an undamaged condition and taken to Castletownbere; a porthole from this ship is in use as a roof window in a house in Greenane, as some of its timbers were recycled this roof trusses."

***The pre-internet re-tellings of the events stop at the salvage of the cargo and the recognitions that one of the rescuers received. There is no mention of any post-rescue 'developments' -- involving the captain and the boatswain -- until well into the internet era***

## **Charges brought against the captain and the boatswain**

### **Internet-era Bere Island versions of this 'development'**

The first Bere-Island-documented version of the development seems to be in the text that accompanied the version of the poem that was posted on The Bere Island Group Facebook page in February 2013.

"However, the steward reported to the authorities that during the voyage the captain had attacked the galley boy, who later died from his injuries and was buried at sea. The captain was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to eighteen months hard labour."

Further details were provided in the posting the following year

"However, not long after their ordeal, the steward Peter Seymour reported to the coastguards that during the voyage the captain had ill treated the galley boy, attacking him and knocking the young boy unconscious. The galley boy eventually died from his injuries and was buried at sea. On hearing this, the coastguard notified the Royal Irish Constabulary and the captain was arrested. He was, tried and found guilty of manslaughter. He was sentenced to eighteen months hard labour."

A version of the poem, a colour photo of the Cliffs at Faill na dTadhg and a fuller text, including the following, were added to the online Bere Island Community Archive in February 2024.

"The rescued men were then brought into Castletownbere where the steward Peter Seymour reported to the local authorities that during the voyage the captain had ill-treated the galley boy, attacking him and knocking the young boy unconscious. The galley boy eventually died from his injuries and was buried at sea. The Royal Irish Constabulary were informed, and the captain was arrested. He was tried and found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to eighteen months hard labour."

In August of that same year, in the online version of the Echo, weekly columnist Tom MacSweeney repeated these statements under the story headline "The wreck of the Joseph Howe at Bere Island uncovered dark cruelty aboard."

### **Newspaper accounts at the time**

None of these online reports mentioned the captain's name, but his descendants took particular note of them, and contacted Bere Island with this message

"This is an article that was posted 3/29/1876 in regards to the sentencing of Captain Templeton and the boatswain on the Joseph Howe. My cousin found the article and we wanted to share it with the group. I'm sending this on behalf of 3 cousins who would like Captain William Templeton to be remembered by his great and great great grandchildren!"

The present author had already been looking into a basic aspect of the story, namely how many were lost and how many saved, using the online archives of the newspapers of the time. And so, prompted by the article supplied, he looked further.

He found that the accounts in the Cork Examiner, starting with its February 26 account of arrest of both the captain and the boatswain, only partially match the 'Bere Island' version. The full Cork Examiner coverage, including its account of the March 14 trial, is reproduced in Annex 1. In its reports from various counties, the Freemans Journal of the same day had this summary of the trial.

ASSIZES INTELLIGENCE  
(from our Reporters)  
CORK.

Cork, Tuesday.

Today, at the sitting of the County Court, Judge Lawson proceeded to try Wm. Templeton, master, and another, William Templeton, boatswain, of the brigantine Joseph Howe, for the manslaughter on the high seas of the mate of the same vessel, George H. Roberts. Mr. Atkinson defended. The prisoners were found guilty, with a recommendation to mercy. They were then put back [for sentencing].

The judge delivered his sentence a week later, and it was reported by both the Cork Examiner and the Cork Daily Herald. But the actual sentence is very different from the Bere Island version (eighteen months hard labour)!

THE CORK DAILY HERALD, WEDNESDAY MORNING, MARCH 22, 1876  
CORK SPRING ASSIZES: COUNTY COURT

Judge Lawson sat at [...] o'clock yesterday morning.

SENTENCING PRISONERS

William Templeton, master of the Belfast ship "Joseph Howe," and William Templeton, boatswain, who had been found guilty of the manslaughter of George Roberts, the mate of that ship, on the high seas, were put forward in the dock.

His lordship said—Both William Templetons, you were found guilty before me on a charge of manslaughter, that is by accelerating the death of your mate by assaulting him. I have considered the case very anxiously since it was tried, and I am bound to say the conviction has not been altogether satisfactory to my own mind. I don't think any evidence in the case can be relied on except that of the foreign seaman, and his evidence, though it would establish a charge of assault against both of you, would not, in my judgment, at all establish the charge on which you were tried—that is, having treated the man so as to accelerate his death. *Therefore, on the whole, having regard to the very excellent character you have received, and to your previous good conduct, I have come to the conclusion that I won't pass sentence upon either of you, but discharge you both, on entering into your own recognizances to appear whenever called upon.*

This fact-checking is courtesy of a great-daughter of the captain. On reading one of the Facebook posts about the captain, she shared an article from the Belfast News-Letter of Wednesday, Mar 29, 1876. Both Templetons, as well as the owner, were from Belfast, so the Belfast newspaper had taken a keen interest in the case. The article gave as its source the Cork Daily Herald article a week earlier. That same Belfast Newsletter also carried reports of the subsequent Board of Trade enquiry, and in its March 30 issue, the introduction told its readers that

*The master of the vessel, Wm. Templeton, was in attendance. This is the same man who was tried at the last assizes and convicted with the boatswain of causing the death of the second mate, but whom the judge, on a review of the facts, allowed to be discharged on his own recognizances.*

### Answers we may never get

It is not clear how, over the ensuing almost 150 years, the Bere Island version of this part of the story mutated to its present form. Is the “little cabin boy” in one pupil’s telling of the losses connected with the ‘young’ galley boy who was attacked in the Facebook telling, or the ‘youngster’ galley boy in the Echo article?

More importantly, how did the story about a sentence of 18 months’ hard labour take hold? Was it conflated with an outcome of the Board of Trade enquiry, a topic to be addressed in the next section?

***The internet re-tellings include a post-rescue ‘development’ in which the captain was arrested, tried, and found guilty (by jury) of the manslaughter of the cabin boy during the voyage; and was sentenced to eighteen months hard labour.***

***The newspaper reports at the time indicate that both the captain and the boatswain were arrested and tried (not for the manslaughter of the young galley boy, but of an ‘aged’ mate); and that the jury found both men guilty.***

***However, they show the sentence of eighteen months hard labour to be a ‘rural myth;’ indeed, the judge was not all that comfortable with the verdict the jury returned. At the sentencing, he told the captain and the boatswain***

***“I have considered the case very anxiously since it was tried, and I am bound to say the conviction has not been altogether satisfactory to my own mind. I don’t think any evidence in the case can be relied on except that of the foreign seaman, and his evidence, though it would establish a charge of assault against both of you, would not, in my judgment, at all establish the charge on which you were tried—that is, having treated the man so as to accelerate his death.***

***Therefore, on the whole, having regard to the very excellent character you have received, and to your previous good conduct, I have come to the conclusion that I won’t pass sentence upon either of you, but discharge you both, on entering into your own recognizances to appear whenever called upon.”* [Cork Daily Herald, March 22]**

***It is not clear how the sentence of eighteen months hard labour got ‘out there.’ The fact-checking is courtesy of the captain’s great-granddaughter.***

## The Board of Trade enquiry into the loss

The enquiry took place in Cork City. Here is a summary of the **first day**, from one edition of the Cork Examiner of Wednesday March 30.

“The inquiry ordered by the Board of Trade respecting the loss of the brigantine Joseph Howe on the South Western coast of Ireland in February was opened in this city today [Wednesday March 29]. **William Templeton, the boatswain, was examined**, and attributed the disaster to the weather and the fact that several of the crew had been disabled by illness. The inquiry will be resumed today.”

The longer versions in the Belfast Newsletter, the Cork Examiner and the Cork Daily Herald are reproduced in Annex 2. The Cork Examiner account names the second man who died at sea [Garstein.]

Friday's Cork Examiner provided just a summary of the **second day**.

BOARD OF TRADE INQUIRY.—The enquiry into the loss of the ship Joseph Howe was resumed yesterday [Thursday] at the Police office, before Mr. J.S. MacLeod, R.M., and two nautical assessors. **Henry Gronn, seaman, and Peter Seymour, cook on board the vessel were examined** as to the events of the voyage and the loss of the ship, but their evidence added in no material respect to the information given yesterday. The latter said he thought that the vessel might have been saved if the anchors had been let go. The inquiry was adjourned until twelve o'clock today [Friday].

The Cork Daily Herald had extensive coverage of this second day; it is reproduced in Annex 2. Henry Gron, as he is called in it, tells us that the second man to die at sea was named “**Garston**”; and that the mate (George **Roberts**) had “died shortly after leaving Minititlan.”

Both the Cork Examiner and the Cork Daily Herald provided extensive coverage of the **final day** [Friday], when the testimony of the two rescuers, **Dennis Harrington and Michael Shanahan**, and the **Captain, William Templeton** was given. It is reproduced in Annex 2.

The judgment was delivered on the Monday, and reproduced in full in the Cork Examiner the next day, as follows

THE CORK EXAMINER, TUESDAY MORNING, APRIL 4, 1876

### BOARD OF TRADE INQUIRY

At the Police Office yesterday, before Mr Macleod, R.M, Captain Burney and Captain Beasly, judgment in the case of the loss of the Joseph Howe was delivered. It was as follows:

“After giving due consideration to the evidence concerning the loss of the Joseph Howe on the night of the 17th February, 1876, on Bear Island, the Court find—

“That the master showed great want of energy in not getting either the foreyard repaired by finishing it with the spars he had on board, or in

not making use of his lower foretopsail yard, as a foreyard, after the gale of the 27th January; which had he done he would have been able to carry the foresail and lower topsail, with the top-gallant sail over as an upper topsail.

"That the vessel was lost through a mistake in the master's reckoning through which he found himself off the Calf Rock light-house, instead of Cape Clear, which place he intended to make; and that when he had ascertained his position with certainty that morning, knowing he was short handed and his crew debilitated from sickness; that he could not carry sufficient sail to work her off the land, on account of the loss of his foreyard, and seeing she was making leeway dead on the land; that he was guilty of a grave error in judgment in not running into Berehaven where he could have procured assistance while he had daylight and a fair wind.

