



## **SS VERA - COLLISION AT CLEY and “A Man of Indomitable Courage”**



**Sue Gresham  
Research Volunteer**

**Researched  
Updated**

**December 2018  
September 2021**

## **FOREWORD**

The wreck of the iron steamship *SS Vera* has lain off Cley Beach since she went aground in November 1914.

Her wreckage is a familiar and recognisable sight, lying close to the shore, visible at low tide, and is a regular dive site, but what is the history of the ship?

My research set out to answer this short question and this report outlines the history of the ship, her construction, history of ownership, and the sequence of events which caused her to run aground. It describes how the disaster was reported and the attempts that were made to save the vessel.

What has emerged as being even more fascinating than the story of the ship itself is the story of the courageous, humble man - the man "of indomitable courage" – who was her Master, Captain James Joseph Shaw.

The research has, therefore, gone beyond just the story of the *SS Vera*.

Captain James Joseph Shaw went on to become the Master of another ship which went to the aid of a stricken vessel and saved many lives. Coincidentally, his Second Officer was a man from Salthouse. Discovering this courageous event has led, in turn, to the equally brave Captain of the ship whose crew and passengers were all rescued by Captain Shaw and his crew.

## NOTES

### Censuses

The Censuses were taken on the following nights, each a Sunday:

1841	6th June
1851	30th March
1861	7th April
1871	2nd April
1881	3rd April
1891	5th April
1901	31st March
1911	2nd April

### 1911 Census

The 1911 Census gives more detailed information about each household than the preceding ones and, unlike those in the 19th Century, was completed “by, or on behalf of , the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling” rather than by an Enumerator.

The Census requested information about the property and the person completing it had to state “the Number of Rooms in this dwelling (House, Tenement or Apartment) and to count the kitchen as a room but not “the scullery, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom; nor warehouse, office, shop”; throughout this report, references to the 1911 Census reflect this.

Like earlier Censuses, people’s professions or occupations had to be stated but , in addition, the “Industry or Service with which worker is connected” and whether each person was an “Employer, Worker or Working on Own Account” and whether or not someone was working “carrying on Trade or Industry” at home”.

Similarly, Birthplaces had to be given but also now the nationality of anyone born in a “Foreign Country”.

Two very significant changes were to ask – in a section “Particulars as to Marriage” - for each married woman the number of years the marriage had lasted, the total number of children born alive, the number still living, and the number who had died.

A section titled “Infirmity” asked that if anyone shown on the Census was “Totally Deaf” or “Deaf and Dumb”, “Totally Blind”, “Lunatic “, “Imbecile” or “Feeble-minded”, the infirmity should be stated against the person’s name and “the age at which he or she became afflicted”.

### The 1939 Register

Due to the onset of war, the 1939 Register was taken on 29 September 1939 with the purpose of producing National Identity Cards; it later came to be multi-functional, first as an aid in the use of ration books, later in recording the movement of the civilian population over the following decades, and subsequently, from 1948, as the basis for the National Health Service Register.

The information was used to produce identity cards and, once rationing was introduced in January 1940, to issue ration books. Information in the Register was also used to administer conscription and the direction of labour, and to monitor and control the movement of the population caused by military mobilisation and mass evacuation.

## DISSEMINATION

This research may be used free of charge for academic or other not-for-profit purposes but the material must be acknowledged as the work of the author for the Blakeney Harbour Association.

Prior permission for commercial or any other use or purpose(s) should be sought from the Secretary of the Association on [info@blakeneyharbourassociation.co.uk](mailto:info@blakeneyharbourassociation.co.uk)

## CONTENTS

### SS Vera – The Ship

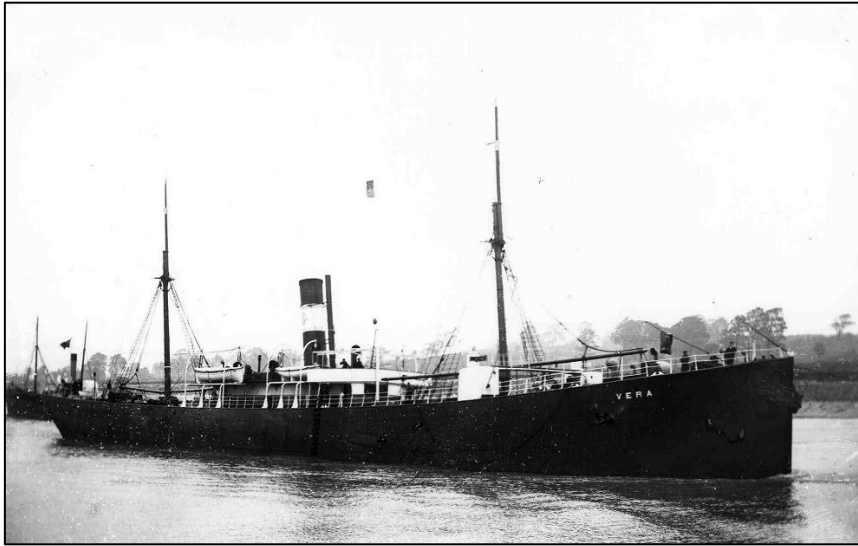
The Ship Builder	1
The Engine Builder	2
Early Troubles	2
Ownership	2
Collision, Beaching and Salvage	4
The Wreck	7

### Captain James Joseph Shaw

Master of the SS Vera	8
Early Years	8
Career and Family	11
Master of the SS Dalton	15
Rescue of the SS Tidal	15
The Rescue – A First Hand Account	17
Captain Carl Peters - Master of the SS Tidal	18
Robert Spence of Salthouse	20
SS Dalton – Gallantry Awards	22
SS Dalton – The Heroes	23
SS Dalton – The Awards - 2001	25
Later Years	27
The Last Voyage	28

## SS VERA - THE SHIP

The *SS Vera* was a steel screw steamer – official number 96558 - built by Thomas Turnbull & Son of Whitby at Yard Number 117 of Whitehall Dockyard. She was launched on 12th December 1890 and completed in January 1891.



**SS Vera**

The *Vera's* dimensions were: Length 289' 5" x Breadth 38' 2" x Depth 19' 7"; her gross registered tonnage was 2,391, her net registered tonnage 1,536.

The *Vera* was fitted with two Scotch type boilers, a single screw, 3-cylinder triple expansion (22, 36, 59 x 39in) engine with 218 nominal horse power built by Blair & Co. Ltd. of Stockton & Tees.

### The Ship Builder

Whitehall Dockyard/Shipyard was built and developed on the River Esk by Thomas Turnbull (born in 1784), whose family business of shipbuilding brought great wealth and success. The company was originally founded in Whitby in 1817 and owned a large fleet of sailing ships.

TURNBULL, THOMAS, & SON—continued.		
	Yard No.	Tons
<i>i.s.</i> Maria-Annetta	(37)	961
<i>i.s.</i> Melrose Abbey	(57)	1211
<i>stl.s.</i> Merannio	(119)	2300
<i>stl.s.</i> Olive	(142)	3678
<i>stl.s.</i> Onward	(138)	358
<i>stl.s.</i> Oswin	(118)	1737
<i>stl.</i> Pearl	(139)	239
<i>stl.s.</i> Peterston	(123)	2768
<i>stl.s.</i> Phoebe	(126)	2754
<i>i.s.</i> Reidar	(91)	1353
<i>i.s.</i> San José	(46)	1265
<i>i.s.</i> Saxon	(77)	1595
<i>i.s.</i> Schaldis	(60)	1241
<i>i.s.</i> Severini	(83)	1316
<i>i.s.</i> Skandia	(81)	1386
<i>stl.s.</i> Southgate	(140)	3661
<i>stl.s.</i> Suma Maru	(122)	2204
<i>stl.s.</i> Theodor Wille	(144)	3667
<i>stl.s.</i> Theresedal	(108)	1762
<i>stl.s.</i> Thórdisa	(106)	2317
<i>stl.s.</i> Trongate	(131)	2553
<i>stl.s.</i> Vera	(117)	2391
<i>stl.s.</i> Warrior	(143)	3674
<i>stl.s.</i> Westgate	(124)	2773
<i>stl.s.</i> Whitehall	(120)	2776
<i>i.s.</i> Zephyrus	(90)	2084

In 1840, Turnbull's son, also Thomas, joined his father as a builder and owner of sailing ships and steamers; they traded as Thomas Turnbull and Son, being already owners of sailing ships on the sixty-fourth share system.

Known as the Whitehall Dockyard, the Turnbull yard began making wooden sailing ships and, in 1871, switched to making iron tramps. The first steamship to be built at the yard, the *Whitehall*, was launched on 20th June 1871 for the account of Thomas Turnbull and Son. Between 1871 and 1902, the yard made 113 tramps, over half of which were for the Turnbull family itself. In addition to being shipowners and shipbuilders, Thomas Turnbull and his son were able to offer drydock and repair facilities in the port.

With the invention and developments of steam ships, the Whitehall Shipyard ran into difficulties because the river was neither wide nor deep enough to allow for larger vessels. Some iron and screw steel steamers were built but by 1887 the business offices, now Turnbull Scott and Co., moved to London.

The Whitehall Yard closed in 1902 after sixty-two years of shipbuilding. Thomas Turnbull died in 1924.

## The Engine Builder

Blair & Co. was formed from the engine maker Fossick & Hackworth, later to become Fossick, Blair & Co. in 1865, then Blair & Co. in 1866.

Under Partner George Blair's direction, the company expanded the works to specialise in marine engines; in January 1869, the firm built the first compound engine on the Tees, and the first triple expansion engine in 1884. By 1914, nearly 1,400 marine engines had been built, 103 of them for Thomas Turnbull & Son.

## Early Troubles

The "Glasgow Evening Post" of Friday 8th April 1892 reported that, just one year after she was completed, the *Vera's* Captain, a Captain Forth, was fined for overloading.

This was probably Robert Forth, a Mariner, born circa 1839 in Whitby.

**A GLASGOW CAPTAIN FINED FOR OVERLOADING.**  
(By Telegraph.)  
HULL, 4.—At Hull Police Court, this afternoon, Mr Twiss, Stipendiary Magistrate, dealt with summonses against Captain M'Lauchlan for overloading the s.s. *Strathdon*, Glasgow. He imposed a fine of £50 for the first offence, and ordered the captain to pay the cost of the second offence.  
Captain Forth, of the s.s. *Vera*, Whitby, was also fined £50 and costs for a similar offence.

Three years later, "The Cardiff Times" of Saturday 1st June 1895 reported that the *Vera* had suffered a fire in one of her holds.

**FIRES AT CARDIFF DOCKS.**  
Shortly after 10 a.m. on Tuesday a fire was discovered among some rubbish in the forepeak of the steamer *Swanmore*, of Liverpool, which is now lying in the East Dock, Cardiff, taking on a cargo of patent fuel. Information was at once conveyed to the Butte Docks Fire Brigade by P.O. Morris, and they, with Berthing-Foreman Lewis and a number of watermen, were quickly on the spot. Later on the tug *Earl* and her water-bomb were brought alongside and rendered valuable assistance. The fire was soon got under, and in about half an hour was completely extinguished without much damage having been done.  
The s.s. *Vera*, of Whitby, took fire on Monday in No. 3 hold. The vessel had loaded her cargo in Hoath Basin, and was all ready to proceed to sea for Port Said when it was discovered that in some unknown manner the cargo had taken fire. It is needless to say the vessel did not proceed, but on Tuesday passed through the Roath Dock to discharge part cargo in order to get at the seat of the fire.

The s.s. *Vera*, of Whitby, took fire in No 3 hold. The vessel had loaded her cargo in Hoath Basin, and was all ready to proceed to sea for Port Said when it was discovered that in some unknown manner this cargo had taken fire. It is needless to say the vessel did not proceed, but on Tuesday passed through the Roath Dock to discharge part cargo in order to get at the seat of the fire."

## Ownership

The first owners of the *SS Vera* were T. Marwood & Sons of Whitby and her first port of registry was Whitby.

On the death of Thomas Marwood in June 1900, and ten years after she was built, four sixty-fourth shares in the *Vera* - "Managed by Mr Jefferson Suggit of Whitby" - were offered for sale.

The sale details suggest that Suggit was then managing the ship on Marwood's behalf but the *Vera* was sold a year later, in 1901, to J. Suggit, registered in Whitby; she was transferred in 1904 to Suggit & Forth and still registered in Whitby.

**WHITBY.**  
**SALE OF VALUABLE STEAMSHIP SHARES.**  
MR. ROBERT GRAY has received instructions from the EXECUTORS of the LATE THOMAS MARWOOD, Esq., of Liverpool, to SELL BY AUCTION, on TUESDAY, October 9th, 1900, at the CROWN HOTEL, in Whitby, at 2 for 3 o'clock in the afternoon precisely (subject to such conditions as shall be then read), the following valuable SHARES:—  
One Sixty-fourth Share in the s.s. *Vera*, of Whitby.  
One Sixty-fourth Share in the s.s. *Vera*, of Whitby.  
One Sixty-fourth Share in the s.s. *Vera*, of Whitby.  
One Sixty-fourth Share in the s.s. *Vera*, of Whitby.  
Managed by Mr. Jefferson Suggit, of Whitby.  
**THIRTY-THREE** £11 SHARES (£10 paid) in the Rowland and Marwood Steamship Company, Limited, in suitable lots.  
For further particulars apply the Auctioneer, County Sale Room, Whitby.  
Whitby, September 21st, 1900.

