

# WRECKS, HULKS AND OTHER VESSEL REMAINS AT SOUTH GEORGIA, FALKLAND ISLANDS DEPENDENCIES

R. K. HEADLAND

*Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road,  
Cambridge CB2 1ER, UK*

## INTRODUCTION

The island of South Georgia (53° 56' to 54° 55' S, 35° 45' to 38° 15' W) is situated in the Antarctic or Southern Ocean between South America, South Africa and Antarctica. The nearest continental land mass is the northern end of the Antarctic Peninsula, 1550 km away. The Falkland Islands lie 1450 km to the west and continental South America is 2150 km in that direction. The history of South Georgia (Headland, 1984) may be divided into five substantially distinct periods: early voyages and first landing (1675–1775), the first epoch of sealing (about 1788–1913), modern whaling, sealing and exploration (1904–65), the period after whaling ceased up to the Argentine invasion (1966–82), and the period of military presence (1982–present). Virtually all transport to and from the island has been by sea and many different types of vessel were used during all these periods.

South Georgia is an extremely mountainous island with its highest peak, Mount Paget, reaching 2934 metres above sea level. The island rises almost twice this distance from the floor of the surrounding ocean. Over half its area of 3755 km<sup>2</sup> is permanently covered by ice and snow. There are about 150 glaciers on the island, which have carved many deep fjords around its coastline. These fjords provide many harbours and anchorages but there are also many reefs, sunken rocks and other hazards to navigation. The island's climate is between a cold oceanic and an Antarctic one with low temperatures, heavy winter snow, frequent periods of poor visibility, very strong winds and a great capacity for rapid changes. The coasts and surrounding waters of South Georgia were not comprehensively surveyed until the *Discovery* Investigations from 1927 and the first reliable land map was not produced until 1958. Charts are still somewhat inadequate for the remoter parts of the island and are constantly being improved.

Largely because of these circumstances, more than 50 vessels are known to have been wrecked or otherwise lost at or near South Georgia. Records of them occur in a large number of varied sources. One interesting published account describes three wrecks during the first epoch of sealing and was written by a man unfortunate enough to be aboard each of them (Smith, 1844). Mr A. G. E. Jones has discovered details of several others and I am indebted to him for his comprehensive and accurate research of early voyages. Records of wrecks during the modern whaling and sealing period are mainly from the files of the resident Magistrate at South Georgia, a post established in 1909. Most of the Magistrate's files are now held at the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge (donated by the Governor of the Falkland Islands and Dependencies). Some information is from my colleagues at the British Antarctic Survey, W. N. Bonner, Dr R. I. Lewis Smith and Dr D. W. H. Walton. I. Hart, Dr L. Harrison Matthews and J. J. Thompson have also provided some valuable information. For the remaining details, some sources are given in the references, much information about vessels is from Lloyd's List and some of the remainder is from personal knowledge gained during almost three years residence on the island.

Mr J. Smith of Stanley undertook a similar investigation of the wrecks, hulks, etc. of the Falkland Islands and he provided much of the stimulus to write this account.

As well as the wrecks recorded here, there are undoubtedly some more as yet unknown – especially from the first epoch of sealing. It is possible that some of the unidentified wrecks may be some of those I have described as 'site unknown'. Further investigation may be able to confirm some of these possibilities.

Details of wrecks, hulks, scuttled vessels, etc. follow in chronological order from 1796 to 1983. Several other vessels for which definite dates are not known also remain on the island. These, together with notes on vessels arguably not wrecked but still present, are listed at the end. A map of the island showing the sites of all vessels for which this is known (as far as possible – some sites become a bit crowded) is included (Fig. 1).

The author would appreciate advice of omissions and errors.