"With regard to the two men 'Christian' and 'Nicholas,' who were unfortunately drowned by the swamping of the boat, the court cannot attribute any blame to the master, although there was some confusion or mistake of orders in getting the boat out.

The Court, therefore, adjudge that the certificate of the master, Wm. Templeton, be suspended for six months from this date; and recommend that the Board be pleased to grant him a mate's certificate for that period.

Dated this 3rd April, 1876.

J. S. Macleod, Stipendiary Magistrate,  
Henry D. Burney, R.N., J.P. & Thomas Beasly. Nautical assessors.

I make no order as to costs,

J. S. Macleod, R.M."

A shorter version was carried in the Belfast Newsletter .

BOARD OF TRADE INQUIRY.

CORK, MONDAY.—The Court delivered judgment in the Board of Trade inquiry respecting the loss of the Joseph Howe, wrecked on the west coast of Ireland in February. They held that the loss of the vessel was owing to a mistake of reckoning on the part of the master, Wm. Templeton, and to his not having, when he discovered his position, and while he had light of day and a fair wind, run for Berehaven, where he could have obtained assistance, being at the time short-handed. They suspended his certificate for six months, but recommended he should receive a mate's certificate.

***The Board of Trade Enquiry, held in Cork City over three days, heard from all four survivors (the captain, William Templeton; the boatswain William***

***Templeton; the steward Peter Seymour; and the seaman William Gronn) and from the two rescuers (Dennis Harrington and Michael Shanahan). It covered (i) the deaths, early on, of two crew: they, as well as the captain and other crew had been suffering from the effect of the fever they caught in the port of departure in Mexico (ii) the mid-voyage gale that carried away some of their sailpower (iii) sighting the Calf Rock Lighthouse and realizing they were off course (iv) the loss of two men when trying to launch the boat (v) getting into the 'creek' ( ?Cuan Charraig na nÉan) and striking the rocks (vi) the rescue (v) the Coastguard. The judgment, which included the temporary loss of the captain's Master's Certificate.***

***The full report, and a shorter version of it, are reproduced in the immediately preceding pages.***

## The rescuers

There are a number of questions about the rescuers: who were they? do we have first-hand accounts from them? what monetary and other awards did they receive? And what form did the original of the 'poem' actually take?

### Who were they?

They were named in the Schools Collection in 1937, and in Ted O'Sullivan's 1992 book, as Dennis Harrington and Michael Shanahan of Greenane.

The Bere Island section of the online Irish Community Archive tells us that Dennis was 21 years of age. One wonders if that was the age Michael Shanahan was. There's a Denis Harrington listed as 73 years of age in the 1901 census (see below). Could he have been the 48-year old, when, out looking for wrack, he heard the cries of the seamen, went to get the younger Shanahan to help him with the rescue? [There is a Michael Shanahan in the same census, who age is reported as 58; this would put him as a 33-year-old when the wreck occurred. Of course, we can't entirely depend on the census: someone who was 21 in 1876 might well have emigrated, and not even been captured in the 1901 census.]

We would prefer to be able to draw a direct line back to the two rescuers. We are awaiting further details from Margaret Dennehy, a grand-daughter of Mary White, née Harrington (see below).

### Their statements at the time

As recounted in Annex 2, both rescuers gave evidence at the Board of Trade Enquiry held in Cork City at the end of March. Of additional note are the statements from Harrington regarding the Coast Guard. "When [he] was employed as an extra man in the Coast Guard he used to patrol the cliffs at night." And, "the moment all the men were got up the cliff [he] ran to the [Coast Guard] station about five miles away, and the Coast Guard came at once." Earlier in the enquiry, the boatswain had testified that "We saw no Coastguards there until we went to the village a mile or two off; the village was on Bere Island."

### The recognitions and the awards they got

None of the pupils mentioned these, but the very last entry from the Lawrence Cove Girls School did. Ahead of a poem, entitled "The Wreck of the Joseph Howe, by Denis C. Harrington", the principal, Mrs. Ann Sullivan Doyle, writes

"From Mr M Martin O'Sullivan, Castletownbere, Co. Cork. Age 67. Reared and spent his early manhood in Greenane and who remembers the incident even though only 4 years at the time. I have seen parchment which was presented

to the composer [the] late Denis Harrington who with Michael Shanahan effected the rescue.

Ted's book tells us that "This heroic rescue was hailed at the time and the heroes were presented with certificates;" and the Community Archive adds that "Dennis Harrington received the sum of 15 pounds for his bravery."

In fact, as the newspaper archives are to tell us, there were two sets of awards, from two highly respected institutions. The first award, in May of that year, was from an institution that Berehaven and well beyond still depend on.

SHEFFIELD DAILY TELEGRAPH, MAY 6, 1876.

#### GALLANT LIFEBOAT SERVICES.

On Thursday a meeting of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, was held in London, Thomas Chapman, Esq. F.R.S in the chair. Rewards amounting to £190 were granted to the crews of different lifeboats of the Society for services rendered during the storms of the past month ...

The silver medal of the Institution, inscribed on vellum, and £3 each were voted to Michael Shanahan and Dennis Harrington, of Bere Island, county Cork, in acknowledgment of their gallant and determined conduct in descending, at much risk of life, a precipitous cliff, between 200 and 300 feet high, and rescuing four of the crew of the brigantine Joseph Howe, of London, which was wrecked on Bere Island during foggy and blowing weather on the 18th February last."

The proceedings of the meeting were widely reported in British newspapers; the Bere Island item appeared in "The Nation" three weeks later

In reference to the recent gallant rescue of a shipwrecked crew at Bere Island, Mr. W. J. Tomkins, of Cork, has received the following :—"Royal National Lifeboat Institution, London, 13th May, 1876. —My dear sir—I have duly received your note of the 11th instant and its enclosure, and I have the satisfaction to acquaint you that the very gallant services of Denis Harrington and Michael Shanahan, of Bere Island, on the occasion to which you refer, were brought under the notice of this committee at their last monthly meeting, when the silver medal of the institution, its thanks inscribed on vellum, and the sum of £3 were voted to each man. I am sure the rewards of the society in this case will afford you peculiar gratification.—I am yours very truly, R. Lewis."

The second award, in September of that year, was also widely reported throughout the British Isles. Every newspaper -- even the Dublin one! -- repeated the same geography error, which presumably originated in London.

THE FREEMANS JOURNAL, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1876

The Board of Trade has awarded £5 each to Messrs. Harrington and Shanahan, two farmers of Kerry, in acknowledgment of their gallantry in rescuing the master and crew of the ship Joseph Howe, which was wrecked on Bear Island, county Kerry, on February 17<sup>th</sup>, 1876.

Two days later, *claiming the men as their own*, even the newspaper in our neighbouring county did the same!!

KERRY EVENING POST, SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 23

REWARD OF GALLANTRY.—The Board of Trade has awarded £5 each to Messrs Harrington and Shannahan, to farmers of this county, in acknowledgment of their gallantry in rescuing the master and crew of the ship Joseph Howe, which was wrecked on Bear Island, county Kerry, on February 17<sup>th</sup>, 187

### **The poem**

Ted O'Sullivan has been looking into the poem – said to have been composed by Dennis Harrington himself.

***That same year, each of the two rescuers, Dennis Harrington and Michael Shanahan, received two sets of recognition***

***In May, the silver medal of the RNLI, inscribed on vellum, and £3.***

***In September, from The Board of Trade: £5***

***We are still trying to trace these two rescuers 'forward'.***

## Conclusion

Writers have long noted how challenging it is to stop partial stories from becoming urban myths. More than three hundred years ago, Jonathan Swift noted “Falsehood flies, and the truth comes limping after it.” As communications speed up, this ‘law’ was updated: a commonly cited version is that “A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes,” a quote that, ironically, is widely – but falsely! – attributed to Mark Twain. Just how difficult it is to *un-tell* a story, or stop fiction from becoming fact, is very evident in today’s near instant media communications, despite the best efforts of fact-checkers and posted corrections.

A hundred and fifty years ago, when the *Joseph Howe* was wrecked, information on the actions of the Crown and the Board of Trade would have spread orally. Newspaper stories were read by the few who could read, read out to a crowd, and retold later—thereby accumulating further mutations.

***We could not find any references in any the newspapers of that time to the death of a 'galley boy' or 'cabin boy.' The person whose death the captain and boatswain were accused of was an older man.***

***We wonder if, in some kind of folklore 'translocation', the six months' suspension of the Master's Certificate somehow mutated to eighteen months' hard labour.***

***Today's reader is left to create his/her own headline for any further re-telling of the story.***

## Acknowledgments

*Jo Anne Dancy, great-granddaughter, Robin Diggs Campbell and Judith Ann Vennes, great-granddaughters, of the captain (Annex 4); McGill University, UCC, and Cork County libraries; Irish Newspaper Archives; British Newspaper Archive; Marie D'Arcy; Ted O'Sullivan; Helen Riddell; Pat Cowan, and the many other persons I discussed this with; ChatGPT for using nautical knowledge to decipher poor-quality parts of newspaper images, and serving as an editorial sounding board; LandingAI for its extraction of text from very noisy images (I wish I had found it much earlier in the project).*

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## ANNEX 1: Charges

On the same day (Saturday February 26, 1876) that it first reported on the wreck, the Cork Examiner also had this 'developing story.

### SHIPWRECK AT BEREHAVEN – SERIOUS CHARGE AGAINST THE MASTER

A very serious charge has been made by two of the survivors against the master and boatswain (whose name is also Mr. Templeton), of having caused the death of the mate, a man named George H. Roberts, by beating him in the most brutal manner during the voyage. It is alleged that poor Roberts was in a very delicate state, and unable to do his work properly. These facts having been reported to the very efficient and active Sub-inspector, Mr. Waters, he had the two men arrested and brought before Dr. Armstrong, J P, who investigated the matter. The results of the investigation was that both the captain and boatswain were committed for trial to the next assizes.—*West Cork Eagle*.

That same Saturday, the (Dublin-based) Freemans Journal had just two sentences about it.

The survivors charged Templeton, the master, and the boatswain with causing the death of Roberts, the mate, by beating. Both were brought before the magistrates yesterday, and were committed for trial.