Whitby Gazette - Friday 28th September 1900

In May 1906, the "Whitby Gazette" reported that, at a Share Sale held on 3rd May 1906, one further sixty-fourth share in the *Vera* - the property of the late Miss E. M. Marwood (assumed to be a family member of the original owner) - was offered for sale.

"The last lot was a sixty-fourth share in the s.s. *Vera*, managed by Messrs. Suggit and Fourth of Whitby. The vessel was built in 1891, and passed her No 3 Lloyd's survey in 1904. In dividends she had paid £20 since the 23<sup>rd</sup> August last. Mr R.E. Gray and Captain Forth maintained the competition until at £111, Mr. Gray became the purchaser, on behalf of a client."

Captain Forth - referred to in the article - is the same man who, in 1892, was fined £50 for overloading the *Vera*.

**SHARE SALE.**—At the County Sale Room, yesterday (Thursday) Messrs. Robert Gray and Sons offered for sale some shipping, gas, and water shares, the property of the late Miss E. M. Marwood. There was a good and representative attendance of gentlemen interested in shipping and other forms of investment. Mr. A. J. Buchanan (Messrs. Buchanan and Sons, solicitors) read the conditions of sale. The first lot comprised sixty shares of £11 each (£10 paid) in Messrs. Rowland and Marwood's Steamship Company, Ltd. Captain W. Jefferson opened the bidding at £4 10s., being followed by Captain W. Rayment and Mr. J. Ditchburn, who took the bidding to £5 10s. Mr. F. Snowdon offered £5 15s., but this amount did not reach the reserve, and the shares were withdrawn. Lot II. was two shares of £10 (original capital) in the Whitby Waterworks Company. Mr. W. Edwards opened with £20, and Mr. T. Warters put in an advance of £1. Captain W. Jefferson made an offer of £22, and Mr. Randolph Jowsey entered into competition. At the last-named bidder's offer of £22 5s., the sale was declared open, and he eventually became the purchaser at £22 15s. The last lot was a sixty-fourth share in the s.s. *Vera*, managed by Messrs. Suggit and Forth, of Whitby. The vessel was built in 1891, and passed her No. 3 Lloyd's survey in 1904. In dividends she had paid £20 since the 23<sup>rd</sup> August last. Mr. R. E. Gray and Captain Forth maintained the competition, until at £111, Mr. Gray became the purchaser, on behalf of a client.

Whitby Gazette - Friday 4th May 1906

The "Gloucester Journal" of Saturday 27th November 1909 reported on legal action that *Vera's* owners Suggit & Forth took to recover an alleged balance of freight charge.

#### QUESTION OF A GRAIN CARGO.

On Wednesday, Mr. Justice Hamilton, in the King's Bench Division, had before him the non jury action of Suggit and Forth v. Spillers and Bakers, Ltd., in which the plaintiffs, of Whitby, Yorkshire, sued the defendants, of Cardiff, Bristol, and Gloucester, to recover the sum of £177, alleged balance of freight for the carriage of grain by the plaintiff's s.s. *Vera* from a Russian port to Gloucester. Mr. Bailhache, K.C., appeared for the plaintiffs, and Mr. Atkin, K.C., for the defendants. Plaintiffs' case was that the defendants were the receivers of the cargo, and the endorsers of the bill of lading. Plaintiffs relied upon a declaration, which they alleged was binding upon defendants, under which they said the defendants were liable to pay them on the basis of a scale of 8s. 3d. per unit. Defendants denied that the declaration was binding upon them, or that they declared that they elected to pay on the basis above. They claimed to pay on the basis of a scale of 8s. 6d. per unit. After hearing the evidence and affidavits on behalf of the plaintiffs and defendants, his Lordship said this was a claim for freight against the owners of bills of lading. There was no fixed rate, but the charter party mentioned two scales per unit, which had been referred to. He gave judgment for the plaintiffs for the amount claimed, with costs, and directed the amount paid into court by the defendants to be paid out to the plaintiffs.

#### QUESTION OF A GRAIN CARGO

On Wednesday Mr. Justice Hamilton, in the King's Bench Division, had before him the non jury action of Suggit and Forth v. Spillers and Bakers, Ltd., in which the plaintiffs, of Whitby, Yorkshire, sued the defendants, of Cardiff, Bristol and Gloucester, to recover the sum of £177 alleged balance of freight for the carriage of grain by the plaintiff's s.s. *Vera* from a Russian port to Gloucester. Mr. Bailhache, K.C., appeared for the plaintiffs, and Mr. Atkin, K.C., for the defendants. Plaintiffs' case was that the defendants were the receivers of the cargo, and the endorsers of the bill of lading. Plaintiffs relied on a declaration, which they alleged was binding upon defendants, under which they said the defendants were liable to pay them on the basis of 8s. 6d. per unit. Defendants denied that the declaration was binding upon them or that they declared that they elected to pay on the basis above. They claimed to pay on the basis of a scale of 8s. 6d. per unit. After hearing the evidence and the affidavits on behalf of the plaintiffs and defendants, his Lordship said this was a claim for freight against the owners of bills of lading. There was no fixed rate, but the charter party mentioned the scales per unit, which had been referred to. He gave judgement for the plaintiffs for the amount claimed, with costs, and directed the amount paid into court by the defendants to be paid out to the plaintiffs."

Seven years after the Share Sale, ownership of the *Vera* was transferred in 1911 to Vera S.S. Co. Ltd. (A. Richter & Co.) and her port of registry was Newcastle.

Her final change of ownership was in 1913 to W. Coupland & Co (Montauk Steam Ship Co. Ltd.); her port of registry remained as Newcastle.

## SS VERA - COLLISION, BEACHING AND SALVAGE

The *Vera* left the Tyne on Saturday 14th November 1914 and was on passage for Livorno (Leghorn), Italy with a cargo of coal. On the following evening, she was involved in a collision, when apparently four miles east of Cley.

The steamship, *Vera*, of Newcastle, bound from Newcastle to Leghorn with coal, collided off Cley, Norfolk, on Sunday night in rough weather with a mine sweeper. The *Vera* was holed amidships on her port side, and water entered her engine-room. The captain beached his vessel close in shore, and her crew of twenty-three hands were rescued by the rocket brigade. This morning two Sheringham lifeboats made futile attempts to reach the ship. The vessel, which is 2,391 tons gross register, owned by Messrs. W. Coupland and Co., of Milburn House, Newcastle, is valued at £13,000.

**Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer –  
Tuesday 17th November 1914**

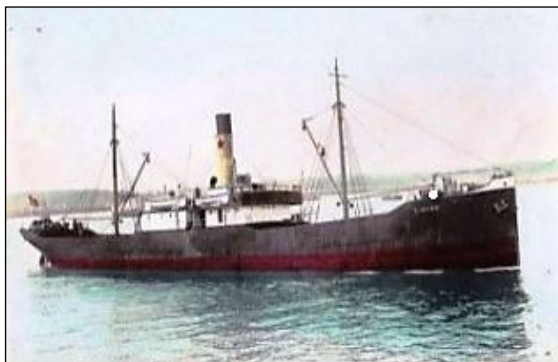
### **COLLISION OFF EAST COAST.**

#### **CREW RESCUED.**

The steamship *Vera*, of Newcastle, 1,500 tons, bound from Newcastle to Leghorn with coal, collided off Clay, near the Norfolk coast, on Sunday night in rough weather with a mine-sweeper. The *Vera* was holed amidships on her port side, and water entered her engine room. The captain beached his vessel close to the shore, and the crew of twenty-three hands were rescued by the rocket brigade. Yesterday morning two Sheringham lifeboats made futile attempts to reach the scene.

**Londonderry Sentinel - Tuesday 17th November 1914**

A number of newspaper reports refer to the other vessel being a minesweeper; however, on the day after its first report, "The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer" suggested that the steamer involved in the collision with the *Vera* "proves to be the Norwegian s.s. *Lisken*" of Raumo.



**SS Lisken**

#### **(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENTS.)**

London, Tuesday Night.

The position of the Newcastle steamer *Vera*, beached off Cley, is very serious, and unless the weather moderates immediately, the vessel will probably become a total loss. The steamer with which she was in collision proves to be the Norwegian s.s. *Lisken*, which has arrived in London damaged, and is of 1,105 tons gross register, built in 1911, and was bound from Raumo with general cargo.

**Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer –  
Wednesday 18th November 1914**

Also on 18th November, Lloyd's List reported, "A Wells telegram states that the crew of the steamer *Vera*, of Newcastle, which was beached after a collision outside Cley, have been landed."

### **SHIPPING DISASTERS OFF NORFOLK COAST**

On Sunday afternoon the s.s. *Vera* of Newcastle-on-Tyne, bound from that port to Leghorn with coal, was in collision off Cley with a Grimsby trawler engaged as a mine sweeper. The wind was blowing strongly, and there were heavy seas running. The force of the impact holed the port side of the *Vera* amidships, and the engine-room began to fill with water. The captain, J. Shaw, of South Shields, at once put his vessel's head to the land some four miles away. The plight of the vessel was seen from the shore, and the Rocket Brigade was called out. In the meantime the Sheringham fishermen's lifeboat, the *Henry Ramey Upcher*, eight miles to the eastward, put off to render assistance. She was out from four to six hours, but the seas were such that she could not get near enough to give any aid. Nothing daunted, the crew of the institution lifeboat also made an abortive effort during the night. By about five o'clock in the afternoon the Cley Rocket Brigade had succeeded in getting a line to the *Vera*, which continued to come more and more in shore. Neither crew nor master, however, left the vessel until eight o'clock on Monday morning. By then she was well up on the Beach, about sixty yards from high water line. In all there were twenty-three souls aboard, and their rescue was splendidly effected by the Rocket Company. Mr Belcher, Lloyd's agent at Yarmouth, was in Cley on Monday and made every provision for the welfare and comfort of the crew at the George Hotel. The *Vera*, which left the Tyne on Saturday, is owned by Messrs. Copeland & Co., of Newcastle, and is of 1536 tons register.

**The Diss Express - Friday 20th November 1914**



The *Lisken* was a steel steamer fitted with a single screw, single shaft, 3-cylinder triple expansion engine with 115 nominal horse power and capable of 9 knots. Her dimensions were: Length 68.9m x Breadth 11m x Depth 4.9 m. and her gross registered tonnage was 1,105. The ship and her engines were built in 1911 by Trondhjems Mekaniske Versted; her first owner was Hansen William of Bergen.

At the time of the *Vera's* collision, two Sheringham lifeboats were in service and reports suggest that both boats went, independently of each other, to the assistance of the *Vera*.



**R.N.L.I. Lifeboat - J.C. Madge**

The first was the *J.C. Madge*, a R.N.L.I. station boat, the "institution lifeboat" referred to in the newspaper report, and the second the private lifeboat *Henry Ramey Upcher*, the "fishermen's lifeboat" referred to.

The *J.C. Madge* was a 41' 0" long x 11' 0" wide, non-self-righting, pulling and sailing Liverpool class boat, the largest of the type ever built, and was rowed by sixteen oars. The lifeboat was in service from 1904 to 1936.

The *J.C. Madge* went out to the *Vera* which was aground off Cley Beach in a heavy gale and a rough sea. On reaching the ship, the Captain of the *Vera* did not answer the signals from the lifeboatmen and they, assuming that the crew had been taken ashore, made an extremely rough return journey to their station.

The crew were actually still on board the *Vera*. Her Captain, James Shaw, later said that he felt it would have been impossible for the lifeboat to have reached the ship in the darkness and he feared it would have been knocked to pieces if an attempt had been made to bring it alongside; for this reason, he thought it better not to answer the lifeboatmen's signals. The *Vera's* Master and her twenty-two man crew were brought ashore the following day by the Cley Rocket Brigade, assisted by men from the lifeboat, *Henry Ramey Upcher*.

Built in Sheringham of local oak in the style of the local crab fishing boats, the private lifeboat *Henry Ramey Upcher* measured 39'8" long x 11'3" wide, was double ended, and, like the *J.C. Madge*, carried sixteen oars. She was donated to the fishermen of Sheringham by Mrs Caroline Upcher of Sheringham Hall in memory of her husband.

In the very difficult sea and weather conditions, neither of the two lifeboats had been able to get close to the stricken *Vera* but, as "The Diss Express" reported, the Cley Rocket Brigade was able - after, what was implied, considerable and very lengthy effort - to get a line to the *Vera*, which enabled her to move closer to the shore. The *Vera's* crew was able to beach the ship before she sank and, as reported, no crew members were lost.

In the meantime, "The Belfast News-Letter" of Wednesday 18th November and the "Gravesend and Northfleet Standard" of Friday 20th November 1914 reported that "The Norwegian steamer *Lisken*, from Raumo, arrived at Gravesend with her starboard bow damaged above water having been in collision off Yarmouth on Sunday night."