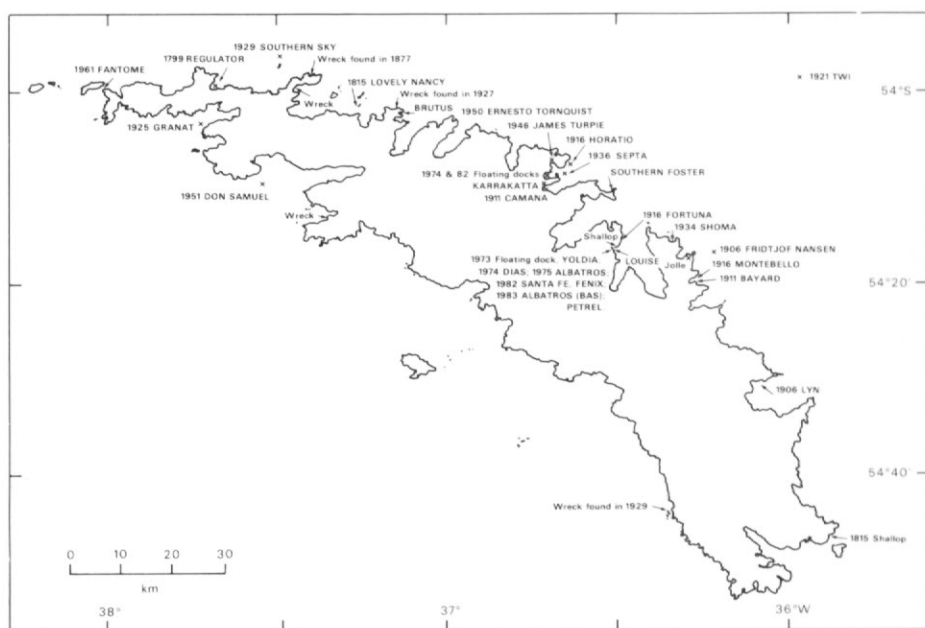


Fig. 1. Outline map of South Georgia showing sites of wrecks and vessel remains.

#### LIST OF VESSELS ETC.

##### *Vessels whose dates of loss are known*

*SALLY*, 1796, site unknown. This is the first vessel recorded as lost at South Georgia. She was a British brig of 171 tons engaged in the fur sealing trade, and owned by Thomas Guillame and Co., shipbuilders at Limehouse Bridge, London. Her master was either a Captain Farmer or Ellis. She left England for the 'South Seas' in the boreal summer of 1795 and was reported lost at South Georgia in the following austral summer. Her complement was rescued from the island by Captain Mackie in command of the sealer *Young William*. They returned to England in June 1796. (Jones, 1973.)

*REGULATOR*, 1799, Right Whale Bay (?). She was a United States of American sealing vessel and was wrecked in 'Sparrow Cove' – probably what is now known as Right Whale Bay. Her crew landed near the wreck, built temporary habitations ashore and were able to save much of her equipment together with the cargo of 14000 fur seal skins. The cargo was sold to a British sealing vessel, which rescued *Regulator's* company. Captain Edward Fanning, in command of the *Aspasia* (a vessel with the same owners as *Regulator*), arrived at South Georgia in September 1800 with the intention of rescuing *Regulator's* men but he found only her wreck and their abandoned shelters. However, he later met the British sealer *Morse* (Captain French) aboard which was one of *Regulator's* former crew who provided details of the wreck and rescue. Fanning used parts of *Regulator* to construct a shallop (a small cutter) for sealing around the island where he had a very successful catch. There are various old timbers still on Binder Beach in Right Whale Bay and Mount Regulator, in the vicinity, is named after her. (Fanning, 1833.)

*CANADA*, 1800, site unknown. This was a British sealing vessel of 213 tons owned by Messrs J. Hill and Co. merchants and insurance brokers of Rotherhithe, London, and commanded by Captain Lewis Llewelin. She arrived at South Georgia about March 1800 and was later reported lost. Perhaps this is not surprising as it is also recorded that her last major refit had been made 18 years previously. (Jones, 1973.)

*EARL SPENCER*, 1801, site unknown. She was also a British sealing vessel owned by the same Company as *Canada*. After a voyage to South Georgia in the 1799–1800 season she returned to England for refitting thence sailed again to the island in May 1801 under the command of Captain Beacon. She was lost on the island and her complement rescued by another vessel. (Jones, 1973.)

*Shallop* (name unknown), 1815, Cooper Bay. A sealer's shallop (a small cutter working from a larger vessel) with a complement of eight was wrecked in Cooper Bay. She was deployed from the sealer *Norfolk*, from London, and had anchored for the night. A storm arose accompanied by a strong swell and an extra anchor was dropped. The swell increased rapidly and a cable was laid out to the shore to prevent her dragging her anchors. By day-light the storm had risen to such a force that the seas were breaking over her with great violence. Eventually the cable parted, her anchors dragged, and she was driven onto the rocks where she grounded head on to the swell which continued breaking over her – reaching half mast height. Men stood ready ashore and were able to rescue all but two of her complement. Her Master (Mate of *Norfolk*) and a boy were killed. Later some of her wreck and cargo of elephant-seal blubber were recovered. (Smith, 1844.)