Two weeks later, on Saturday the 11th of March, the Examiner reported

### CORK SPRING ASSIZES COUNTY CROWN COURT (Before Mr. Justice Lawson.)

#### ALLEGED MURDER ON THE HIGH SEAS

William Templeton, master, and William Templeton, mate, pleaded not guilty to an indictment charging them with the wilful murder of George Roberts, a seaman, on the high seas. Their trial was fixed for Monday.

The full accounts of the March 14 court proceedings in the Cork Examiner and in the Cork Daily Herald are reproduced below. In its reports from various counties, the Freemans Journal of the same day had this *summary*.

ASSIZES INTELLIGENCE  
(from our Reporters)  
CORK.

Cork, Tuesday.

Today, at the sitting of the County Court, Judge Lawson proceeded to try Wm. Templeton, master, and another, William Templeton, boatswain, of the brigantine Joseph Howe, for the manslaughter on the high seas of the mate of the same vessel, George H. Roberts. Mr. Atkinson defended. The prisoners were found guilty, with a recommendation to mercy. They were then put back.

On the 16th, the Belfast Newsletter carried a one paragraph report that repeated the accusation, and ended with

The captain's log-book spoke of the mate on the 28th of October last as having been beaten with a belaying pin by a seaman named McClure, but nothing was mentioned in the log about the mate after October until the 12th of January, when it stated that he was very ill, and that next day he died and was buried. The prisoners were found guilty, with a recommendation to mercy. They were put back. Both prisoners belong to Belfast.

Here now are the longer **accounts of the trial** and verdict in the Cork Examiner and in the Cork Daily Herald.

**THE CORK EXAMINER,  
WEDNESDAY MARCH 15, 1876**

**CORK SPRING ASSIZES - COUNTY COURT  
(Before Mr. Justice LAWSON).**

William Templeton (captain) and William Templeton (boatswain), belonging to the Joseph Howe, which was wrecked last month off Bere Island, were indicted for having on the 11<sup>th</sup> January feloniously killed and slain George H. Roberts, mate of the same vessel. They pleaded not guilty, and were defended by Mr. Atkinson, B.L., instructed by Mr. Fulham.

Sir Colman O'Loghlan, Q.C., Messrs. ExxHaus, Q.C., Greene, Q.C., and J. O' Hea, instructed by Mr. H. Gillman, Crown Solicitor, prosecuted.

Sir Colman O'Loghlan stated the case on behalf of the Crown.

Evidence was then given.

Peter Seymour, cook and steward, deposed that he shipped on board the Joseph Howe at occasion when the captain struck him with his North Shields, and sailed in her to Peru and thence to Minatitlan. When the vessel came to anchor at the latter port late at night, as they were hauling down the mainsail, the captain called on the deceased man to lend a hand, but Roberts being aged and unable to come as quickly as was desired, the captain ran towards him and upset him on the deck with his hand and foot. Up to that time deceased complained of diarrhoea, and to stop it witness gave him some mixed flour.

Mr. Greene: Did you see the captain strike him afterwards?

Witness said he did not on that night. While at Minititlan the mate was in his room at one hand. Witness was in the pantry at the time, the door of which faced the mate's room, and when he left to go into the cabin, the captain, who had not noticed him previously, said "when the like of this happens I don't want you here". On the homeward voyage he saw the captain strike the deceased on several occasions; never heard of any provocation having been given by the latter, or that he retaliated or said to the captain he should not strike him. He saw deceased's face cut,

and twice shaved his beard in order to wash the blood away. The captain on another occasion put Roberts to the pump, but being unable to pump, the captain beat him on the back with the rope's end. On the passage there was sickness on board, and all, with one exception, had fever. On the day before the man's death witness saw the captain lift deceased by the neck and give him a shake, and heard him say he was scheming. On that day when washing Roberts, he saw black marks on his side, when Roberts remarked he thought two of his ribs were broken. Next day the man died. Witness never saw the man disobedient to order, on the contrary, he always said to the captain he would do what he was asked. He only saw the captain act kindly to him once, when he gave him lotion for his eyes, which were bad at the time, and when he gave him some rum and water the day before his death.

Mr. Greene: Did you see the boatswain do anything to deceased? I did. I saw him strike the mate on several occasions. I can't say whether the captain was in view on those occasions. Did you hear the prisoner speak about Robert's death? I did. I heard them say that if the old b----- had lived to come ashore, he would have hung him by the letters found in his chest. I saw those letters during the man's lifetime, and I asked him why he didn't send them by post. He had relatives in the North of England. He said he had no money to post them. I said the captain would give it to him. He said he would not, and he was afraid the captain would open the letters on him.

On cross-examination, witness admitted that at the time the vessel was wrecked, the captain was the means of saving his and another's life by lowering them on to a rock by the aid of a rope and that of two other men.

Mr. Atkinson—and the captain stayed on board himself the very last man—didn't he?

Witness—He did.

In reply to further questions, he said Roberts complained to the crew of the ill-treatment received, but not to the captain. Witness never struck the deceased or knocked him out of his berth, but on the day before his death, by the captain's directions, he took him out of his berth to wash him and put clean linen and clothes on him.

Mr. Atkinson—Did you ever threaten to avenge yourself on the captain when you'd get ashore? Never. I never made that or any threat to him. Deceased was in a melancholy state of health before he died, and the day before his death he said he knew he would never live to go home, that he had been murdered on board, and hoped some member of the crew might bring it to light when the ship arrived at her destination. Did he say how he has been murdered? He did not. Accounting for several omissions in his information sworn before the magistrate at Castletown, which he now supplemented in his evidence, witness said since the information was taken he remembered many things.

Harry Gron, a German by birth, and one of the survivors of the wreck, deposed that during the voyage he saw the captain kick and strike the witness with his hand, and once with a rope's end. He also saw blood on the latter's face after the captain had struck him with his hand, and saw the captain capsize him on deck and Roberts bleeding. The last time he saw that was about eight days before Roberts died. Witness also saw the boatswain kick deceased.

To Mr. Atkinson—When deceased and I used to be at the wheel he never complained to me or the captain. I never saw the captain kick him with his foot but only strike him with his hand. Seymour and I have been talking together about this case.

The case for the crown having closed.

Mr. Atkinson addressed the jury for the defence. It was fortunate, he said, for the sake of justice, that the dead man Roberts spoke from his watery grave in the record he left behind him, and which falsified every word sworn by the witness Seymour as against the captain. Seymour, counsel asserted, deliberately came upon the table to perjure himself for the purpose of gratifying his contemptible sense of malignity against him because of some madness that occurred during the voyage. So far from being the inhuman brute Seymour would represent the captain to have been, the entries made in deceased's hand showed that the captain was most anxious for the safety of the crew, and did all he could in their regard. Unless, he repeated, the entries in the log book were the grossest fabrications, and unless Roberts, who made them, was the instrument of somebody, of which there was not a particle of proof, they spoke trumpet-tongued of his client's innocence, and on those entries he confidently asked the jury for a verdict of acquittal.

His Lordship, in charging the jury, said he was bound to say that if the prisoners did commit the acts of violence imputed to them, having regard to the state of health the unfortunate man was in, he did not think they should have any doubt that the violence contributed to and accelerated his death; but the real question in the case was—did they believe the testimony of the two seamen who had deposed to the acts of violence?

The prisoners were convicted of manslaughter and recommended to mercy.

**CORK DAILY HERALD,  
WEDNESDAY MORNING, MARCH 15, 1876**  
**COUNTY COURT**  
(Before Right Hon. Judge Lawson.)

At the sitting of the court yesterday, his Lordship disposed of the remaining county Crown business.

William Templeton, master, and William Templeton, boatswain, of the ship "Joseph Howe," were put on trial for the manslaughter of George H. Roberts, mate of that vessel, on 11th January, on the high seas.

Mr. Atkinson, instructed by Mr. A. Julian, defended the prisoners.

The following jury was sworn:—Messrs. Owen McCarthy (foreman), James Keefe, Daniel Callaghan, Michael Lawton, Frank Neville, P. Ahern, William Francis Lender, William Daly, John Twomey, Timothy Dougan, Patrick Geary, and Thomas Daunt.

Sir Colman O'Loghlen, in stating the case for the Crown, said the deceased man Roberts was in a very delicate state of health, and it was peculiarly the duty of the prisoners not in any way to ill-treat him. On the evidence there would be little doubt that the deceased had been ill-treated by both prisoners, and it would be for the jury to say whether his death was in any way accelerated thereby. The Joseph Howe was on her return voyage from Minititlan, in Mexico, with a cargo of mahogany. When it was approaching Cork, it was wrecked on Bere Island in February last. There were nine persons on board coming home, only four of whom were now alive. Three of the others died on board, and

two were drowned at the wreck. In the official log-book, in which the captain was obliged by law to make entries of offences, there was not from beginning to end a single statement of misconduct by the deceased, or any statement that the captain was obliged to punish him. There was an entry of the mate having been injured by one of the sea men named McClure, but from that time there was no entry till those of his death and burial. The cook would be the principal witness as to the treatment he received from the prisoners, and though the log-book showed that the cook himself had been punished, but upon his evidence it would be for the jury to say whether Robert's death was accelerated by any conduct of the prisoners.

Mr. Whitehead, of the Board of trade, proved the official logbook. In reply to Mr. Atkinson, he said there was another log kept by the mate called "the ship's log," which the Board of Trade had nothing to do with.

Peter Seymour, cook and steward, on board the brigantine Joseph Howe, said, on the night they got to Minititlan, the captain tripped and upset the mate when he, being an old man did not come fast enough; witness also saw him strike the mate with his fist; on the voyage home, saw him on several occasions, strike the mate without provocation; saw his face cut several times; the mate was put to the pumps, and as he was too weak to work at them the captain beat him on the back of the rope's end; on one occasion after the captain struck him, the mate had a black eye; on the day before his death, when he lay in his bunk, the captain lifted him up by the neck and gave him a shake, saying that he was scheming; there were several black marks about his ribs; witness never saw the disobedient, but he lost his memory and forgot to do things; he also saw a Templeton, the boatswain, strike Roberts on several occasions; after Roberts' death, he heard a conversation he heard a conversation between the two prisoners in which they said if the old b..... had lived to set foot on land, he would hang them; they referred to the letters they found on him addressed to his relatives in the North of England; he was afraid to entrust the letters to the captain for fear he would open them.