The *Lisken's* journey was probably a costly one, both for the ship and for her Captain. He had evidently been able to leave the Port of Gravesend for London where, possibly awaiting repairs to his ship, Captain Christian Wilhelmsen, was purchasing quantities of alcohol in anticipation of his return to Norway.

#### SPIRITS IN A SETTEE

A curious hiding-place for smuggled spirits was described at Tower Bridge yesterday when Christian Wilhelmsen, 43, master of the s.s. *Lisken*, lying at Russia-yard, Surrey Commercial Dock, pleaded guilty to concealing six bottles of brandy, four bottles of liqueur, and four bottles of unenumerated and unrated spirits with intent to defraud H.M. Customs. - Mr. G.E. Fooks, a preventive officer, stated that in the course of a "rummage" of the s.s. *Lisken* the bottles of spirit was found in between the springs of a settee and the springs of a bed in the master's cabin. - Defendant said he was expecting to leave the steamship at Newcastle, and he was proposing to take the spirits to Norway, as it was impossible to purchase spirits there. - Defendant was ordered to pay double value and duty - £5. 17s. 4d. (current equivalence £612.00).

**The People - Sunday 29th November 1914**

Not long after the collision between the *Vera* and the *Lisken*, "The Shields Daily News" of Monday 7th December 1914 and "The Newcastle Daily Journal" of Friday 11th December 1914 reported under the heading "Tyne Shipping – Arrivals and Repair Work" that "The Middle Docks and Engineering Company have in dock the steamers *Lisken*, of Bergen, and the *Magnus Mail*".

While Shipping Lists show that the *Lisken* left The Tyne on Saturday 19th December for Rouen, attempts to refloat the *Vera* failed: "Salvors have abandoned salvage operations on the s.s. *Vera*, ashore near Cley, as the vessel has broken in two during the recent bad weather."

Salvors have abandoned salvage operations on the s.s. *Vera*, ashore near Cley, as the vessel has broken in two during the recent bad weather.

**The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer - Thursday 7th January 1915**

At the time of the collision, the *Vera* had been in service for twenty-three years. She was eventually sold for salvage. The ship was heavily salvaged, being cut down largely to her waterline; although there is, therefore, no remnant of her collapsed hull, much of the wreckage remains.

The cargo of coal being carried by the *Vera* gradually washed out of the ship and onto the beach and it is said that for several years after she was lost, local people in Cley had no need to buy coal for their fires.

## SS VERA – THE WRECK



The *Vera* lies in shallow water at 52 58 000N 001 03 5000E, at a depth - depending on the tide - of approximately 6-8 metres. She is approximately 120 metres from the shore and almost parallel to the shoreline with her bow to the west, her stern to the east.

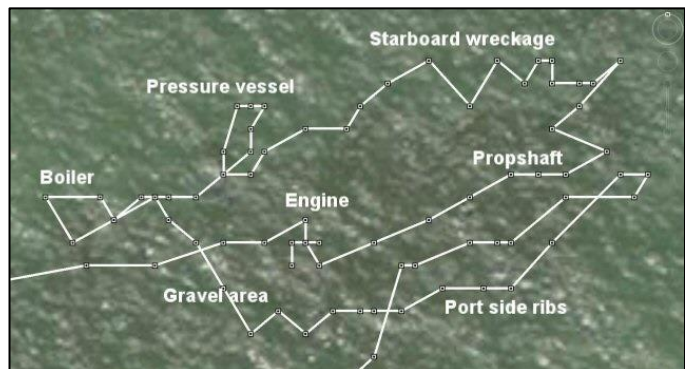
Reports from one of the North Norfolk diving groups describe that the ship seems to lie in a gravelly scour, which is slightly lower than the surrounding seabed, around a small core of remaining wreckage. The main debris field is around 60 m long East-West and 25 m wide North-South.

The *Vera's* structure is very broken and is scattered over a wide area; there is no upper structure left, her plates and ribs have collapsed, but large pieces of her mechanics remain.

The heart of the wrecksite is the propshaft, engine and boiler, of which the triple expansion engine and a single boiler are both visible at low water.

The prop shaft and tunnel bearings are standing. The prop shaft extends 30 m from the engine and the very end of the main wreckage is 5-10 m North of the space where the main propeller would have been.

An iron propeller - size 4-5 m across and lying 5-10m back from the engine, between the prop shaft and the starboard wreckage, is her spare.



One of the masts runs parallel along the port side of the prop shaft but is disappearing into the sand just past the end of the prop shaft.



The engine is very broken up, the three cylinders have gone but one con rod remains. Lying apart from the engine is another cylindrical object - perhaps some type of tank or pressure vessel - from which a trail of wreckage and ribs leads South South West and onto the single boiler.

The boiler itself has been rolled some 20 m or so West of the engine and makes for the most intact part of the wreck. The boiler is heavily salvaged, the top cut away, and all fire tubes have been removed.

The *Vera* was fitted with two Scotch type boilers but there is no sign of the second one.

The remaining wreckage is made up of sections of broken plates and framework which lie in a large gravel expanse, about 20 m from the boiler. The action of shingle has given the metalwork a shot-blasted appearance in places and the metalwork seems clear of rust on some of the lowest platework.

## CAPTAIN JAMES JOSEPH SHAW

### Master of the SS Vera

The newspaper report of the *Vera's* collision off Cley described the actions of her Captain, "J. Shaw of South Shields".

James Joseph Shaw was born on 24th April 1874 in Plymouth, Devon; his parents were Rufus David Shaw and Ann/Anastasia (née Collins).

### Early Years



Censuses show that James Joseph Shaw's mother, Ann or Anastasia Collins was born circa 1851 in Queenstown, the name given in 1849 to the port of Cove ("Cove of Cork"). The only record found of the birth/baptism of an Anastasia Collins is a baptism recorded in the Catholic Parish Registers for 18th January 1854 at Carrigtohill, Cork. This Anastasia was the daughter of William Collins and Ell Leahy, of Tubber in the Diocese of Cloyne, Cork.

Censuses for Canada and England show that Rufus David Shaw was a Mariner; born in Windsor, Nova Scotia, Canada circa 1846, he was of English origin. Two of his siblings were born in England.

Queenstown was a significant port, from which millions of emigrants left for North America in the mid-19th and 20th Centuries, and the harbour was home to many noteworthy ships. The town of Cove reverted to its original name of Cobh after the foundation of the Irish Free State in the early 1920s. Rufus was a Mariner and it is for speculation whether it was in Queenstown and its harbour community that he met Ann/Anastasia Collins.

Canadian records of "Seafarers of the Atlantic Provinces" show Rufus Shaw on crew lists for various voyages to and from different destinations but unfortunately do not give a full, sequential list of them. The first reference shows only that Rufus Shaw was discharged at Liverpool on 30th September 1863 on completion of a voyage.

His next engagement was an Ordinary Seaman on the Windsor, Nova Scotia registered ship *Gloire* on a voyage leaving Liverpool on 23rd October 1863, arriving at Glasgow on 12th March 1864.

His ship probably docked at Brooklyn - mid-way in distance and time between his departure and destination ports - for the New York Civil War Muster Roll Abstracts show that Rufus Shaw, aged 18, enlisted at Brooklyn on 22nd December 1863. The record shows that Rufus was a Sailor, born in Nova Scotia; he was described as 5'4" tall, with blue eyes, dark hair and a light complexion.

Admission and Discharge records for the Dreadnought Seamen's Hospital in Greenwich show that Rufus Shaw - described as an Ordinary Seaman, aged 19, height 5'5", birthplace Windsor, Nova Scotia - was admitted on 24th January 1865, suffering from Ague (malaria or another illness involving fever and shivering). His ship was the *Ottolina* and he had sailed from the port of Windsor, Nova Scotia. Records show that he had been in the "Merchants' Service" for four years.

Rufus Shaw was discharged as "Convalescent" on 21st February 1865, after thirty days in hospital. This suggests that between leaving the *Gloire* in March 1864 and his hospital admission in January 1865, he had joined a ship - given the short timescale, possibly only the *Ottolina* - perhaps travelling back to and returning from Nova Scotia.

In 1866, Rufus Shaw was reported as being one of eight men on the *Royal Family* who were in dispute with the Master about underpayment of wages. This was probably the 1,750 ton sailing ship – official number 42693 - registered to the port of St. John, New Brunswick.

Remanded until Monday.—*William Buchanan*, master of the ship, *Royal Family*, appeared in answer to summonses issued by eight of his men, named James Jordes, Axwell Hold, Fritz Waterstreet, Charles Holden, James Glasse, Leonard Gilmore, Rufus Shaw, and John Christie, each claiming £20 8s, wages. The amount claimed were their full wages, but the captain refused to pay them, alleging that they had received advances at Callao, after signing articles, and also had their wages reduced in other ways. The captain's statement was borne out by several witnesses, and he was ordered to pay the respective sums of £6 9s 0d; £6 14s 0d; £6 9s 9d; £6 14s 0d; £2 4s 0d; £6 14s 0d; £6 14s 0d; £16 4s 8d; making a total of £58 2s 8d due to the men, whilst their claims amounted to £165 4s 0d.

Hull and Eastern Counties Herald - Thursday 17th May 1866

BOARD OF TRADE EXAMINATIONS.			
Return of the Examinations reported to have been passed under the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act during the week ending May 27, 1870.			
The letters Ex C denote Master Extra; O C, Master Ordinary; 1 M, First Mate; O M, Only Mate; 2 M, Second Mate.			
FOREIGN TRADE.			
Name.	Gr	Ex. Bd.	Name.   Gr   Ex. Bd.
Jack, Alex. ... 2 M	Greenock		Bannister, E. F. 1 M   Liverpool
Cameron, D. ... 2 M	do.		Dewis, Benjamin O C   Dublin.
Campbell J. ... O C	do.		Dewis, Robt. ... O C   do.
Anderson, A. J. 1 M	do.		Jackson, Fred... 2 M   London.
M'Bride, Jas. ... 1 M	do.		Rhodes, Thos... 1 M   do.
Angus, John ... O C	Dundee.		Bridgman, E. C. O C   do.
Melville, Wm... 2 M	do.		Robertson, W... 1 M   do.
Cullen, W. A.... 2 M	London.		Guiver, W. E.... 1 M   do.
Sim, Jonathan. 2 M	do.		Gomme, Jas. S. 1 M   do.
Palethorpe, H. J. 2 M	do.		Blandford, Geo. 1 M   do.
Sommer, John 2 M	do.		Carter, Chas. ... 1 M   do.
Nickels, Fred... 2 M	do.		Fraser, John ... O C   do.
Boulton, T. O... 2 M	do.		Bryson, Arch... 1 M   Leith.
Shepherd, Jas. 1 M	do.		Armour, Jas. ... O C   do.
Farrier, J. T. J. 1 M	do.		Lee, Douglas ... 2 M   do.
Zerwick, F. E. J. O C	do.		Richards, Thos. 1 M   Plymouth.
Dennis, G. L.... 1 M	do.		Marker, Wm.... O C*   do.
Williams, T. J. 1 M	do.		Maer, Wm..... O M   do.
Allen, Hy. .... 2 M	do.		Cooper, J. T. ... 2 M   do.
Steel, Chas. ... 2 M	do.		Collins, C. F. V. 2 M   do.
Hardie, Joseph 2 M	do.		Woolcock, Jas. 2 M   do.
DeGruchy, G. C. 2 M	do.		M'Intosh, Chs... O M   Sudbnd
Glynn, Jhn Frs. 2 M	do.		Key, Thos. .... O M   do.
Shaw, Rufus D. 1 M	Liverpool		Denson, Wm.... O M   do.
Davies, Jenkins O M	do.		Woodhouse, W. S. 2 M   do.
Phillips, James O M	do.		Jones, Allen ... 2 M   Bristol.
Davidson, John 2 M	do.		Lang, W. S. ... 2 M   do.
Tadmore, Geo. 2 M	do.		Bisson, N. .... 2 M   do.
Wilson, John Jas 2 M	do.		Harris, John ... O C   do.
Robertson, Robt. 2 M	do.		Whiting, Wm. ... O C   Hull.
Comley, Jas. ... O C	do.		Wilkinson, John 1 M   do.
Rothery, J. W. ... O C	do.		Green, T. Cliffe 2 M   do.
Hartley, Wm. ... O C	do.		Abbott, John ... 2 M   do.
Thomas, Wm. ... O C	do.		Kersten, J. S. ... 1 M   London.
Cassons, W. Keal O C	do.		Venement, J. P. 1 M   do.
Fowler, O. G. ... O C	do.		Emerson, John O C   Cork.
George, Chas. T. O C	do.		Holland, John... O C   do.
Melvin, David. O C	do.		

\* Fore-and-aft rig.

HOME TRADE.  
Voice, Jas. .... Mate London | Eburn, Jos. Wm. Mate London

ENGINEERS.  
NIL.

EVERARD HOME COLEMAN, pro Registrar-General.  
General Register and Record Office of Shipping and Seamen,  
6, Adelaide-place, London-bridge, E.C., May 28, 1870.