Cross-examined by Mr. Atkinson—I can't say whether the captain saved my life at the wreck; he lowered us to the rock and stayed on board himself to the last; I did not break into the cabin to take rum; I did not take some out of a jug; can't say that the captain had yellow fever on

the way home; I was only logged once for drunkenness by the mate; the other entries about my drunkenness are untrue; the mate complained of his ill-usage to the crew, but not to the captain; did not strike Roberts myself; washed him; and put on clean clothes on him before he died by the captains orders; did not threaten the captain when under punishment that I would see it out with him when I got ashore; the day before his death mate said he knew he would never live to go home, that he had been murdered on board, and that he hoped some of the crew would bring it to light.

Henry Gronn, a German seaman, deposed that on the voyage home he saw the captain strike Roberts with the rope's end; saw blood on Roberts' face after the captain had struck him; he fell sometimes himself, other times, the captain capsized him; about eight days before his death, saw the captain throw him down, and saw him bleeding; after that he lost his senses; saw the boatswain several times strike Roberts on the ribs.

By Mr. Atkinson—Had been living at Seymour since the wreck, and had talked over the case sometimes; the mate suffered from venereal disease; he sometimes bled when he fell himself.

This closed the case for the Crown.

Mr. Atkinson, addressing the jury for the defence, said it was fortunate for the prisoners that Roberts himself spoke from his watery grave, and had left behind him a record that stamped as falsehood every word detailed here by the drunken cook, Seymour. He asked them to come to the conclusion that Seymour, to be a revenged on the captain, who punished him for his misconduct, was deliberately coming on the table to perjure himself to gratify his own petty malignity. The other man knew little English, and had been under Seymour's influences. Counsel would read them extracts from the log-book kept under the dead man's hand, which never entered one word of complaint against the captain, on the contrary said he was kind and generous, and attributed his death to the disease he was suffering under. The vessel was short-handed, the crew suffering from fever, and it was absolutely necessary that every man who could should move about. Council then read extracts from the mate's log. In one he said: "captain attending carefully to the wants of the sick men.." Another described Seymour, the cook, who was sick, as anxious to return to work, "but the captain is

afraid to have him return, weak, too soon, for fear of a relapse. Another entry stated that his eye was unwell, and that the captain himself was sick, “but managing the best possible.” Where was the evidence that this man made entries by compulsion at a time when, according to Seymour, he was suffering from the violence and ill-treatment of the captain? Other entries described how the disease grew worse, and stated his doubts whether he could survive. Counsel concluded by arguing that this true record from the hand of the dead man completely displaced the evidence of the drunken cook, whose life the captain himself had saved.

Mr. Exham, Q.C., having replied for the crown:

His Lordship summed up the evidence for the jury. He was bound to say that if the prisoners did commit the acts of violence imputed to them, having regard to the state of health of the unfortunate man was in, he did not think there could be a doubt that this violence contributed to and accelerated his death; but the real question in the case was—did they believe the testimony of the two seamen who had deposed to these acts of violence? The only things against Seymour were those entries of drunkenness against him in the log-book. With respect to Gronn, his character appeared to be a very good one, and he felt it difficult to believe that he could have joined in a conspiracy to take away these men's liberties. His Lordship ??reassessed the evidence of the two seamen and then put it to the jury whether the log-book kept in the mate's handwriting, in which he had not only omitted mention of any ill-treatment, but mentioned the captain's kindness when he referred to him at all, whether this to detracted from the weight of the evidence, or whether it was inconsistent with the case made for the Crown.

The jury, after a short absence, returned into court a verdict of “Guilty” against both prisoners, with a recommendation to mercy. The prisoners were put back.

At a subsequent period of the day, Mr. Atkinson said he had in his hand a memorial from a number of people in Belfast who knew the prisoners, which spoke of their good character.

His Lordship—I never mind these memorials, because they're always wrong.

Mr. Atkinson said the people who signed this memorial were most reputable.

His Lordship said he knew when the worst criminals were convicted that reputable gentleman sent in memorials in their favour. He would rather hear a gentleman examined on the table.

Mr. Atkinson said that those men belong to the North of Ireland, and therefore their friends could not be present at a moment's notice. He asked his Lordship to read the affidavit from a Belfast gentleman in the course of the day or two if it was made in Belfast.

His Lordship said he would hear it when produced, the same time expressing his readiness to send to read the memorial now presented.

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The Cork Daily Herald's account of **the sentencing** was already reproduced earlier on in this piece. Here, with a few variations, is the one from the Cork Examiner.

**CORK EXAMINER**  
**WEDNESDAY MORNING, MARCH 22, 1876.**  
  
CORK SPRING ASSIZES.  
COUNTY COURT.

MR. JUSTICE LAWSON entered court at 9. 45. a.m. yesterday.

SENTENCING PRISONERS

William Templeton master of the "Joseph Howe" and William Templeton, boatswain, who had been found guilty of the manslaughter of George Roberts, the mate of the ship, on high seas, were put forward.

His Lordship said—You both were found guilty of a charge of manslaughter, that is by accelerating the death of your mate by assaulting him. I have considered the case very seriously since it was tried and I am bound to say the conviction has not been altogether satisfactory to my own mind. I don't think any evidence in the case can be relied on except that of the foreign man, and his evidence, though it would establish a charge of assault against both of you, would not in my judgment at all establish the charge on which you were tried, that is, having treated the man so as to accelerate his death. Therefore on the whole, having regard to the very excellent character you have received

and to your previous good conduct, I have come to the conclusion that I won't pass sentence upon but discharge you both on entering into your own recognizances to appear whenever called upon.

His Lordship then took up the hearing of the last case for the assizes.

## ANNEX 2: The Board of Trade Enquiry

### DAY 1

#### BELFAST NEWS-LETTER, THURSDAY MORNING MARCH 30, 1876

##### BOARD OF TRADE INQUIRY.

CORK, WEDNESDAY.—A Board of Trade inquiry was opened to-day in Cork with respect to the loss on the west coast of Ireland, of the brigantine Joseph Howe, of London. The members of the court were—Mr. Macleod, R.M., assisted by Capt. Burney, R.N., and Capt. Beasley, R.N., acting as nautical assessors. The master of the vessel, Wm Templeton, was in attendance. This is the same man who was tried at the last assizes and convicted with the boatswain of causing the death of the second mate, but whom the judge, on a review of the facts, allowed to be discharged on his own recognizances.

The Joseph Howe was 354 tons register, and belonged to Messrs. Samuel Hill & Co., of London. She left Minatitlan with a cargo of mahogany in the end of last year, bound for Cork for orders.

Fever had been raging at Minatitlan, and nearly all of the crew, including the captain, had suffered from the malady. On the voyage two died, including the mate; and out of a crew of eight only six remained to work the ship, of whom one was altogether incapacitated, and the others were weak from their recent illness.

On the 29th January a violent gale was experienced, and the foreyard was carried away, in consequence of which the vessel was deprived of the service of two important sails.

In this way the Joseph Howe reached the Irish coast on the 17th February, and the weather was thick. An effort was made to weather land without success, with insufficient wind and sail, and with a heavy sea setting in on land. The vessel drifted on the rocks and became a total wreck.

Previous to the accident the captain directed the lifeboat to be got out. The boat was swamped and two men were drowned. The other two were rescued in an exhausted condition. Left with only one man, the

captain was unable to put out the anchors or do anything to save the ship. The inquiry has not concluded.

**THE CORK EXAMINER**  
**THURSDAY MORNING MARCH 30, 1876**  
**BOARD OF TRADE INQUIRY**

YESTERDAY, Mr. Macleod, R.M., assisted by two nautical assessors, sat at the Police office, for the purpose of enquiring into the loss of the brigantine, Joseph Howe, on the west coast of Ireland, in the month of February last.

Mr. Joseph Bennett appeared on the part of the Board of Trade, and Mr. Arthur Julian represented the captain, William Templeton, whose certificate was surrendered to the bench upon the opening of the inquiry.

Mr. Bennett quoted the sections of the act under which he proceeded, and said the Joseph How was a British vessel, built in Nova Scotia in 1867. She was a brigantine of 354.95 tons, and owned by S. Hill, Island Magee, county Antrim, farmer, and others. She left Minatitlan on the 7th December, with a cargo of mahogany, bound to Cork for orders, having a crew of eight hands all told, and appeared to be in good condition and fairly found.

During the voyage some of the crew were laid up in fever, and on the 11th of the same month the mate died and his death was the subject of criminal proceedings against the master at the recent assizes; but that was a matter with which they had nothing to do now. One of the able seamen named Garstein died on the 27th January, which left only six hands on board.

On that day she encountered some heavy weather, and some sails and spars were carried away, and it would also appear that the pumps had to be kept constantly at work during the voyage. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of February about noon they sighted on the south coast of Ireland what was supposed to be the Calf Rock Lighthouse, the vessel still making water.

At four p.m. that day land was sighted ahead, and at seven o'clock the boat was got ready for launching. She was lowered from the stern and

four of the crew got into her but she capsized and two of the men perished. That reduced the crew to four hands. After that the wind increased, and the captain stood N.W. by N., but the captain stated he couldn't carry enough of canvas owing to the loss of the foreyard which was carried away some time previously. Ultimately the vessel drifted into a place called Fileen Bay, which name did not appear on the chart, and struck on the rocks there, the four surviving members being rescued with the assistance of people on shore.

Mr. Bennett said the three questions for the consideration of the court were, first, the cause of stranding, second, whether proper means were used to prevent her stranding, and third, what default if any was there on the part of the master. He would now examine witnesses.

William Templeton, boatswain, examined by Mr. Bennett, said that he was on board six months. The ship was in good condition. In the early part of the voyage lost some of the sails. Had two pumps, double chambers, worked by a fly-wheel. They were in good condition. Two of the crew were laid up with fever. They were all weak, the effect of a fever caught at Minatitlan.