Shipping and Mercantile Gazette - Saturday 28th May 1870

Several months later, the 1871 Census for Canada – taken on Sunday 2nd April – shows Rufus Shaw living in Hampshire, Nova Scotia, with his parents and siblings, so he was probably single.

Name	Age	Country or Province of Birth	Origin	Profession or Trade
Shaw, William	58	Nova Scotia	English	Shoemaker
Shaw, Florence	5	England	English	
Shaw, Susan A.	2	England	English	
Shaw, Sophia	41	Nova Scotia	English	
Shaw, Rufus	24	Nova Scotia	English	Mariner
Shaw, Isaiah	22	Nova Scotia	English	Farmer
Shaw, Thomas	17	Nova Scotia	English	
Shaw, Herbert	11	Nova Scotia	English	

1871 Census – Canada

Rufus Shaw had presumably returned to England soon after the Census for Canada for his “Certificate of Competency” as Master was issued from the Port of Liverpool on 4th July 1871.



### Master's Certificate

The Canadian records "Seafarers of the Atlantic Provinces" show that in 1872 Rufus Shaw, 26, was engaged as First Mate on the Halifax, Nova Scotia registered ship *Seaforth* on her voyage from Newcastle on 3rd February 1872, bound for arrival in London on 28th February 1874, but that he was "discharged with mutual consent" on 13th April 1872 in Yokohama, Japan. His previous ship was a Yarmouth, Nova Scotia registered vessel.

Shortly after his son James Joseph's birth on 24th April 1874, Rufus Shaw was admitted for a third time to the Dreadnought Hospital on 5th May, again suffering from "Deafness". Recorded as 28 and from Nova Scotia, he was serving on the *Glyn Lion* of London and had sailed out of Japan. Rufus Shaw was discharged, "Relieved" of his condition, on 3rd September 1874 after a stay of one hundred and twenty-two days.

The "Seafarers" records show that Rufus Shaw, then aged 30, joined the barque *Ella Moore* of Windsor, Nova Scotia as First Mate on 2nd October 1876 at Aberdeen; he was discharged in Glasgow on 24th January 1877 on completion of the voyage.



The *Ella Moore* was built in Halls Harbour, Nova Scotia; at 41.5 metres long, with a 9.2 metre beam and a depth of 4.5 metres, with 391 gross registered tonnage, she was, on her completion in 1867, one of the largest vessels built in Halls Harbour.

The *Ella Moore* had a long career sailing the North Atlantic, making some fast passages, including a voyage in 1881 from Nova Scotia to Belfast in only two months. She ran aground in Nova Scotia in 1892 but was refloated and returned to service, being scrapped in 1907.

### Barque *Ella Moore* at dock

Rufus Shaw was serving on the *Ella Moore* between October 1876 and January 1877 and it was during this period that his second son, Robert was born, on 31st December 1876.

Shortly after his discharge from the ship in January, Rufus Shaw re-joined the *Ella Moore* in Glasgow on 7th February 1877 and was discharged in Swansea on 4th September. To the question "Family on Board?", he gave the answer "Related to Master". "Lloyd's List" and the "Shipping & Mercantile List" confirm that a Captain Shaw – his forename not stated – was Master of the *Ella Moore* for numerous voyages in the period from 1870 until at least 1877.

Rufus Shaw re-joined the *Ella Moore* in Swansea on 22nd September 1877, again as First Mate, and was discharged in London at the end of the voyage on 28th December. The last voyage listed for Rufus Shaw in the Canada "Seafarers" records shows him re-joining the Nova Scotia registered barque *Georgie* on 29th January 1878 as First Mate for her voyage from London on 1st February, bound for arrival in Sligo on 29th April 1878. Rufus Shaw was discharged by mutual consent on 19th March 1878 at Boston, Massachusetts. The next reference is to him being a Mate on the barque *Antagonist* of Swansea in 1880.

The 1881 Census shows that James (Joseph) Shaw, his mother and his siblings were living at 102 Oxford Street, Portsea, Portsmouth. No record has been found in the Census of Rufus Shaw's whereabouts and the assumption is that he was at sea.

Name	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age	Rank, Profession or Occupation	Where Born
Ann Shaw	Head	Married	30	Seaman's Wife	Ireland, Queenstown
Sarah Ann Shaw	Daughter		9	Scholar	N. America, Halifax
Joseph Shaw	Son		6	Scholar	Devonshire, Plymouth
Robert Shaw	Son		4	Scholar	Hants, Portsmouth

1881 Census

Rufus Shaw was admitted a fourth time to the Dreadnought Hospital on 9th June 1883. Aged 37 and described as being from Nova Scotia, he was this time suffering from "Bronchitis and ?Aural Catarrh" and was discharged "Cured" after twenty-three days on 11th July. He was recorded as serving on the *John Johnson* of Anapolis, Nova Scotia, having sailed from Pensacola, Florida.

Shortly after leaving the hospital, Rufus Shaw joined the barque *Assyria* as First Mate on 4th August 1883, bound from London for Islay, Scotland, with arrival due in March 1884. However, the ship, homebound from Mobile, United States to Liverpool, went ashore off Port Ellen, south east of Islay, with a cargo of cotton; the ship was a total wreck but the crew were landed safely. The Canada Seafarers records show that Rufus Shaw was discharged with mutual consent on 10th October 1883, at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

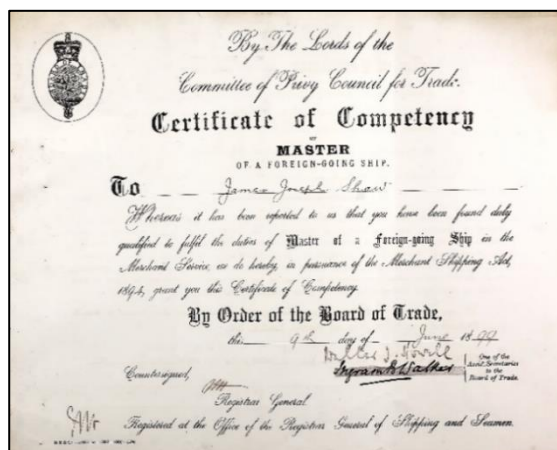
## Career and Family

James Joseph Shaw came from a sea-faring family, both his father and another family member were mariners. The first record of him embarking on his own merchant navy career appears in 1889 in the "Register of Apprentices Indentured in the Merchant Navy".

Shaw Jas. J.	15	North Shields	4	1893	Peter Macfarlane
			10.12.89		

Name of Apprentice	Jas. J. Shaw
Age when bound	15
Port of Enrolment	North Shields
Date of Indenture	10.12.1889
Term for which Bound	4
Year in which Indenture Expires	1893
Name of Person to whom Bound	Peter Macfarlane

Unassisted Immigrant Passenger Lists for New South Wales, Australia show that in February 1894 James Shaw, 20, was one of two Apprentices in a total twenty-one man crew on the 1,115 ton *Don* of Glasgow from the Port of London to Sydney, New South Wales



Master's Certificate – Foreign-going Ship

The records of Masters and Mates Certificates show that, one year after his Merchant Navy Apprenticeship ended, James Shaw was awarded Certificates of Competency, all issued from the Port of South Shields, firstly as "Second Mate in the Merchant Service", on 22nd December 1894 when he was aged 20.

This was followed on 22nd May 1897 by a Certificate of Competency as "First Mate of A Foreign-going Ship in the Merchant Service".

James Shaw was awarded a Certificate of Competency as a "Master of a Foreign-going Ship in the Merchant Service" on 10th June 1899, when he was twenty-five years old.

By the time of the 1891 Census, taken on Sunday 5th April, James's mother and her children had moved from Portsea; they were one of four families each occupying two rooms in a property described as 59, 61 and 63 Prince's Street, Westoe, South Shields.

Archive photographs of similar buildings in South Shields (from South Tyneside Council's History Archive) suggest that these were tenements – and the Census itself refers to “Tenements with less than Five Rooms” - with three or four separate street level entrances leading to accommodation at ground floor and upper floor levels.

Name	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age	Rank, Profession or Occupation	Where Born
Ann Shaw	Head	Widowed	40	Living on her own means	Ireland, Cork
Sarah Shaw	Daughter	Single	18	Dressmaker	Nova Scotia
Joseph Shaw	Son	Single	16	Sailor - Seas	Devonshire, Plymouth
Robert Shaw	Son	Single	14	Boiler Maker's Apprentice	Hants, Portsmouth
Norah Collins	Visitor	Single	40	Cook - Domestic Servant	Ireland, Cork

1891 Census

James's mother was then a Widow and the implication is that, at some time in the ten years between the 1881 and 1891 Censuses, James's father had died. The fourth entry on this abstract from the “Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths at Sea, 1844-1890” suggests a likely explanation.

1. Name and Surname of Decedent.	2. Sex.	3. Age.	4. Rank, Profession, or Occupation.	5. Nationality or Birthplace.	6. Last Place of Abode.	Death.			10. Name of Ship.	11. Official Number.	12. Port of Registry.	13. Trade.	14. Register-General of Deaths to whom reported.	15. Source of Information.
						7. Cause.	8. Date.	9. Place.						
Shales, Wm. . .	Male	55	Master - ✓	English (Haction).	Row 90, Great Yarmouth.	Epileptic fit . . .	20.12.89	Yarmouth (at his home).	Oinda . . .	02,003	Jrónath	Home - ✓	-	Eng. 6. L.B.
Shannon, Wm. . .	Male	42	Bentwain's Male.	British, Liverpool.	Care of Mr. Terus, 21, Quay Street, Jetties Park, Liverpool.	Dysentery . . .	01.00	Sea, 31° 42' N., 32° 20' W.	Gileruz . . .	03,005	Liverpool	Foreign - ✓	L.	Eng. 1. L.B. W. & H. I.
Sharer, John Wilson	Male	67	Master ✓	Bishopwearmouth.	-	<i>Empyemas - asthma</i>	01.03	Sea (Swansea to Port Nolloth).	Cumberland . . .	03,038	London -	Foreign - ✓	✓	Lr. 15,943. R.S.
Shaw, Robert . . .	Male	49	Fireman ✓	British . . .	61, Prince's Street, South Shields.	Heat and exhaustion . . .	21.8.89	Sea . . .	S.S. Highfield . . .	87,221	Liverpool	Foreign - ✓	L.	Eng. 1. L.B. W. & H. I.

On 21st August 1889, a Robert Shaw, of 61 Prince's Street, South Shields (the same address as Ann Shaw and her family), a 49 year old Fireman on the Liverpool registered *SS Highfield*, died at sea bound from Swansea to Port Nolloth (on the north-western Coast of South Africa) on 21st August 1889; the cause was “Heat Exhaustion”.

Ann's husband died between 1881 and 1891, and this Robert Shaw's date of death would fit with that timescale; the address is consistent with the family's address in the 1891 Census.

**HOT WEATHER IN THE RED SEA.**

**DEATH OF A SHIELDS MAN.**

Information has been received in South Shields, from the master of the screw-steamer Highfield, belonging to Liverpool, which recently left the Tyne, stating that during the passage up the Red Sea, one of the crew, a fireman, named Robert Shaw, was prostrated through the effects of the intense heat which prevailed, and on the arrival at Colombo he died, and was interred there. Deceased belonged to South Shields, and was a married man.

The wording of the report “Information has been received in South Shields ...” suggests that the news had not come direct.

The Registers of Deaths at Sea were compiled from lists sent in by the various ships' Masters and it is quite likely that - from not necessarily neat, handwritten returns - the forename Rufus was transcribed as Robert.

**Shields Daily Gazette - Saturday 14th September 1889**

The change in role from Master to Fireman sounds a demotion but - if, as seems likely, the Robert Shaw who died in 1889 was actually the Rufus Shaw who apparently died between 1881 and 1891 - might Rufus Shaw's previous ill-health have been a factor?

Rufus Shaw had been admitted four times to the Dreadnought Seamen's Hospital, twice for “Deafness”, and the longest admission was for one hundred and twenty-one days. The Fireman's role was primarily to tend the boilers and ensure they ran efficiently and one, perhaps, for which deafness did not affect his ability to work on board ship.



James Shaw cannot be found on the 1901 Census but the Census shows his brother and mother living at 91 Marshall Wallis Road, South Shields.

Name	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age	Rank, Profession or Occupation	Where Born
John Clark	Head	Married	60	Mariner Seas	Northumberland, Newcastle
Anastasia Clark	Wife	Married	50		Ireland
Robert Shaw	Son-in-Law	Single	24	Boiler Riveter	Hampshire, Portsmouth
Norah Collins	Sister-in-Law	Single	55	Cook - Domestic	Ireland, Cork

1901 Census

The relationships show that James's mother, Ann Shaw (shown as Anastasia), now 50, had married again following her husband's death, to a John Clark, another Mariner; her son Robert is John Clark's son-in-law and Norah Collins is his sister-in-law, thus Norah being Ann/Anastasia's sister. The Civil Registration Marriage Index shows that John Clark and Anastasia were married in 1892.

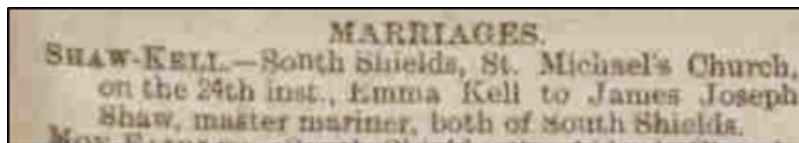
Two years after her mother's remarriage, James Shaw's sister Sarah Ann was married to Richard Bradley in South Shields in 1894.

The 1901 Census shows the couple and their family also living in Marshall Wallis Road, the same road as her mother, but at number 113.

Name	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age	Rank, Profession or Occupation	Where Born
Richard Bradley	Head	Married	34	Ship Riveter	Durham, Yarrow
Sarah A. Bradley	Wife	Married	28		Nova Scotia
Winifred Bradley	Daughter		6		Durham, South Shields
Anastasia Bradley	Daughter		4		Durham, South Shields
Sarah A. Bradley	Daughter		1		Durham, South Shields
Rosanna Bradley	Mother	Widowed	63	Living on own means	Ireland

1901 Census

James Shaw was married to Emma Kell on 4th December 1902 at St Michael's Church, South Shields. Emma - born on 7th September 1875 at Houghton-le-Spring, Durham and the daughter of a Stonemason - was a Baker and Confectioner's Assistant.



Shields Daily Gazette - Monday 29th December 1902

The 1911 Census - completed in his own hand as Head of the household - shows James J. Shaw, 36, a Master Mariner and his wife, Emma, 35, living at 17 Salisbury Street, South Shields.

**CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.**

Number of Inhabitants **108**  
(To be filled up by the Enumerator after tabulation.)

*Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.*

*The contents of this Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, or in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.*

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE last Birthday and SEX	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards		BIRTHPLACE of every person.	NATURALITY of every Person Foreign Country.	INFIRMITY.
				Personal Occupation.	Industry or Service with which worker is connected.			
1. Shaw James J.	Head	36	Married	Master Mariner	Mariner	South Shields	British	
2. Shaw Emma	Wife	35	Married		Wife	South Shields	British	

(To be filled up by the Enumerator)

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of the Head of Family or other person in charge of this dwelling)

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: *J. J. Shaw*  
Postal Address: *17 Salisbury St. S. Shields*

1911 Census

The Census shows that James and Emma were living in a house with five rooms, including the kitchen but not "the scullery, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom; nor warehouse, office, shop".

James and Emma's marriage is shown to have lasted for eight years and there were no children but - according to a family source - the couple effectively brought up their niece, Florence, the daughter of Emma Shaw's youngest sister, Isabella, who was born in 1915.

By 1911, the Census shows James Shaw's mother, Ann, 64, and her husband John Clark, 74, living at 8 Elizabeth Street in South Shields. They had been married for eighteen years; the Civil Registration Marriage Index shows that the couple were married in the April-June registration quarter 1892. Ann's sister, Norah Collins, 69, was still living with the couple, and there were two Boarders living in the household.

Name	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age	Rank, Profession or Occupation	Where Born
John Clark	Head	Married	74	Mariner, Merchant Ship	Durham
Annie Clark	Wife	Married	64		Whitewell, Cork, Ireland
Norah Collins	Sister	Single	69	Assistant Help	Whitewell, Cork, Ireland
James Owens	Boarder	Single	68	Labourer	Leitrim, Ireland
William Smith	Boarder	Single	28	Platelayer	Spennymoor, Durham

1911 Census

The same Census also shows James Shaw's sister Sarah Ann and Richard Bradley, now with a young son, still living in South Shields, still in Marshall Wallis Road, but now at number 83. The marriage had lasted for seventeen years.

Sarah Ann's daughters have the names of their grandmother (Anastasia) and their mother (Sarah Annie); her son Richard Joseph has the middle name of his uncle, James Joseph Shaw.

Name	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age	Rank, Profession or Occupation	Where Born
Richard Bradley	Head	Married	44	Ship Riveter	Yarrow, Co Durham
Sarah Ann Bradley	Wife	Married	38		Nova Scotia, Canada (British)
Winefried Bradley	Daughter	Single	16	Dressmaker's Assistant	South Shields, Durham
Anastasia Bradley	Daughter		14	At School	South Shields, Durham
Sarah Annie Bradley	Daughter		11	At School	South Shields, Durham
Richard Jos. Bradley	Son		8	At School	South Shields, Durham

1911 Census

Also in South Shields in 1911, James's brother, Robert and his family were at 328 Alice Street. The Census shows their marriage had lasted for eight years.

Name	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age	Rank, Profession or Occupation	Where Born
Robert Shaw	Head	Married	34	Boiler Maker	Portsmouth
Dorothy Shaw	Wife	Married	28		Canada
Robert Shaw	Son		8		South Shields
Arthur Thomas Shaw	Son		7		South Shields
John Shaw	Son		4		South Shields

1911 Census

Masonic records show that James Joseph Shaw, Master Mariner, aged 36, of South Shields, was initiated into the Hedworth Lodge, South Shields on 14th June 1911; he was one of a number of members who were either mariners or whose trades and professions were connected with shipping.

The Civil Registration Death Index shows the death in 1912 South Shields of a John Clark, aged 75, probably Annie's husband.

By 1914, Captain James Shaw was Master of the *Vera* when, on the evening of Sunday 15th November, she was in collision with the *SS Lisken* and beached off Cley. Eight years later, in 1922 and now living at 19 Seafield Terrace, South Shields, James Shaw was involved in a spectacular rescue at sea.

## CAPTAIN JAMES JOSEPH SHAW

Master of the SS Dalton

### RESCUE OF THE SS TIDAL

Newspaper reports gave accounts of Captain James Joseph Shaw's skill in navigating the *Vera* safely to the shore off Cley in 1914 and in avoiding any loss of life. Eight years later, he and his crew saved the lives of those on board another stricken vessel off the Norfolk coast.

In 1922, James Shaw was Master of the steamship *SS Dalton* of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He and his First Officer, J. Crisp, were instrumental in saving the lives of fifteen people - ten crew members and two women and three child passengers - from the *SS Tidal*, which was on her maiden voyage.

The *SS Dalton* was an iron screw steamer – official number 76215 - built by Matthew Pearse & Co of Stockton-on-Tees at Yard number 157. She was launched on 23rd October 1877 and completed in December the same year. Her first owner was Pyman, Bell and Company of Newcastle; in 1922, at the time of Captain Shaw's rescue, she was owned by W. Swanston & Sons of Newcastle.



**SS Dalton**

The *Dalton's* dimensions were: Length 235' 0" x Breadth 32' 5" x Depth 17' 9"; her gross registered tonnage was 1,325, her net registered tonnage 840.

The ship had a single screw, 2-cylinder C12 (30, 55 x 36in), compound engine with 120 nominal horse power which, like the *Vera's* engine, was built by Blair & Co. Ltd. of Stockton & Tees.

The *SS Tidal* – official number 143536 - was a steam cargo ship of 502 gross registered tonnage, built in 1921 – just a year before the disaster - at Yard number 107 by Colby Brothers Ltd. of Lowestoft for Williams Brothers of Cardiff. She was registered on 30th March 1921. Her dimensions were: Length 165' 0" x Breadth 25' 0"; her depth is unknown.

Captained by Carl Wilhelm Louis Peters, the *Tidal* was on passage from Seaham for Weymouth with a cargo of coal when, on Thursday 12th January 1922, the ship got into distress about eight nautical miles off the Corton Lightship near Lowestoft; in very heavy weather and having shipped tremendous sea, she had become waterlogged, causing her to take a heavy and increasing list.

In response to the *Tidal's* distress signals, the *Dalton* came to her assistance and although the weather conditions were very bad, Captain James Shaw decided to try to launch a boat. Volunteers were called for, and after the *Dalton* had been manoeuvred about 50 yards to the windward side of the *Tidal*, a lifeboat - in the charge of Robert Spence and crewed by: Martin Wennerburg, Boatswain; Arthur Hellman and Arthur Edward Clark, Able Seamen; and Henry Fudge, Donkeyman - was launched. The R.N.L.I. Secretary of Lowestoft, Mr R. Wollaston-Seago reported:

"A wireless message was received at North Foreland and telephoned to Lowestoft Coastguard that the SS Tidal had foundered 9 miles SxW of Corton lightvessel and that the crew of 10 men, 2 women and 3 children had been picked up by SS Dalton which was approaching Lowestoft roads. A boat was requested to take ashore the survivors. The lifeboat launched at 2pm and collected them. The Master of the Tidal was Capt. C. W. Peters. Wind ENE strong, heavy seas.

14 lifeboat crew at 22/6d each	£15.15s. 0d.
Launch helpers	£ 9. 7s. 6d.
Signalman	1s. 0d.
Messenger	2s.6d."

The Lifeboat Coxwain John Swan's Logbook recorded that a lifeboat crew of fifteen men - including four men named Ayers and four men named Swan – on the "RNLB John & Mary Meiklam of Gladswood went to ss Dalton which had picked up the crew of ss Tidal. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Coxswain (G. Ayers) was in charge."

The lifeboat succeeded in rescuing the crew and passengers from the *Tidal* and transferring them safely to the *Dalton*. The lifeboat had only gone some 30 yards on the return journey when the *Tidal* sank a few minutes after the rescue had been completed.

“The Lowestoft Journal” of 14th January 1922 carried the news that “the SS Dalton of Newcastle picked up the crew, brought them into Lowestoft roads and transferred them to the Lowestoft lifeboat”.

## **CARDIFF STEAMER FOUNDERS.**

### **Newcastle Ship Rescues Women and Children.**

#### **NO LOSS OF LIFE.**

The Cardiff steamer *Tidal*, 500 tons, owned by Messrs W. T. Williams, sank off Lowestoft.

She had met bad weather, big seas swept her repeatedly, and water gained headway rapidly.

The steamer *Dalton*, of Newcastle, bore down and took off the crew.

Capt. Peters, of the *Tidal*, belonging to Cardiff, had with him his wife and three children, and his mate had his wife with him.

When the *Dalton* arrived in Lowestoft Roads, a motor lifeboat went out and landed the rescued at Lowestoft.

The men, women and children all bore evidences of their terrible experience. They saved nothing except what they stood in.

Capt. Peters stated that the *Tidal* was bound from Seaham for Weymouth with coal. They had a fair passage till about 3 o'clock yesterday morning, when a heavy gale struck them. Great seas washed over them repeatedly.

The *Tidal* shipped a lot of water and began to list. The pumps were set to work, but the water gradually gained mastery. This continued till past 10 o'clock, when three violent seas washed right over the vessel.

Signals of distress were hoisted, and these were seen by the steamer *Dalton*, of Newcastle, which sent out her big boat and took off the crew of ten, together with the two women and three children.

Soon afterwards the *Tidal* sank, some ten miles abreast of Lowestoft.

The *Dalton* brought up in Lowestoft Roads, and in response to her signals, the Lowestoft motor-lifeboat put out and brought in the shipwrecked people, who at once were taken to the Sailors' Home.

Their landing evoked great sympathy among the hundreds that had assembled, and it was peculiarly pathetic when the captain was seen to be clasping his baby in his arms, while a curly-headed little chap of about four was borne by a burly lifeboat-man.

## **CARDIFF STEAMER FOUNDERS**

### **Newcastle Ship Rescues**

### **Women and Children**

### **NO LOSS OF LIFE**

The Cardiff steamer *Tidal*, 500 tons, owned by Messrs W.T. Williams, sank off Lowestoft.

She had met bad weather, big seas swept her repeatedly, and water gained headway rapidly.

The steamer *Dalton*, of Newcastle, bore down and took off the crew.

Capt. Peters, of the *Tidal*, belonging to Cardiff, had with him his wife and three children, and his mate had his wife with him.

When the *Dalton* arrived in Lowestoft Roads, a motor lifeboat went out and landed the rescued at Lowestoft.

The men, women and children all bore evidence of their terrible experience. They saved nothing except what they stood in.

Capt. Peters stated that the *Tidal* was bound from Seaham for Weymouth with coal. They had a fair passage till about 3 o'clock yesterday morning, when a heavy gale struck them. Great seas washed over them repeatedly.

The *Tidal* shipped a lot of water and began to list. The pumps were set to work, but the water gradually gained mastery. This continued till past 10 o'clock, when three violent seas washed right over the vessel.

Signals of distress were hoisted, and these were seen by the steamer *Dalton*, of Newcastle, which sent out her big boat and took off the crew of ten, together with the two women and three children.

Soon afterwards the *Tidal* sank, some ten miles abreast of Lowestoft.

The *Dalton* brought up in Lowestoft Roads, and in response to her signals, the Lowestoft motor lifeboat put out and brought in the shipwrecked people, who at once were taken to the Sailors' Home.

Their landing evoked great sympathy among the hundreds that had assembled and it was peculiarly pathetic when the captain was seen to be clasping his baby in his arms, while a curly-headed little chap of about four was borne by a burly lifeboat-man.