During the voyage had gales of wind and heavy seas, and between the 27th and 29th of January the foreyard was carried away, also the lower topsail. There was part of bulwarks broken.

The day before the loss of the vessel, on Thursday at noon, saw a lighthouse on the coast of Ireland. The weather was foggy, wind W. or W.S.W. They could not manage the foresail or topsail. They had all available sails set. Saw the Calf Rock at 12 o'clock noon. They were steering N.N.E. Continued that course between the 11th and 12th, when the captain altered it N.N.W. The lighthouse was three or four miles from the Calf rock lighthouse. Was called up at 3 or 4 o'clock again. The weather was very thick, with a drizzling rain. Could not see the lighthouse. There was a heavy roll of sea towards the land. The lead was hove. The captain always managed that. The vessel was all by the wind at three o'clock. Saw land at about five o'clock on the weather bow. The vessel would not weather the land. Whom they could not weather it they wore ship. Saw the lead hove a good many times.

After we wore the vessel we cleared the boat from the top of the house where she was lashed. When she was over the rail he and three others got into her. The foretackle was slacked too rapidly, and she went head-foremost into the sea. The men were pitched out. She righted

again, and some of them got into her; ultimately, two of the men were lost in that occasion. The boat swamped several times. He was disabled. He helped to rescue a man named Seymour. They were both got on board again, and were unable to go on deck till the ship was on the rocks.

The captain called them on deck several times, as he expected the vessel to strike at any moment. He did not come up till she struck, because he was so helpless he did not care what became of him. About twenty minutes after she struck he came on deck. It was a dark night. There was no light in view.

Had two anchors on board. Could not tell how the wind was at the time, only that it began to freshen after the vessel struck. There was a heavy sea on. There were three compasses on board, also a quadrant, sextant, and some charts. On Thursday, the day before the vessel struck, at noon, the captain brought instruments up and tried to take the sun. Could not say if he got it.

After the vessel struck a sea began to break over her. Made signals of distress by torches. The sea broke over her stern and went down into the cabin. Got off by a block and the jib-boom. Her head was to the shore. High cliffs were over their heads. Succeeded in passing a lead and line ashore to two men who came down to the cliff. It was after daylight. Had no deck load except one log. The captain was the last to leave the ship. The bottom had begun to break up. Saw no coastguards there until they met them coming to the scene of the disaster. Did not do anything towards dismantling the vessel.

Cross-examined by Mr Julian—Fever prevailed at Minnitian. It was an epidemic. The captain was suffering from the effects of the fever till the time of the wreck. He could not be strong. He was working all the time.

The day the gale came on two men, Roberts and Marston, were dead. The gale did considerable damage to the sails. From the day the gale came on till the 17th of February, they were trying to make the land.

When they sighted the land the captain went down and looked at his charts, returned to the deck, and altered her course. Could not say whether the captain could see the sun or not. When he (Templeton) came on deck at three o'clock, she was still on the starboard tack. It was very foggy and they could scarcely see the land. In his opinion all that could be done to save the vessel was done.

Mr Macleod said that he considered it necessary to have the coastguards there. The assessors concurred and the inquiry was adjourned till 12 o'clock to-day.

**THE CORK DAILY HERALD  
THURSDAY MORNING MARCH 30, 1876**

**BOARD OF TRADE INQUIRY.**

At the Police Office yesterday, *a Board of Trade inquiry was opened* respecting the loss of the brigantine Joseph Howe, Captain, Wm. Templeton, off Bere Island, in February last. Mr. MacLeod, R.N., assisted by Captain Burney, R.N., J.P., and Captain Beasley RN, as nautical assessors, held the inquiry.

Mr. Bennett (solicitor) appeared on behalf of the Board of Trade, and Mr. A. Julian appeared for the captain, who, it might be remembered was tried with the boatswain at the last assizes for causing the death of one of the crew.

Mr. Bennett stated the case for the Board of Trade. The Joseph Howe was a Brigantine of 354 tons, and belonged to Messrs. Samuel Hill and others, of London. She was seven years old, but appeared to be well found and in good repair. On the occasion she was wrecked, she was bound from Minititlan with mahogany to Cork, for orders, and was commanded by Wm. Templeton, who had a crew of seven. Soon after the vessel left Minititlan, two of the crew, including the mate, died from the effects of a fever they had contracted at that port. The captain and the other members of the crew would also appear to have suffered from the disease. Mr. Bennett then detailed the facts immediately preceding the wreck of the vessel on the coast of Ireland and called the following evidence:—

**Wm. Templeton [boatswain], examined by Mr. Bennett**

—I was *boatswain* on board the brigantine Joseph Howe; was shipped at Shields, and was over eight months on board; the crew consisted of eighteen [sic] men, all told; remembers in the month of December, 1875, having left Minititlan with a cargo of mahogany bound for Cork; the ship was well found, and in good condition.

After being about a fortnight on the voyage, we lost some of our sails; we had two pumps with double chambers, worked by a fly wheel; two of

the crew were laid up at the time with fever, and the rest were all weak after recovering from fever; during the voyage we experienced gales of wind and heavy seas, and between the 27th and 29th January the foreyard was carried away; the lower topsail was carried away at the same time; several stanchions were broken; portions of the bulwarks were carried away, and the tarpaulin was swept off the main hatchway.

Remembers when nearing the coast of Ireland on a Thursday at noon the weather was thick and foggy. and the wind was west or W.S.W, moderate; we had all available sail set. We could not set the foresail or lower topsail,; we saw the Calf rock at twelve noon; when I went to the wheel at ten o'clock, I got the course N.N.E.; I continued that course to between eleven and twelve, when the captain ordered her to be hauled up, and altered the course to N.N.W.; about twelve o'clock noon we were in my judgment, about 3 or four miles from the Calf Rock Lighthouse; I was relieved at noon and called again between 3 and 4 o'clock; the weather was then very thick, with a drizzling rain; we could not see the lighthouse then; we could not see three lengths ahead of the vessel; there was a heavy roll of the sea to the land; the lead was hove by the captain. Was the ship's course altered at any time that evening? I cannot say, but the vessel was hauling by the wind when I came up; at 5 o'clock, we again made the land on the weather bow. Did you weather the land? she would not do; we were trying the whole afternoon to weather the land, but did not succeed; then wore ship; saw the lead hove a good many times.

About an hour or so afterwards we cleared the ship's boat and proceeded to get her out; I and three others got into her; while lowering the boat the fore tackle was let go too soon, and the boat capsized and we were pitched out, but we got into her again; the sea was running over her, and we were pitched out a second time; two men named Christian Christian and Garrett Nicholas were drowned.

I got crushed on the occasion, I helped to save a man named Seymour; the captain got on the bulwark outside and helped me on deck; Seymour and I were taken into the cabin, and we remained there until the ship got on the rocks; while we were in the cabin, the captain sung out to us several times to come up as he expected the vessel would strike every minute; he wanted us to come up to save ourselves; he was stripped at the time.

I did not come up however until we struck because I was so helpless I did not care what became of me, I felt a shock when the vessel struck, and in about twenty minutes afterwards, I came on deck; it was quite dark at the time, and there was no light that I could see in view.

We had two bower anchors, a kedge, and a stream anchor; the chains were on deck ready for use; we had the chains arranged a couple of days before, and both bower anchors were on the rail; neither of the anchors were let go, there be no person to let them go, the captain was the only person in deck at the time; there were heavy sea rolling in when the vessel struck, and the wind began to freshen after the accident.

There were three compasses on board which we believed to be correct; there were several charts, a chronometer, and a sextant and a quadrant; on the day before the vessel struck saw the captain trying to take observations.

The sea began to break over her a short time after the vessel struck; we made signals of distress by torches. We did not fire any guns because I don't think we had any gun to fire. The sea was coming over her stern and running into her cabin, and she was striking at the same time; her head lay to the shore; high cliffs were right over our head; we wove a block to the end of the jibboom, and we succeeded in passing a lead line ashore to two men who came down the cliff; in that way we got ashore; it was clear daylight at the time; we had no deck load except one log which was secured with ringbolts to the deck; four of us got ashore; the captain was the last to leave the ship; the bottom had then begun to break up. We saw no Coastguards there until we went to the village a mile or two off; the village was on Bere Island.

Did you do anything to dismantle her? I don't know; I saw some boats about her.

Mr. Bennett. Oh, they were the wreckers.

Cross-examined by Mr. A Julian—We had to leave Minitilan in consequence of the fever. Several other vessels at Minitilan suffered at the same time; there was an epidemic there at the time; the captain was weak after the fever, and he had to resume work before he was fit for it; that was owing to the gales; I was laid up for nearly twenty one days during the passage; at the time the gale came on there were five men and the captain available on board; two men had died from the effects of

the fever; when the foreyard was carried away we lost the service of two important sails; between that and the 17th February, we were trying to repair the damage; we had favourable winds up to the time we sighted the land. When we saw the Calf Rock Lighthouse, the captain went down and consulted his charts; on his return on deck, he had the vessel hauled up and placed on the starboard tack; that was done for the purpose of clearing the land; after putting her about, the vessel began to make less way. What was that in consequence of? The wind had died away, and there was a heavy sea setting in to the land; the vessel was drifting broadside onto the rocks for the want of wind and sufficient sail; we could hear the breakers.

The captain ordered the life boat to be got ready, for the safety of our lives; he gave us our stations in the boat; Captain Templeton ran a risk in endeavouring to assist Seymour and me out of the water when the boat capsized; it would have been dangerous to remain on board the ship longer than we did; in my opinion, everything that could be done was done.

To the Bench—before we got out the boat, we had strength enough to bear cables; the captain did not say what land it was we had sighted; when I came on deck in the afternoon of Thursday and we saw the land of the weather bow, the captain said there was no distinguishing mark to enable him to make out the headland; the top of the land was then obscured by fog; the captain always hove the lead himself; the deep-sea lead was cast on this Thursday by the captain; the fog that day was a lifting and shutting one; sometimes the horizon was clear, and then a bank of fog came down.