Shortly after the rescue of the passengers and crew of the *Tidal* on 12th January 1922, moves began to bring the bravery of the *Dalton's* crew to the attention of the shipping authorities.

“The Shields Daily News” of Tuesday 31st January reported:

“At a joint meeting of the association and the Shipping Federation, Ltd., Mr E.R. Newbigin brought to the notice of the committee as case of meritorious conduct at sea, when a crew of four men and the second officer of the s.s. *Dalton*, belonging to Messrs William Swanson and Sons went to the rescue of the s.s. *Tidal*, of Cardiff, then in a sinking condition. Two men, two women and three children, huddled on the rail of the sinking vessel, were taken off. Hardly had the lifeboat got clear than the *Tidal* sank.

Upon Mr Newbigin's suggestion, it was unanimously agreed the case to the Shipping Federation in London, for the presentation of their diploma, also to support the recommendations made on the subject by the owners to the Board of Trade.”

## **RESCUE OF THE SS TIDAL**

### **A First Hand Account**

An account of the rescue - entitled "The wreck of the ss Tidal" - was written retrospectively by Olga Peters, wife of the *Tidal's* Master, Captain Carl Wilhelm Louis Peters, who was on board the ship, travelling with her husband and their three children, Charles, Lucy and Conrad.

"In the year January 1922 I left Sunderland with my husband and three children on the S.S. Tidal with a cargo of coal for Newhaven. The mate's wife was also on board.

During the night a storm came up and we were caught in the teeth of the gale, the cargo shifted, then the trouble started. They were all called below to shift it back as she was listing heavily but by that time the sea was terrific and the waves were going right over her. After a couple of hours, the mate's wife came up to my room as mine was under the bridge and said her room was filling with water. We had to get down to her room to get some of her belongings but the water drove us back.

The men were working for all they were worth but to no avail. By this time there was thunder, lightning and the sea mountains high. We kept on asking the men if it was alright and they assured us it was. My three children were lying in the bunk as we couldn't stand up.

Eventually my husband came and told us he was taking us aft to the engineer's room as it would be safer up there. They sent up rockets and tied the whistle to keep it going to call attention to any ship passing. He put a line across the hatch to help us across. He took our eldest son first on his back across and when he saw the big waves, he said "Daddy, don't let me drown". Then he came back and took the other two children across in turn, then the mate's wife and lastly me. When I got outside, I saw the front part of the ship was under water. I was horrified. One big wave caught us but we managed to cling to the rope and got across.

Then he saw a ship in sight a long way off and started shouting through the megaphone we are sinking. The mate held up our youngest son and the captain saw them through his binoculars and said to his men there are women and children on board, who will volunteer to go in the boat to take them off? and they readily said they would. It seemed hours before they came alongside as the seas were terrific and our ship was gradually sinking by now. She was nearly all under water. We were told to jump if she went. My husband held one of the children and two of the men took the other two in their arms. The mate and his wife were saying Goodbye to one another but I kept perfectly calm. I couldn't think of anything.

At last the boat came alongside then started the task of getting us in the boat. The children were lowered down first with a life line then the mate's wife and at last it was my turn. I was nearly trapped between the ship and boat but they pulled me back in time but the next time the boat came up on the wave, they managed to get me safely on the boat. By that time my baby was crying for me. They put me to sit on the bottom of the ship with my baby in my arms. I was sitting in water but didn't notice it, I was too frightened. Then when we were all aboard, they said they couldn't take my husband and the chief engineer, they would come back but we knew they would be gone by that time. At last my husband was the last to leave the ship. By that time there was only a part of her bottom left and he slid over on to the boat. Just as we got a few yards away she went down, blowing her whistle as if to say goodbye. It was very touching and our one regret was we wouldn't find our cat anywhere. We were taken on board the other steamer, given hot drinks and told to lie down. They were kindness itself as those men risked their lives in saving us and they were rewarded after for their bravery. They took us into Lowestoft Roads and called for the lifeboat. They took us off - put us into Lowestoft Sailors Home. By the time we got in, there were crowds of people on the Quay and when they knew we were all saved, they cheered. We were treated very good in the Sailors Home as we were the first women to be taken there. We had no clothes more than we were standing in as we couldn't save anything.

We had the parson and others to come and see us and told we go to the cinema free if we wanted to go but we were too upset to go anywhere as the first night we all had nightmares thinking we were drowning all the time. We had clothes sent up from the shops and eventually we went home after an experience I never forgot.

Did I go to sea again with my husband? Yes, many times."

## CAPTAIN CARL WILHELM LOUIS PETERS

### Master of the SS Tidal



Carl Wilhelm Louis Peters

Carl Wilhelm Louis Peters was born on 21st September 1886 in Barmbeck, Hamburg. Twelve years younger than Joseph Shaw, he joined the Merchant Navy in Hamburg, arrived in Falmouth in 1907 and became a naturalised British subject in 1914, living in Cornwall.

Having obtained his Coasting Master (Home Trade Certificate), Carl Peters became Master of the *SS Thomond* in 1920, then Master of the *SS Avanville*, both based in Cardiff. He became Master of the *SS Tidal* in 1922, shortly before the ship foundered off Lowestoft.

Captain Peter's wife and four children were all on board the *Tidal*. The family photograph of the Peters family was taken in about the mid-late 1920s.

From left:

Charles Peters (son, born 1919)

Olga Peters

Lucy Peters (daughter, born 1916)

Captain Carl Peters

Conrad Peters (son, born 1914)



Captain Carl Peters described the loss of the *Tidal* in a statement to The Shipwrecked Mariners Society.

“On January 12, 1922, about 8 am., the *Tidal* was in distress about 8 miles off the Corton Lightship, near Lowestoft. The weather was exceptionally bad – very heavy seas running, with half a gale blowing from the northward. Finding the vessel was showing no signs of righting herself from the list which she had, I put up distress signal, viz., two flags, and also continually blew steamer's whistle. I saw two steamers within 5 or 6 miles of us – the *Dalton* being nearest. She bore down on us, and got sufficiently near for me to megaphone to the Captain and inform him we wished to leave the ship – the Mate at the same time holding up one of my little children for him to see. The Captain told me to launch my lifeboat, but I replied it was impossible on account of my ship's list and the bad weather.

The *Dalton* was then put to windward of my ship, and at a distance of about 50 yards from same the lifeboat was launched, and made for our stern, from which we threw a heaving line as they got round on port side. In the boat was the 2nd Mate and four seamen of the *Dalton*. With the greatest difficulty and bravery, the *Dalton*'s men assisted all hands of the *Tidal* into their boat, women and children first. This was about 10.15 am. Five minutes later the *Tidal* sank. The *Dalton* and the lifeboat then manoeuvred towards each other, and in ten minutes we were all on board the *Dalton*, which took us into Yarmouth Roads, when we were transhipped to the Lowestoft lifeboat, landing about 2 pm.

On board the *Dalton* we were given every attention, clothes being dried, and all hands supplied with breakfast and dinner. The Captain of the *Dalton*, by his prompt and skilful handling of his ship, was the means of saving 15 lives, as the matter of a few minutes made all the difference. There was another vessel coming to our assistance, but she was too far away, and the *Tidal* would have sunk before she could reach us. It may be added that His Majesty the King, awarded bronze medals for gallantry in saving life at sea to Captain J. J. Shaw, Mr R. Spence and the rest of the crew of the *Dalton*'s lifeboat, as well as a piece of Plate to the Master, and binoculars to Mr Spence, in recognition of the rescue of the crew of the *Tidal*.”

The *Tidal's* owners, Williams Brothers of Cardiff, wrote in April 1922 of Captain Peters being employed from September 1921 to March 1922, when he was always "a most energetic, industrious, sober and iconomical Master" and recommending him to anyone "desiring a Coasting Master".

He had had command of two small Coasting steamers which they owned, "the first one unfortunately foundered" and the second they sold. Captain Peters would have been employed still "were it not for the fact that all the Williams Brothers steamers were deep-water vessels and ... (Captain Peters) only holds a Home Trade Certificate".

Carl Peters continued to serve as Master of Cardiff registered ships: *SS Cromwell* from 1922; *SS Mandrake* from 1923, *SS Stanwell* from 1925; *SS Margeret* in 1928 and, in the same year, *SS Kilvey*.

In 1946, Carl Peters was made an Honorary Major in the US Army, and was a supervisor in the Hamburg Docks, Germany, unloading stores for allied forces. From 1953, he was caretaker for ten years on the Cable Ship, *Mackay Bennett* which was laid up in Plymouth.

The *CS Mackay-Bennett* was a London registered cable repair ship, owned by the Commercial Cable Company and based mainly in Nova Scotia. She is remembered for being the ship that recovered the majority of the bodies of the victims of the Titanic sinking.

Carl Wilhelm Louis Peters died on 19th December 1967 in Bristol, aged 81.

**ROBERT SPENCE OF SALTHOUSE**  
**Second Officer of the SS Dalton**

Robert Spence, the Second Officer of the *SS Dalton*, was one of five crew members and was in charge of the *Dalton's* lifeboat which went to the aid of the passengers and crew of the *SS Tidal*.

Parish and Census records show that there were a number of Spence families, possibly inter-related, living in Cley or Salthouse, some of whom were seafarers.

Robert's parents were John Spence and Maria (née) Thomas, who were married at St Nicholas's Church, Cley in November 1845. The 1851 Census shows the couple and their family living in High Street, Salthouse.

Name	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age	Rank, Profession or Occupation	Where Born
John Spence	Head	Married	34	Agricultural Labourer	Norfolk, Salthouse
Maria Spence	Wife	Married	34	Charwoman	Norfolk, Guestwick
Mary Spence	Daughter		3		Norfolk, Salthouse
William Spence	Son		1		Norfolk, Salthouse
Lydia Thomas	Sister-in-Law	Single	21		Norfolk, Salthouse
John Hunt	Lodger		39	Lodger	Norfolk, Salthouse

1851 Census

John Spence was living in Holt Road, Salthouse at the time of the 1861 Census, now with five children: Mary Ann, 13, William, 11, Ellen, 9, Henry, 6, and Robert, 1. Robert Spence was born on 1st July 1859.

By the 1871 Census, John and Maria Spence had moved to Cley Road, Salthouse, when only Robert was living with his parents.

Name	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age	Rank, Profession or Occupation	Where Born
John Spence	Head	Married	59	Agricultural Labourer	Norfolk, Wiveton
Maria Spence	Wife	Married	54		Norfolk, Guestwick
Robert Spence	Son		12	Scholar	Norfolk, Salthouse
John Spence	Grandson		3		Norfolk, Salthouse

1871 Census

The "Register of Apprentices Indentured in the Merchant Navy" shows that Robert, aged 16 and born in Salthouse, was indentured for a three-year period on 25th October 1875 until 1878 to a William Spence, Master Mariner of South Shields. William Spence was Robert's uncle, his father John's brother. John Spence was one of four sons/seven children born to Edmund and Elizabeth (née Wilson) Spence.

REGISTER OF APPRENTICES.												
NAME AND DESCRIPTION.	DATE OF EXPIRY.	1875.		1876.		1877.		18		18		REMARKS.
		Out.	Home.	Out.	Home.	Out.	Home.	Out.	Home.	Out.	Home.	
<i>Spence, Robert</i> Born at Salthouse April 16 Bound 25.10.75 Registered 25.10.75 at S <sup>o</sup> Shields Term 3 Years From 15.9.75 To whom Bound Wm Spence, M.M. S <sup>o</sup> Shields	1878			F. 52495 Lily 22/2	24/6	C. 52495 Lily 9.1	10.8					
				C. 4/7	22/6	C. 16.8	14.12					

In 1876 and 1877, Robert was serving on the ship *Lily*.

The 1881 Census shows Robert, having by now completed his apprenticeship, living with his uncle and his wife in Mitre Street, Westoe, South Shields; they had presumably offered Robert both a home and a Mariner's apprenticeship.

Name	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age	Rank, Profession or Occupation	Where Born
William Spence	Head	Married	59	Master Mariner	Norfolk, Salthouse
Mary Ann Spence	Wife	Married	65		Yorkshire, Whitby
Robert Spence	Nephew		20	Seaman	Norfolk, Cley

1881 Census



Robert Spence's mother, Maria died in 1884 and was buried at Salthouse on 23rd October 1884, aged 66.

The 1891 Census shows Robert Spence, aged 29 and single, as an Able Seaman on the steamer *SS Advent* at Spithead, Portsmouth. In the same year, his uncle William, now a "Retired Mariner", and his wife were still living in Mitre Street, Westoe.

Both of Robert Spence's brothers moved away from Norfolk to settle in South Shields and appear to have followed him into the Merchant Service. No record has been found of either of them in the 1881 Census.

The 1891 Census shows William Thomas Spence living with his wife, three sons, two daughters and his mother-in-law at 5 Regent Street, Westoe, South Shields. William, 40, was a General Labourer. One of his sons was a Shipwright. In 1911 and now at 28 Laygate Place, South Shields, William, 61, was a Seaman in the Merchant Service.

In the same year, the Census shows Henry John Spence living with his wife and four sons at 82 Hedley Street. Henry, 35, was a Sailor. Ten years later and still at Hedley Street, Henry was a Mariner. In 1911 and now at 10 Lytton Street, South Shields, Henry, 55, was a Ship's Rigger, as was one of his sons.

The 1901 Census shows Robert Spence's wife and family at 61 Regent Street, South Shields.

Name	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age	Rank, Profession or Occupation	Where Born
Mary A. Spence		Married	39		Norfolk, Guestwick
Robert Spence	Son		15		Norfolk, Guestwick
Flossie M. Spence	Daughter		8		Durham, South Shields
Laurine A. Spence	Daughter		5		Durham, South Shields
Jessie L. Spence	Daughter		4		Durham, South Shields
Mary A. Spence	Daughter		1 <sup>mo</sup>		Durham, South Shields

1901 Census

Robert Spence and his family were still living at 61 Regent Street at the time of the 1911 Census but, as in 1901, he was not at home, presumably at sea. The Census shows that the couple's marriage had lasted twenty-eight years and that ten children had been born but only four were still living.

Name	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age	Rank, Profession or Occupation	Where Born
Mary Anne Spence		Married	48		Norfolk, Guestwick
Flossie Maria Spence	Daughter		18	Shop Assistance	Durham, South Shields
Laurine Alice Spence	Daughter		15	General Servant	Durham, South Shields
Jessie Lydia Spence	Daughter		14		Durham, South Shields
Mary Anne Spence	Daughter		10	School	Durham, South Shields

1911 Census

By 1922, Robert Spence, aged 63, was the Second Officer of the *SS Dalton* and was living at 61 Regent Street, South Shields.

The only other record found of Robert Spence is in the 1939 Register for England and Wales, taken on 29th September, which shows him and his daughter living in South Shields.

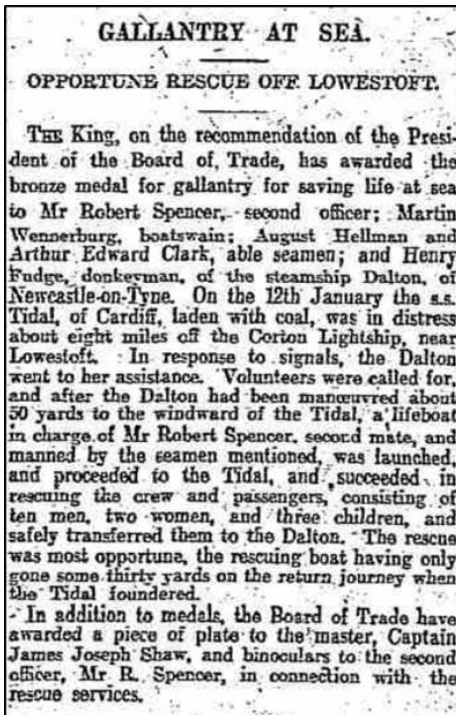
Name	Date of Birth	S, M, W or D	Personal Occupation
Robert Spence	1st July 1859	Widowed	2nd Officer Retired
Flossie M Spence	16th November 1892	Single	Cashier, Draper's Store Housekeeper & St John's Ambulance Brigade

1939 Register

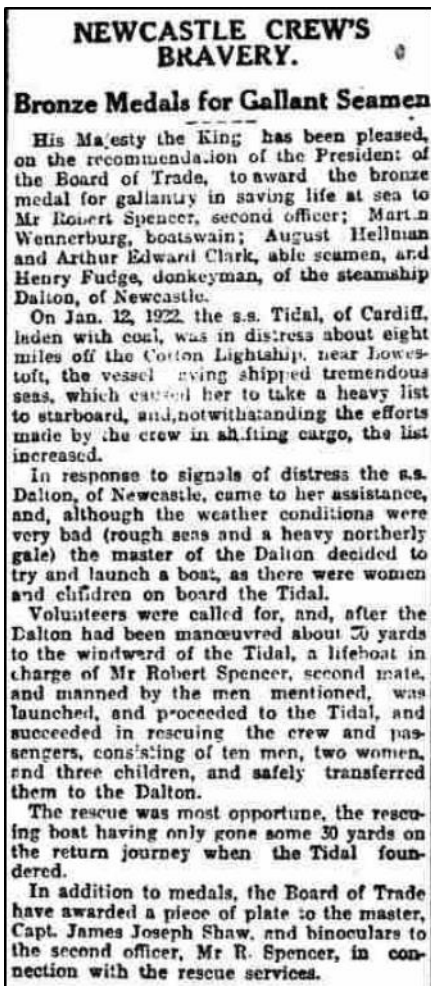
Robert Spence died in South Shields in 1943, aged 84.

## SS DALTON - GALLANTRY AWARDS

Newspapers of 7th April 1922 – and subsequent reports - gave further detail of the events and the gallantry awards made in recognition of the rescue achieved by the crew of the *SS Dalton*.



**The Scotsman**



**The Shields Daily News**

All five men from the *Dalton* involved in the rescue received from the Board of Trade gallantry awards for their great courage in attempting and achieving a successful rescue in the face of dreadful weather conditions and in bringing ten men, two women and three children to safety on board the *Dalton*. In addition, the Board of Trade awarded a piece of plate to Captain James Shaw, and binoculars to Robert Spence, the Second Officer, "in connection with the rescue services".

### **GALLANT RESCUE AT SEA** **Rewards for Exploit Which was Only Just in Time**

The King has awarded the bronze medal for gallantry in saving life at sea to Mr. Robert Spencer, second officer, Martin Wennerburg, boatswain, August Hellman, and Arthur Edward Clark, able seamen, and Henry Fudge, donkeyman, of the steamship Dalton, of Newcastle-on-Tyne.

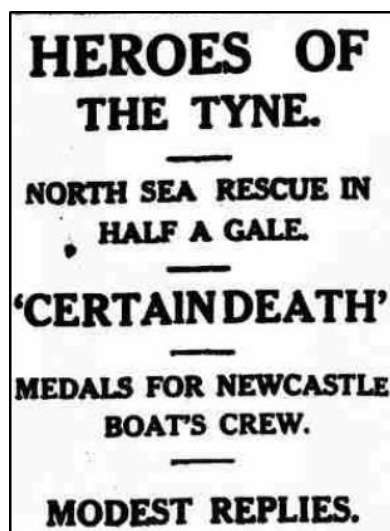
In January the s.s. Tidal, of Cardiff, laden with coal, was in distress off Lowestoft, the vessel having shipped tremendous seas, which caused her to take a heavy list to starboard, and, notwithstanding the efforts made by the crew in shifting cargo, the list increased. In response to signals of distress the s.s. Dalton, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, came to her assistance, and, although the weather conditions were very bad the master of the Dalton decided to try and launch a boat, as there were women and children on board the Tidal. Volunteers were called for, and a lifeboat in charge of Mr. Robert Spencer, and manned by the seamen mentioned, was launched and proceeded to the Tidal, and succeeded in rescuing the crew and passengers, consisting of ten men, two women, and three children. The rescuing boat had only gone some thirty yards on the return journey when the Tidal foundered.

In addition to medals, the Board of Trade have awarded a piece of plate to the master, Captain James Joseph Shaw, and binoculars to the second officer, Mr. R. Spencer.

**Sheffield Daily Telegraph (Transcription)**

## SS DALTON – THE HEROES

“The Shields Daily News” of Thursday 6th July 1922 gave extensive, lengthy coverage to the presentation of awards to Captain James Shaw and his crew for the rescue achieved against all odds. The transcription – with original heading – appears on this and the following pages.



“A story of the rescue of a shipwrecked crew of a Cardiff steamer by a lifeboat’s crew from a Tyne steamer was relayed at a special meeting of the Local Marine Board at Newcastle, this morning.

Mr E.R. Newbiggin (chairman of the North of England Seamanship Owners’ Association) presided, being supported by the Lord Mayor of Newcastle (Ald. R.H. Millican), Sir A.M. Sutherland, Captain E.W. Kent, Mr J.W. Wetheringham (members of the Board), Mr A.S. Taylor (Master, Trinity House), Mr Andrew Christie (deputy master), and many other gentlemen interested in shipping, while a large number of seamen were present.

The meeting was convened to present a handsome silver salver and binoculars, awarded by the Board of Trade to Captain J.J. Shaw (master), and Mr Robert Spence (second mate) of s.s. Dalton, of Newcastle, in recognition of their service in assisting to rescue the shipwrecked crew of s.s. Tidal, of Cardiff on January 12, 1922.

Captain. Shaw resides at 19 Seafield Terrace, South Shields, and Mr R. Spence, second mate, at 61 Regent Street, South Shields.

The secretary (Mr A. Radfield) gave a graphic account of the incident in which the steamers were concerned. At 8 am the steamer Tidal was in distress some eight miles off the Corton lightship, and off Lowestoft. The weather was very bad and a very heavy sea was running, with half a gale of wind from the north. The Tidal showed no signs of righting herself and the master hoisted the distress signal and blew the steamer’s whistle.

Two steamers were seen five miles off, and the Dalton bore down on the distressed vessel, coming near enough to speak by megaphone. Intimation was given that the master wished to leave the sinking Tidal. It was impossible owing to the list of the ship and bad weather to launch the ship’s lifeboat.”

### -o0 SKILFUL HANDLING 0o-

The Dalton was skilfully manoeuvred to within 100 yards of the Tidal and Capt. Shaw was horrified to see two women and children aboard the Tidal. He decided to launch a lifeboat, which was manned by Mr Spence and the following members of the crew, Messrs Martin Winnerburg (bos’n). A.E. Clark, A.B., August Hellman, A.B., and H. Fridge (donkeyman). The boat’s crew went into the lifeboat convinced that it would not be launched safely, but by the skilful handling and heroic endeavours the seemingly impossible was accomplished.

The lifeboat was once thrown back on to the engine room, but got to the Tidal, and with the greatest difficulty got all hands into the boat, women and children first being one of the features of the rescue.

The lifeboat had hardly got clear before the Tidal sank. The rescued people from that vessel received every attention on the Dalton, and a course was set for Lowestoft. The shipwrecked crew was later transferred to the Lowestoft lifeboat, which came out to meet the boat.”

### -o0 “CERTAIN DEATH” 0o-

No praise, said the secretary, was too high for the boat’s crew who went out to what seemed certain death, nor could too high a tribute be paid to the captain and crew of the Dalton for the way they handled the ship, and launching of the lifeboat.

The secretary further stated that the gallant work had been brought to the King’s notice, and he had approved of the award of a bronze medal for gallantry at sea to Mr Spence and the rest of the boat’s crew. The investiture of these awards would take place on Saturday.

Contd/

The Chairman said this was one of the functions of the Board to represent the Government when public recognition was to be made in cases of gallantry at sea. They would agree, he thought, that of all the presentations that had been made under such circumstances, there were few so well deserved as that which the Lord Mayor would make that morning. The ceremony was not only to show that the owners were proud of the officers as the officers of the men, or even that the Government Department were glad to recognise meritorious service. It was something in which the whole community shared. The Board represented the Government, and the Lord Mayor represented the City and the general community.

It was pleasing to note that among the boat's crew were two who were of their own nation. These two were also receiving recognition.

**-o0 LORD MAYOR'S PRAISE 0o-**

The Lord Mayor said the incident was one of the finest examples on record of the noble service and courage of the mercantile marine. He was proud to be associated with the ceremony.

He was deeply touched when he heard the statement "that the crew went into the boat convinced that it could not be safely launched." They could not have realised what that meant. It was an extraordinary incident. It was a beautiful example of the self-sacrifice and the greater love to which they had so many shining examples during the darkest days of the war.

Capt. Shaw had shown himself not only to be a man of indomitable courage, but a man of tender heart and human sympathy. The crew of the Dalton had maintained the high traditions of the mercantile marine, and the fact that two of another nation had been associated with the rescue, was splendid proof of the old brotherhood.

The Lord Mayor, in handing over the presents, congratulated each recipient on the courage and skill they had shown in the rescue.

Mr Swanston, senior partner of the company owning the s.s. Dalton, also bore tribute to the splendid services of Capt. Shaw, Mr Spence and the crew. He said the Shipping Federation had also awarded medals and diplomas to the boat's crew."

**-o0 "THEY BEHAVED AS SEAMEN" 0o-**

Capt. Shaw said "On behalf of the crew of the Dalton and myself, I would like to thank you for the way you have honoured us here today. My crew that day behaved as seamen. (Applause). I am very very proud indeed to be here to be in the position to speak well of the whole of the crew, including those left on the ship that day. I thank you."

## SS DALTON – THE AWARDS - 2001

The medals and the silver salver awarded to Captain James Shaw for his part in the *SS Tidal* rescue came to auction in April 2001.

They were described as “an unusual life-saving group awarded to Captain James J. Shaw, Master of the Steamship *Dalton* of Newcastle, for rescuing the shipwrecked crew and passengers of the Steamship *Tidal* of Cardiff, off the Corton Lightship, near Lowestoft, in January 1922.