By Mr. Julian—One of the men in the boat was sick, and had to be helped in; he had been sick for four months, and unable to render any assistance.

This completed the witness's testimony and the court adjourned, it being four o'clock.

**DAY 2**

**THE CORK DAILY HERALD  
FRIDAY MORNING MARCH 31, 1876**

**BOARD OF TRADE INQUIRY**

The inquiry into the loss of the ship Joseph Howe was resumed yesterday at the Police Office, before Mr. J. S. Macleod, R.M., Captain Burns, R.N., and Captain Beasley, R.N.

**Henry Gron**, seaman, stated that he shipped on board the "Joseph Howe," at Minititlan. The ship appeared to him to be well found.

The mate died shortly after leaving Minititlan. Garston died also.

They were supplied regularly with lime juice and vinegar.

They had had weather for most of the passage. The mainstaysail was often carried away also. The lower top-gallant sail was carried away, as were also the foreyard and the mainmast.

There were two patent pumps. The vessel was leaky, though not so much so in the beginning. The boatswain sounded the pumps sometimes. They worked the pumps, one man at a time, for about ten minutes. They had a heavy gale when they lost the foreyard, and the ship made more water than usual after that. The pumps had to be worked all night in consequence.

They had occasionally heavy weather till they sighted the Irish coast. Witness was at the wheel from 8 to 10 o'clock on the day they sighted land. Saw land first about 9 a.m., and the Calf Lighthouse at 10. The ship's course was altered after he left the wheel.

They stood for the land to see what land it was. He saw the Captain heave the lead many times that day. It was a hand lead. The deep sea lead was not hove on that day. The captain was on the poop when he hove the hand lead. It required three hands to heave the deep sea lead.

The chains were on deck, and were shackled on to the anchors before land was sighted. The sea was heavy on that day, and the weather was foggy.

The boat was ordered out by the captain at seven o'clock in the evening. He also ordered the ship to be kept off when he knew what land it was. He was on deck. The captain helped to get the boat off. The witness described the capsizing of the boat and the drowning of two of the men.

The vessel was then in danger, and they could hear the breakers. Could not say if there was any powder on board. No signals were made until after they struck, which was about 10 o'clock. No one answered the signals. The vessel went into a little creek. About daylight she struck heavily. They kept the signals up till daylight, when two men appeared on the cliffs above them and assisted in their escape.

By Mr. Julian.—Witness was shipped instead of a man who died. Saw the captain sound the pumps after the first storm. Sometimes during the voyage there were only three men to work the ship. Did not swear that at any time the ship had to be hove for the purpose of pumping, in consequence of the shortness of hands and the weakness of men. After he was relieved on the 17th the vessel got lighter. The deep-sea lead was on deck when he went down.

**Peter Seymour** was next examined, and gave substantially similar evidence. He attributed the disaster to the want of wind, the want of sail, and a heavy sea driving on the shore.

The inquiry has not yet concluded.

**DAY 3**

**THE CORK EXAMINER  
SATURDAY MORNING, APRIL 1, 1876.**

**BOARD OF TRADE INQUIRY.**

Yesterday the inquiry into the loss of the Joseph Howe was resumed at the Police office before Mr. J. H. Macleod, R.M., Captain D.H. Burney, R.N., J.P., and Captain Beasley.

**Denis Harrington**, of Bere Island, farmer, deposed to seeing the wreck on the morning of February 18th; it was about day break; the vessel was wrecked at Filenar, at the west of part of the island; when witness saw her she was in the greatest danger of going to pieces; the place was a little rocky creek with high cliffs, except in one spot where there was a rough strand; her head was turned towards the shore and she was striking on the rocks; the wind was about due west at the time and the sea was very rough; the coastguard station is at the eastern end of the island; the moment all the men were got up the cliff, witness ran to the station, about five miles away, and the coastguards came at once; witness was about 400 feet above the ship; another man named Michael Shanahan and witness descended the cliff, it was very dangerous; ropes were usually used, but they did not wait for any; they got down and the boatswain heaved a lead with a rope to them. The men were got ashore with great difficulty; and the captain was the last to come ashore; the vessel was about 18 fathoms from the rocks at the time; the vessel broke up altogether on the second evening after; some of the cargo was saved, there was a show where the vessel lay.

To Mr. A. Julian—The vessel lay on a rough rocky strand when witness saw her; the first time he saw her there were planks from the vessel's bottom floating about; the coast was not so bad where the vessel went ashore as other parts about it; nearly all wreckage comes to the creek, being calmer than portions of the coast.

To Captain Burney—When witness was employed as an extra man in the Coast Guard, he used to patrol the cliffs at night; it was not raining, or foggy, or hazy, the day before, but towards evening it got foggy; witness left his house at daybreak to look out for the wreck, and saw the vessel's head towards the shore; he thought it was some time about ten

o'clock when they got to the cliff above the wreck; they lost no time in coming.

**Michael Shanahan** gave evidence substantially the same as the previous witness, and, in reply to Captain Burney, said he never saw the coastguard going round the island.

**William Templeton** deposed that he was a master mariner and held a Board of Trade certificate of competence; he was about twelve years master; the last vessel he commanded was the "Joseph Howe," which belonged to parties in Island Magee; he had no interest in the vessel; he did not know that she was insured but was informed by the owner after the wreck that she was partially insured; the vessel was rigged as a brigantine; in April last she was classed ?? G, 1, 1, to the best of his knowledge; she was built in Nova Scotia in 1867, and at the voyage was reasonably well found; two of his men had been sick and died before the great gale; before the gale he had the vessel under lower topsail and foresail, with the wind abaft about south-west; immediately before the gale he took the foresail off and she was running under the lower topsail; there came a heavy rain squall and the wind flew to the north west; the foreyard was carried away and not quite half way; a very heavy sea was running; it became a very cross sea on the shift of wind; he rounded the ship to on the starboard tack; and did all that was happening to secure the wreck of the foreyard from doing further damage, after heaving he found the ship making more water than usual; there was then about 15 inches in her; she sucked at nine inches; the pumps were in good order and worked well; before that she had been sucked dry as he always kept a man at the pump, being shorthanded.

There were general strong winds and heavy seas during the voyage; he made first for land on the 17th of February, about 11 or 12 o'clock, the boatswain called his attention to something he supposed his lighthouse; there was a heavy sea running, and the weather was thick; he estimated the object to be about five miles away; he altered his course to north-north-east to make the land as his distance was ran up, and altered to north-west to get a better look at the lighthouse; he knew it to be the Calf light from distinguishing marks; he took its bearings and went down to consult his chart and book of directions; he then picked off his course, which was southeast by south, and came on deck and altered the ship's course.

About one he found the wind falling light and the ship making lee way; there is not much tide on that coast; he then hauled the ship up to compensate for the lee way; it came up to south by east first, but after a little while she would not go higher than south south east clean full, going about two and a half knots an hour; as the wind fell the lee way increased; the anchors and cables were ready.

About three he saw the land looming ahead and on the lee bow; he reckoned the land to be about Mizen Head or Three Castle Head; after reaching in as far as consistent with safety to examine the land, he then wore ship as he found she would not weather it; about seven he went forward to examine the anchors and cables and see they were in proper working order; he had one cast of the deep sea lead previous to wearing the ship, he reckoned he has about 48 fathoms; he had different casts of the hand lead; he took everything into consideration—his position, the depth of water, and the ship not under control; and for the saving of life ordered the boat to be cleared away; he sang out "Stand by."; "Let go," and to the best of his opinion; Gronn let one side go when he sung "Stand by"; he got a turn of the tackle full round the belaying pin; then on looking over the ship's side he saw the boat swamped and the men in the water; it was very dark and was raining; he had a rope thrown out at once; the boatswain was the first to get hold of the rope, and with Gronn's assistance, witness pulled him up; when pulling him up two others—Christian and Nicolas—drifted away; the steward, Peter Seymour, was next pulled up, but they were unable to get him on deck; witness sang out to the boatswain to come up out of the cabin where he had gone and help them to get Seymour on board; while he was coming Seymour said he was falling, as the bowline was slipping off him; witness got over the side, holding on above, and with the help of the chief mate got Seymour up; the steward was much exhausted and had to be taken to the cabin, and the boatswain who complained of being hurt, also went down.

The boat was still hanging on to the after tackle and to a line forward; at this time the ship was drifting towards the shore; he then got Gronn, the only available man, to cut the boat adrift as a slight breeze sprang up and the vessel began to make some way; he had every idea that if the breeze got stronger there was a chance for him; the breeze sprang up south west; he saw a point of land ahead which he calculated the ship could not weather; he wove the ship around and in doing so she ran a considerable distance towards the land; she was then very near the

rocks on which the sea was breaking heavily; they had nothing to signal with; before coming to the point of land which she could not weather she passed into the little creek when she went ashore; he put his helm down but the vessel would not come round owing to the high sea, and struck; he had several casts of the hand lead but got no sounding from nine o'clock up to the time she struck about twelve or one; she continued to beat heavily on the shore; they let go no anchor as the ship was too near the shore.

To Mr. Julian—Considered the ship to be in danger before he put the boat out; when he got her out he did not intend to desert the vessel; he did not consider the anchors would hold; after the boat was capsized they had not sufficient hands to give cable, and even before he was shorthanded; the principal cause of the loss of the vessel was getting becalmed and the heavy seas, and also the loss of canvas.

This concluded the evidence in the enquiry. The decision will be made known to-day.

**THE CORK DAILY HERALD  
SATURDAY MORNING APRIL 1, 1876**

**BOARD OF TRADE ENQUIRY.**

The **enquiry** into the loss of the ship Joseph Howe **was continued yesterday** before Mr. J. S. Mitchell, R.M.; Captain Burney, R.N.; J.P.; and Captain Beasley, at the Police Office.