The listing continues:

- “Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners Royal Benevolent Society, Silver Medal, sometime gilded, (Captain J. Shaw, S.S. “Dalton” January 12 1922) with claw but lacking usual suspension;
- Shipping Federation, silver medal for Meritorious Service (J.J. Shaw, 12th January 1922) fitted with gold chain mount and ring for suspension;
- Board of Trade Presentation Salver, 320mm, with ball and claw feet, 1,100 gm, hallmarked London 1896, with presentation inscription to the centre

“Presented by the Board of Trade to James Joseph Shaw, Master of the Steamship ‘Dalton’ of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in acknowledgement of his humanity and kindness to the shipwrecked crew and passengers of the steamship ‘Tidal’ of Cardiff, whom he rescued off the Corton Lightship, near Lowestoft, on 12th January 1922, contained in its wooden presentation box, together with a contemporary press photograph of Captain Shaw with the Mayor of Newcastle and other civil dignitaries, generally very fine (condition).”



**Captain James Joseph Shaw - Centre**

A footnote to the catalogue details the crew of the *Dalton* and the circumstances of the rescue and adds the information:

“A piece of Plate (Salver) value £15 was awarded by the Board of Trade to James J. Shaw, Master of the *Dalton*, and a pair of Binoculars value £8.2.6. to Robert Spencer, Second Officer. In addition, Spencer and the four crewmen of the life-boat were awarded the Board of Trade Bronze Sea Gallantry Medal. Henry Fudge was subsequently selected for the Shipwrecked Mariners’ Society’s “Emile Robin” (for bravery in rescue) award for 1922. Captain Shaw received his silver salver at a Presentation by the Lord Mayor of Newcastle on 6th July 1922.”

Medals awarded to August Hellman came to auction in 1998; described as “A Sea Gallantry Medal pair awarded to Seaman August Hellman, S.S. *Dalton*, for saving life in the North Sea”, they were: “Sea Gallantry Medal, G.V.R., bronze issue (August Hellman, “Tidal” 12th Jan 1922; and Mercantile Marine War Medal (August Hellman).

August Hellman’s Shipping Federation, silver medal “For Meritorious Service” (inscribed A. Hellman, 12th January 1922) - described as “extremely fine” - came to auction in September 2001.



The pair of binoculars – by Troughton & Simms of London – presented to Robert Spence came to auction in April 2010, with the provenance that they were “presented to Robert Spencer of the SS Dalton for saving the crew of the SS Tidal”. The catalogue description read:



“... with leather-covered main tubes and black painted brass fittings, inscribed on the backplate Presented by the Board of Trade to Robert Spence, Second Officer of the Steamship `Dalton` of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne in acknowledgement of his able seamanship in assisting to rescue the shipwrecked crew and passengers of the steamship `Tidal` of Cardiff, which was in distress off the Corton Lightship, near Lowestoft, on the 12th January, 1922, contained within original leather case of issue - 5in. (12.8cm.) high S.S. Tidal was a 500 ton cargo ship built by Colby Bros of Lowestoft, launched April 1921”.

## CAPTAIN JAMES JOSEPH SHAW

### Later Years

No further record of the whereabouts of James Shaw and his family has been found until the 1939 Register for England and Wales, which shows that James's wife and James's sister were both living in South Shields.

James's wife, Emma Shaw was living at 26 King George Road, South Shields with her sister Mary Annie Driver and her husband.

Name	Date of Birth	S, M, W or D	Personal Occupation
William A. Driver	19th July 1873	Married	Marine Engineer - Retired
Mary A. Driver	11th December 1873	Married	Unpaid Domestic Duties
Emma Shaw	7th September 1875	Married	Unpaid Domestic Duties
Florence E. Chambers	31st December 1896	Single	Shorthand Typist

1939 Register

James's sister Sarah, her husband Richard Bradley and their daughters were living at 21 Morpeth Avenue, South Shields.

Name	Date of Birth	S, M, W or D	Personal Occupation
Richard Bradley	1st December 1861	Married	Ship Riveter - Retired
Sarah Ann Bradley	5th June 1872	Married	Housewife- Unpaid Domestic Duties
Winefried Bradley	22nd December 1894	Single	Unpaid Domestic Duties
Anastasia Bradley	31st December 1896	Single	School Teacher
Sarah Bradley	28th October 1896	Single	School Teacher

1939 Register

Their son, Richard Joseph Bradley was living in Cockermouth, Cumberland.

Richard J Bradley	9th March 1903	Single	School Master
-------------------	----------------	--------	---------------

1939 Register

James's brother Robert was also living in South Shields, at 350 John Williamson Street but his wife was Elizabeth. The couple had a William Wilson living with them, assumed to be a lodger.

Robert's wife at the time of the 1911 Census was Dorothy, aged 28; the Civil Registration Death Index records the death in South Shields of a Dorothy Shaw, aged 44, in 1925.

Name	Date of Birth	S, M, W or D	Personal Occupation
Robert Shaw	31st December 1876	Married	Boiler Riveter – Heavy Worker
Elizabeth A. Shaw	5th August 1876	Married	Unpaid Domestic Duties
William Wilson	14th October 1916	Single	Bricklayer – Heavy Worker

1939 Register

The same 1939 register shows Robert Shaw's son, also Robert and his wife Charlotte (née Sawkill) living in the same street as his father – at 360 John Williamson Street - in South Shields. The couple married in 1929.

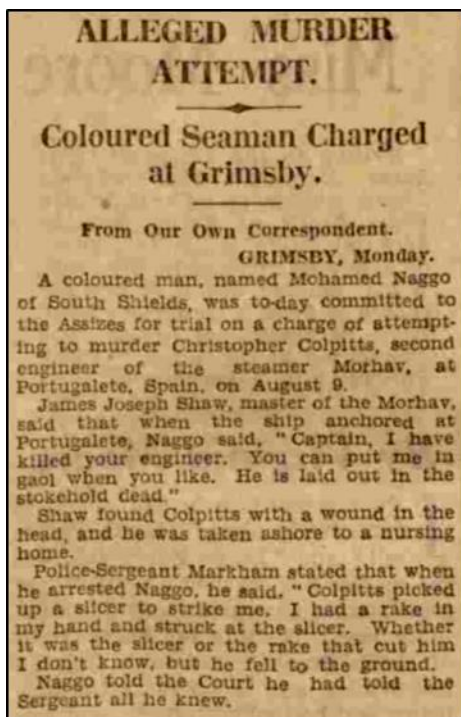
Name	Date of Birth	S, M, W or D	Personal Occupation
Robert Shaw	17th June 1903	Married	House and Ship Plumber
Charlotte Shaw	24th May 1903	Married	Unpaid Domestic Duties

1939 Register

## JAMES JOSEPH SHAW

### The Last Voyage

Captain James Joseph Shaw was forty when the First World War broke out and, apart from the reports of his part in saving the *SS Tidal* in 1922, no information has been found about his wartime or subsequent service until 1936.



"The Leeds Mercury" of Tuesday 15th September 1936 carried a report in which James Shaw was reported as being Master of the steamer *Morhav* (actually the *Morar*). He was already sixty-two.

Three years later, at the outbreak of the Second World War, James was still Master of the same ship, the *SS Morar*.

Originally named the *SS Foretash*, renamed *SS Cramlington*, then *SS Herbert*, the *Morar* - official number 147663 - was registered to the port of Newcastle. A British steamship of 1,507 gross registered tonnage, 168 nominal horse power and capable of 11 knots, she was built in 1924 by Swan, Hunter & Wigham Richardson Ltd.

In the ownership since 1934 of the Western Navigation Company, Cardiff, the *Morar* was serving as an armed merchant ship in World War II.

The *Morar* was on a voyage from London to Belfast with a cargo of cement when she was struck by a mine laid by German E-boats and sank on 26th November 1943 off Harwich.

Fourteen of her crew, including Captain James Shaw, and three gunners lost their lives.



SS Morar



Seven months after the loss of the *Morar*, "The Shields Daily News" of Thursday 22nd June 1944 reported that eight local men were among those killed:

- Ahmed Hassen, Donkeyman
- Mohammed Ahmed, Fireman and Trimmer
- Ralph Watson Ord, Boatswain
- Herman Alfred Petterson, Donkeyman
- William Robert Purvis, Ship's Cook
- Ali Saleh, Fireman and Trimmer
- William Collidge Oshigin, Ordinary Seaman
- James Joseph Shaw, Master



The "Record of Death of Merchant Seaman" states that James Joseph Shaw of 27 Windsor Avenue, Whitley Bay, Master of the SS Morar, died "at sea, vessel sunk by enemy action" and was "supposed drowned" on 26th November 1943, aged 69.

259,500,654	B-	69	43	364	175B
Nat.	Rank or Rating	Cause of Death	Ship	Age Group	Date of Death
Record of Death of Merchant Seaman					
Surname: <b>A</b> SHAW,			Ship: S/S "MORAR"		
Other Names: James Joseph			Official No: <del>147778</del> 147663		
Address: 27 Windsor Crescent Whitley Bay			Port of Registry: Newcastle		
Birthplace: Plymouth			Country: England		
Date of Death: 26/11/43			Place of Death: <sup>at sea</sup> vessel sunk by enemy action		
Cause of Death: supposed drowned			Rank or Rating: Master		
Ppd by: G.J.P.		Registry Entry:		E.F.	
Ckd by: G. J. P.		Year: 1944 Month: January Page: 5		Reg. Cert.	



**Captain James Joseph Shaw  
1874-1943**

**UK, Merchant Seamen Deaths, 1939 -1953**

Captain James Joseph Shaw's name is recorded in the Shipping and Seamen WW1 and WW11 Rolls of Honour for 1914-1945 and on the Tower Hill Memorial in London, which commemorates men of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets who lost their lives in the two World Wars and who have no grave but the sea.

More than 50,700 Commonwealth merchant seamen lost their lives in these two conflicts and the Tower Hill Memorial commemorates more than 35,800 casualties who have no known grave.

SHAW, John Gerald Spark	3rd Radio Officer	24	Cefn Coed	3. 4.41	S.S. "WESTPOOL" TH *
SHAW, Jack	2nd Radio Officer	18	Doncaster	20. 1.41	S.S. "FLORIAN" 166292 TH
SHAW, James Joseph	Master	69	Whitley Bay	26. 11.43	S.S. "MORAR" 147663 TH
SHAW, John Ashford	Purser	59	Wallasey	7. 12.42	M.V. "HENRY STANLEY" TH
SHAW, John Farrell	Hairdresser	29	Glasgow, W.I.	29. 10.42	M.V. "AROSSO" TH
SHAW, John Knaggs	Chief Officer (M)	65	Whitby	13. 12. 39	S.S. "DEPTFORD" TH

**Shipping and Seamen WW1 and WW11 Rolls of Honour for 1914-1945**

During the Second World War, 4,786 merchant ships were lost, with a total of 32,000 lives. More than a quarter of this total were - as Captain James Shaw was - lost in home waters.

SHAW, JAMES JOSEPH. Merchant Navy. Master, S.S. Morar (Newcastle-on-Tyne). 26th November, 1943. Age 69. Panel 71.

**Tower Hill Memorial**

James Shaw's widow, Emma married again on 16th June 1947 to a widower named Joseph William Patterson (1881-1964). She pre-deceased him in 1960. Joseph Patterson married again in 1962; he died in 1964, his wife in 1965.

James Shaw's sister, Sarah Ann Bradley died in September 1943, aged 71. His brother, Robert Shaw died in March 1958, aged 82.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I am very grateful to:

- Diana Hilton for permission to use the photograph of Captain James Joseph Shaw and for sharing information about how Captain Shaw was related to her family.
- David Peters, grandson of Captain Carl Wilhelm Louis Peters, for very generously sharing so many of his family archive records and photographs, including further details about the gallantry awards given to the *SS Dalton* crew, and allowing me to use them in my research.
- Mark Lewis for his interest in my research and for highlighting a discrepancy in contemporary newspaper reports about the name and details of the ship which was in collision with the *Vera*.
- Pete Marra, Dive Officer, of North Norfolk Diving for permission to use information from the group's website.
- George from the organisation "Tees Built Ships" for permission to use information, ship specifications, and the photographs of *SS Vera* (from the collection of Richard Cox) and of the *SS Dalton* from its website.
- Rob and Dawn ("1 town houses") for allowing information about dives and wrecksites on their website to be used, with appropriate credit.
- Julian Dowse for permission to use his (the first) photograph of *SS Vera* on Page 7.
- Gill Fitzpatrick for her great interest and help and for the benefit of her experience as a researcher.
- Simon Gresham for proof-reading many draft versions of this report as and when it was updated.

## **REFERENCES**

- Dictionary Of Disasters At Sea During The Age Of Steam - Charles Hocking, F.L.A.
- Maritime Norfolk, Part 1 - Robert Malster
- Sheringham Lifeboats - Nicholas Leach and Paul Russell
- British Newspaper Archive (The British Library Board)
- Commonwealth War Graves Commission
- Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, Nova Scotia
- Sheringham Museum
- Ancestry (genealogical records) - website
- CLIP – Crew List Index Project – website
- National Historic Ships UK - website
- Naval History/WWI British Navy Ships - website
- Wrecksite - website