**Denis Harrington, of Bere Island**, farmer, deposed to seeing the wreck on the morning of February 18th; it was about daybreak; when witness saw her she was in the greatest danger of going to pieces; her head was towards the shore, and she was sinking on the rocks; the wind was about due west at the time, and the sea was very rough; the moment all the men were got up the cliff witness ran to the station about five miles away, and the Coast Guard came at once; witness was about 400 feet above the ship; another man named Michael Shanahan and witness descended the cliff; it was very dangerous; ropes were usually used but they did not wait for ropes; they got down and the boatswain heaved a lead with a rope to them; the men were got ashore with great difficulty, and the captain was the last man to come ashore; the vessel was about 12 fathoms from the rocks at the time; the vessel broke up altogether on

the second evening after; some of the cargo was saved; there was a shoal where the vessel lay.

Cross-examined by Mr. Julian — The vessel lay on a rough rocky strand when witness saw her; the first time he saw her there were planks from the vessel's bottom floating about; the coast was not so bad where the vessel went ashore as other parts about it; nearly all wreckage comes to the creek, being calmer than other portions of the coast.

To Captain Burney — When witness was employed as an extra man in the Coast Guard he used to patrol the cliffs at night; it was not raining, or foggy, or hazy the day before, but towards evening it got foggy; witness left his house at daybreak to look-out for wreck.

**Michael Shanahan** gave evidence substantially the same as the previous witness, and in answer to Captain Burney, said he never saw the Coast Guard going round the island.

**William Templeton** stated he was a master mariner, and had a Board of Trade certificate of competency; he was about twelve years master; the last he commanded was the Joseph Howe, which belonged to parties in Island Magee; he had no interest in the vessel; he did not know that the vessel was insured, but had been informed by the owner after the wreck that she was partially insured; the vessel was rigged as a brigantine; in April last she was classed S.S. G 11 to the best of his knowledge; she was built in Nova Scotia in 1867, and on the voyage was reasonably well found.

Two of his men had been sick and died before the great gale; before the gale he had the ship under lower topsail and foresail, wind abaft, about south-west; immediately before the gale he took the foresail off, and she was running under the lower topsail; there came a heavy rain squall and the wind blew to the north-west; the foreyard was carried away, not quite half way; a very heavy sea was running; it became a very cross sea after the shift of wind; he rounded the ship to on the starboard tack, and did all that was possible to secure the wreck of the foreyard from doing further damage;

After heaving he found the ship making more water than usual; there was then about fifteen inches in her; she sucked at nine inches; the pumps were in good order and worked well; before that she was sucked dry, as he always kept a man at the pump, being short handed; during

that night a heavy sea struck the ship and carried away four of the stanchions; a quantity of the bulwarks and about eighteen feet of the main rail were broken; there were general strong winds and heavy seas during the voyage.

He made first for land on the 17th of February; about 11 or 12 o'clock the boatswain called his attention to something he supposed to be a lighthouse; there was a heavy sea running, and the weather was thick; he estimated the object to be about five miles away; he altered his course to north north east to make the land as his distance was run up, and altered it to north north west to get a better look at the lighthouse.

He knew it to be the Calf Light from distinguishing marks; he took its bearings and went down to consult his chart and book of directions; he then picked off his course, which was south east by south, and came on deck and altered the ship's course; about one he found the wind and the ship making her way: there is not much tide on that coast; he then hauled the ship up to compensate for the lee way; it came up to south by east first, but after a little while she would not go higher than south south east clean full, going about two and a half knots an hour; as the wind fell the lee way increased; the anchors and cables were ready.

About three he saw the land looming ahead, and on the lee bow; he reckoned the land to be about Mizen Head, or Three Castle Head; after reaching in, as far as consistent with safety, to examine the land, he then wore ship as he found she would not weather it; about seven he went forward to examine the anchors and cables and see they were in proper working order; he had one cast of the deep sea lead previous to wearing the ship; he reckoned he had about 42 fathoms; he had different casts of the hand-lead.

He took everything into consideration, his position, the depth of water, and the ship not being under control, and, for the saving of life, ordered the boat to be cleared away; he sung "stand by," "let go," and, to the best of his opinion, Gronn let one side go when he sung "stand by;" he got a turn of the tackle full round the belaying pin; then on looking over the ship's side he saw the boat swamped, and the men in the water; it was very dark, and was raining; he had a rope thrown out at once; the boatswain was the first to get hold of the rope, and with Gronn's assistance witness hauled him; when pulling him up two others, Christian and Nicholas, drifted away; the steward (Peter Seymour) was

next pulled up, but they were unable to get him on deck ; witness sung out to the boatswain to come up out of the cabin, where he had gone, and help them to get Seymour on deck ; while he was coming Seymour said he was falling, as the bowline was slipping off him ; witness got over the side, holding on above, and with the help of the chief mate, got Seymour up ; the steward was much exhausted, and had to be taken to the cabin, and the boatswain, who complained of being hurt, also went down; the boats still hanging on to the after tackle and to a line forward;

At this time the ship was drifting towards the shore; he then got Gronn (his only available man) to cut the boat adrift, as a slight breeze sprung up, and the vessel began to make some way; he had every idea that if the breeze got stronger there was a chance for him; the breeze sprung up south west; he saw a point of land ahead which he calculated the ship would not weather; he wore the ship round, and in doing so she ran a considerable distance towards the land; she was then very near the rocks, on which the sea was breaking heavily; they had nothing to signal with; before coming to the point of land which she could not weather, she passed into the little creek, where she went ashore; he put his helm down, but the vessel would not come round, from the heavy sea, and struck; he had several casts of the hand lead, but got no sounding from nine o'clock up to the time she struck about twelve or one; she continued to beat heavily on the shore; they let go no anchor, as the ship was too near the shore.

To Mr. Julian—He considered the ship to be in danger before he put the boat out; when he got her out he did not intend to desert the vessel; the principal causes of the loss of the vessel was getting bottomed, and the heavy sea and also the loss of canvas.

To Mr. Macleod—I did not let go an anchor because the place was too exposed, and it never would have held.

The court will give their decision to-day.

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The Cork Examiner's account of **the decision** was already reproduced earlier on in this piece. Here is the one from the Cork Daily Herald.

**CORK DAILY HERALD,  
TUESDAY MORNING, APRIL 4, 1876**

**THE LOSS OF THE JOSEPH HOWE.**

At half-past ten o'clock, on yesterday, Mr. J. S. Macleod, with Captain Burney and Captain Beasly as nautical assessors, delivered the judgment of the Court as to the loss of the ship Joseph Howe, off Bere Island, on the 17<sup>th</sup> February last. William Templeton, the master, was present.

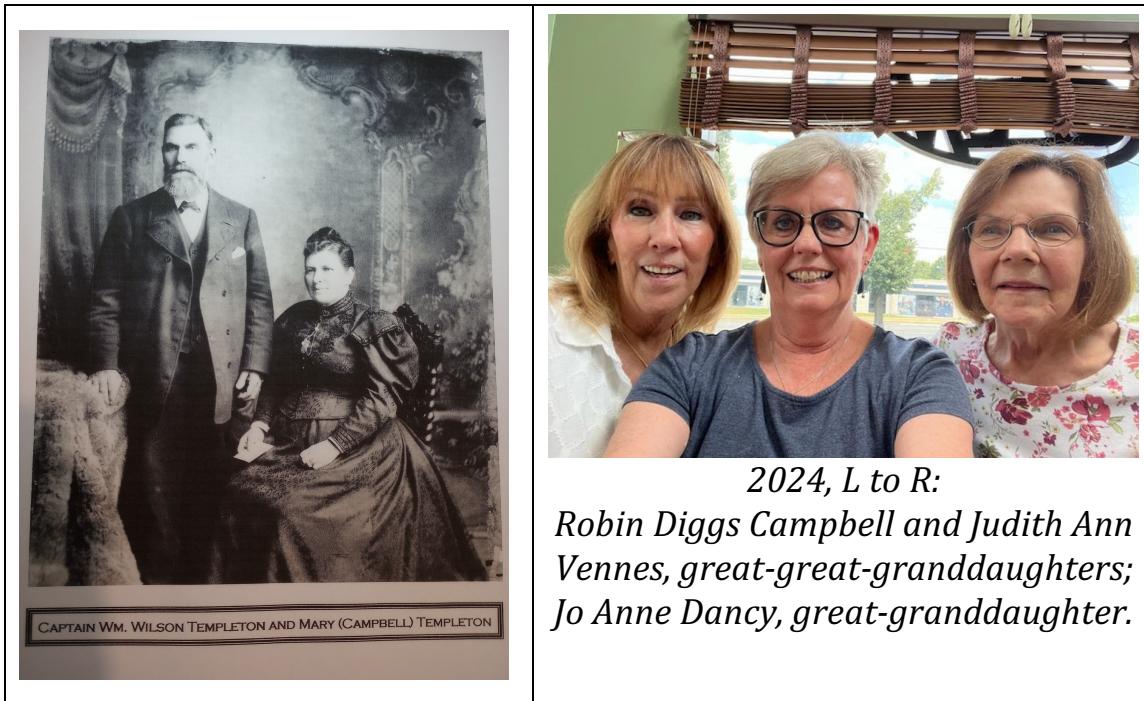
Mr. Macleod delivered the following judgment:—After giving due consideration to the evidence concerning the loss of the ship, the Joseph Howe, on the night of the 17th Feb., 1876, on Bere Island, the Court find – That the master showed great want of energy in not getting either the foreyard repaired by fishing it with the spars he had on board, or in making use of his lower foretopmast yard as a foreyard, after the gale of the 27th January, which, had he done, he would have been able to carry the foresail and lower topsail, with the topgallant sail over as an upper topsail. That the vessel was lost through a mistake in the master's reckoning, through which he found himself off the Calf Rock Lighthouse instead of Cape Clear, which place he intended to make, and that when he had ascertained his position with certainty that morning, knowing he was short-handed, and his crew debilitated from sickness, and that he could not carry sufficient sail on his vessel to work her off the land on account of the loss of his foreyard, and seeing she was making lee way dead on the land; that he was guilty of a grave error in judgment in not running into Berehaven, where he could have procured assistance while he had daylight and a fair wind. With regard to the two men, Christian and Nicholas, who were unfortunately drowned by the swamping of the boat, the Court cannot attribute any blame to the master, although there was some confusion or mistake of orders in getting the boat out. The Court therefore adjudge that the certificate of the master, William Templeton, be suspended for six months from this date, and recommend that the Board be pleased to grant him a mate's certificate for that period. They made no order as to costs.

## ANNEX 3: Tracing rescuer (and author) Dennis Harrington

We are wondering if this the Dennis Harrington who, with Michael Shanahan, rescued the four survivors.

CENSUS OF IRELAND, 1911.																			
Two Examples of the mode of filling up this Table are given on the other side.																			
FORM A.																			
No. on Form B. 11																			
RETURN of the MEMBERS of this FAMILY and their VISITORS, BOARDERS, SERVANTS, &c., who slept or abode in this House on the night of SUNDAY, the 2nd of APRIL, 1911.																			
NAME AND SURNAME.		RELATION to Head of Family.	RELIGIOUS PROFESSION.	EDUCATION.	AGE (last Birthday) and SEX.		RANK, PROFESSION, OR OCCUPATION.		PARTICULARS AS TO MARRIAGE.				WHERE BORN.	IRISH LANGUAGE.					
No Persons absent on the Night of Sunday, April 2nd, to be entered here; EXCEPT those (not even members of the family) who were TRAVELLING, &c., during that Night, and who RETURN HOME on MONDAY, APRIL 3RD.		State whether "Head of Family," or "Son," "Daughter," "Relative," "Boarder," "Servant," &c.	State here the particular Religion, or Religious Denomination, to which each person belongs.	(Members of Protestant Denominations are requested to describe their religion by the vague term "Protestant," and to state the name of the Particular Church, Denomination, or Body to which they belong.)	State here whether he or she can "Read and Write," can "Read," can "Write," or "Cannot Read."		State the particular Bank, Profession, Trade, or other Employment of each person. Children or Persons attending school, or receiving regular instruction at home, should be described as "Pupil," &c.		State for each Married Woman entered on this Schedule the number of—				If Done and Dumb Dumb only; Bill of Embarkation or Letter of Liasate.						
Subject to the above direction, the Name of the Head of Family, and fully describing first, the names of his Wife, Children, and other Relatives; then those of Visitors, Boarders, Servants, &c.					Age of Males. Age of Females.				Whether "Married," "Widower," "Widow," or "Single."				Children born alive to present Marriage. If no children born alive, enter "0" in column 11.	Write the word "Irish" in this column, if the name of each person who speaks Irish is "Irish & English" or "Irish & English" those who can speak both languages. In other cases, nothing should be made in this column.					
Christian Name.		Surname.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	1B.
1 Denis		Harrington	Wife	Roman Catholic	Cannot read	89	-			Harriner	Married	-	-	-	Co. Cork	Irish English			
2 Mary		Harrington	Wife	Roman Catholic	Cannot read	-	75				Married	55	13	11	Co. Cork	Irish English			
3 James		Harrington	Son	Roman Catholic	Read & Write	31	-			Harriner Son.	Single	-	-	-	Co. Cork				
4																			
5																			
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15																			
I hereby certify, as required by the Act 10 Edw. VII., and 1 Geo. V., cap. 11, that the foregoing Return is correct, according to the best of my knowledge and belief.														I believe the foregoing to be a true Return.					
Nicholas Burke, Ans't. Signature of Enumerator.														Denis Harrington, Ans't. Signature of Head of Family.					
														Witness Count N. Burke					

## ANNEX 4: Photographs – Captain Templeton and descendants



2024, L to R:  
*Robin Diggs Campbell and Judith Ann Vennes, great-great-granddaughters; Jo Anne Dancy, great-granddaughter.*

Jo Anne tells us that William Templeton did return to the sea as Mate. He was restored to Master on several ships and First Officer on a few. In 1893 he was accepted as Chief Officer of the Gibraltar/Grampian Training Ship\* in Belfast. [he is listed in the 1901 Census of Ireland as living in a house on May Street in the Windsor Ward in Belfast] He died in 1909 at the age of 66.

[\* Google:] The Gibraltar (later Grampian) was a former Royal Navy battleship converted into an Industrial School for Protestant boys in Belfast Lough from 1872 until 1899, serving as a home and training facility for seafaring skills, tailoring, and shoemaking before being broken up, leaving a legacy as a significant part of Belfast's Victorian-era social welfare for youth.

## POSTSCRIPT – 1937 Essay; entry from Riobard O'Dwyer's book

At the end below is a page from Riobard O'Dwyer's book. Its telling of the "Courageous Bere Island Rescue Of Shipwrecked Sailors in 1875" seems to be the basis for the Facebook and Bere Island Community Archives postings. As we now know from the newspaper reports of the time, it is quite a fanciful account, no doubt having been embellished in the many re-tellings on long winter nights when there was little other entertainment. However, it still does not help us understand where the eighteen months sentence came from.

For completeness, it is preceded by the one essay in the 1937 Schools Collection that went well beyond the topics covered by the poem. It was written by Julia Harrington, Greenane, who got the story from her father "John (Jack) Harrington, age about 50, who got it from his father, who died about 26 years ago."

### Shipwrecks (15-11-1937)

On the night of the 17th February in the year 1876 a vessel named "The Joseph Howe" was wrecked in the of Bantry Bay and convenient to the entrance to Beare-haven harbour. She was a vessel of about 400 tons burden and was of the Brigantine class, carrying a cargo of mahogany from South America and bound to the port of Cork for orders to where she was to deliver her cargo.

Being several months at sea on such a long voyage some of the crew fell sick owing to lack of fresh food and for want of medical attendance two of the 8 men died and were buried at sea. When nearing Bantry Bay coming from the west the Captain decided to put into Beare-haven harbour having still two sick men on board but in his way to the entrance a thick fog made visibility very bad and at mid-night he found the ship was being driven ashore on a dangerous reef in a place known the bight of "Fiall na Diag". The captain knew his ship was doomed and his first thought was of the sick men he decided to lower a boat and placing these men on board he began to lower away but the boat was smashed against the ship's side by a heavy sea and both men were drowned. Soon they were driven on the rocks where they remained until daylight.

Two men arrived and at once descended the cliff to render help and save the lives of the men still clinging to the rigging of the ship.

These men whose names were Michael Shanahan and Denis Harrington were brave and fearless men and descended this precipice which was about 300 feet high at a great risk and by their direction the crew got a rope ashore to the end of which they tied a barrel which carried the rope to where the rescuers stood. They then secured the end to a large stone the other end on board was taken to the winch and hove tight, and by means of both rescuers got on board the ship and by the same means the crew were taken ashore and hauled up the cliff and taken to the homes of Shanahan and Harrington and cared for until the report of the wreck reached the owners and provision made to carry the seamen home.

The ship now a total wreck her valuable cargo floating about, was picked up by numerous small boats and conveyed to Castletownbere. The crew of the "Joseph Howe" consisted of ten all told when leaving port for homeward voyage - two died of sickness, two were drowned, the night of the disaster. The six remaining were of different nationalities, one Austrian, one Dane, two Irish, one English and one Portuguese.

## Who Were My Ancestors - Riobard O'Dwyer

### Courageous Bere Island Rescue Of Shipwrecked Sailors In 1875

On the night of Feb. 17th 1875 a hurricane broke on the south-west coast. The roaring wind lashed the ocean into fury, and mountainous seas rolled against the rocky shores. Such was the night the Joseph Howe, a large barque, freighted with a cargo of huge logs of Domingo mahogany consigned to Cork, was being tossed like a cork in the angry seas. Rudderless, and with her sails in rags, she was at the mercy of the wind and weather. Her crew, suffering from scurvy, were weak and exhausted and powerless to avert disaster. She was being driven before the wind. Near-ing the mouth of Berehaven (Castletownbere) Harbour the captain was hoping, in desperation, that his boat would be driven through to safety, but the gale and fierce current sent her broadside into Foill na Doig, a "bite" in the south-west corner of Bere Island with forbidding precipitous cliffs ascending sheer and stark from the sea. The gale drove the waves in mountains through its narrow inlet and turned it into a churn of frothing, seething foam. In that cauldron the fate of the Joseph Howe was sealed. She was pounded against the jagged, treacherous rocks at the base of the cliffs and soon became matchwood. The baulks of mahogany were beaten against the face of Foill na Doig, and some of them were almost pitched over the top as they were later found high up on the narrow ledges. Four of the crew of the ill-fated Joseph Howe survived to tell the tale.

When the men on board realized that there was no hope for their boat, they threw themselves into the boiling sea. All were drowned except Captain William Templeton, another William Templeton (bosun), Harry Grann (seaman) and Peter Seymour (steward), who were saved by a miracle. A mighty wave threw them on to a ledge on the precipitous face of the slippery cliff. There, weak from disease, famished by exposure, and fearful of their fate, they clung until daybreak.

A Bere Island farmer, Denis Harrington of Greenane, was out to herd his sheep after the night's storm. As if by Providence his steps led him to Foill na Doig. He heard the piteous despairing cries of the half-demented survivors. Prostrate on the ground and stretching over the crest, he located the sailors in distress who, on the ebb tide, were for the moment safe from the devouring seas. He rushed for assistance. Accompanied by his neighbour, Michael Shanahan, and equipped with a stout rope, they hurried to the rescue.

Denis Harrington tied the rope under his arm-pits and then around a boulder, and he was lowered by Michael Shanahan over the cliff. Down, down he went until he reached the ledge, and one by one he sent the famished men up to safety. Last of all came the lion-hearted Denis. The survivors were brought into Castletownbere. Lloyd's agent provided them with every comfort, and the doctor cured them of the sailors' scourge — scurvy.

Soon it was whispered around that the steward, Peter Seymour, had informed the coastguards, who in turn informed the R.I.C. (police), that the Captain, during the voyage, had cruelly ill-treated the "galley boy" and that after an attack on him with a belaying pin the lad became unconscious, died and was buried at sea.

The Captain was arrested, returned for trial at the Cork Assizes, found guilty of manslaughter and was sentenced to eighteen months jail, with hard labour.

When the storm abated, the salvors brought every baulk of the valuable mahogany into Castletownbere and received from Lloyds a handsome remuneration for their labours, and for some time the young lads of the town had a great time jumping from baulk to baulk in the sheltered part of the harbour trying to get across from shore to shore.