*LOVELY NANCY*, 1816, Bay of Isles. Following the loss of the shallop from *Norfolk* in 1815 her master purchased a replacement from another sealer working at South Georgia, the 80-ton *Lovely Nancy*, which cost him £800. She was placed in command of Mr Maclow, chief mate of the schooner *Ann* which had sailed in company with *Norfolk*. After collecting elephant seal blubber from several sites she left 'Hog Bay', an anchorage in the Bay of Isles, and was benighted. While sailing past one of the islands for which the bay is named she grounded on a rock and began to take water. Her complement got off in boats before she slid off the rock and sank in eight fathoms (15 metres). They landed and made an uncomfortable camp on a nearby beach during a freezing rain storm. The mast of *Lovely Nancy* was seen the next day and 12 days later attempts were made from *Norfolk* to raise her. The cable being used parted, however, and the severity of the weather prevented further attempts at salvage. Thus she became a total loss. (Smith, 1844.)

*ADMIRAL COLPOYS*, 1817, site unknown. This vessel is also recorded as *Admiral Coalpoise*. She was commanded by Captain James Todrig, was of 274 tons and had

left London for South Georgia in May 1817. She probably arrived in September, anchored and made fast in a small bay called 'The Rookery' on the southern side of the island towards the eastern end. Her masts were taken down and she was secured to spend some time there while her crew were trying out elephant seal oil. In ten weeks they had obtained 1500 barrels (roughly 250 tonnes) of the 1800 she could carry. In late November 1817 a severe storm blew up which continued for several days. During this a large iceberg was driven into the entrance of 'The Rookery' and grounded a short distance from one of the vessel's anchors. This caused some alarm and her cannon were fired to demolish the iceberg but without effect. The gale continued and during particularly high tide on 28 November 1817 the iceberg capsized and severed her anchor cable. *Admiral Colpoys* was driven ashore and bilged on the rocks. Her complement survived, landed, and later cut a hole in her lee side through which equipment and much of her cargo was saved. This was later taken by a shallop to another vessel that belonged to the same owners (probably *Norfolk*) aboard which her company obtained passage back to England. 'The Rookery' cannot be identified with certainty on modern maps. (Smith, 1844; Jones, 1973.)

*HOPE*, 1829, site unknown. She was a sealing schooner of 145 tons commanded by Captain Matthew Brisbane. Brisbane had previously been at South Georgia in command of *Beaufoy* accompanying Captain James Weddell aboard *Jane* in 1823. *Hope* was owned by James Pirie and had sailed from London. She was wrecked at South Georgia on 23 April 1829. Brisbane and the others of her complement built a shallop to sail to Montevideo (2650 kilometres) where the certificate of registration of *Hope* was delivered to the British Consul on 28 May 1829 – a remarkable expeditious relief from the wreck and an exceptional voyage for a shallop. (Jones, 1975.)

*LYN*, 1906, Moltke Harbour. She was a 153-ton, 31.3-metre long wooden schooner built in 1871 at Moss, near Oslo, and purchased by Compañia Argentina de Pesca in 1905. In the fourth quarter of 1906 she was at anchor in Moltke Harbour while on a fishing trip. During a severe storm a gust of wind broke her anchor line; she was blown ashore and wrecked. Her remains were described by Wilhelm Filchner in 1911 as covered in kelp and near the site of a scientific station used in 1882–83. Filchner took wood, large copper nails, and other items for a camp at the site of the station, which was re-opened for about a month, and reported that the whalers also used to salvage such items. In 1980, about 500 metres east of the station, there were various large timbers on the shore, which are probably part of her remains. (I. Hart, Filchner, 1922.)

*FRIDTJOF NANSEN*, 1906, Fridtjof Nansen Reef. This was the first floating factory for processing whales to go to South Georgia. She was a 2653-ton ship built in 1885 at Newcastle. In early 1906 she was converted to be a floating factory at Sandefjord and departed for South Georgia accompanied by two whale catchers, *Norrøna* and *Sudero*. Approaching the island on 10 November 1906, commanded by Captain Christopher Castberg, she struck an uncharted reef off the Barff Peninsula, broke into three pieces and foundered in about seven minutes. Nine of her company of 58 drowned; the others were rescued by *Sudero* and *Norrøna*, and taken to the whaling station at Grytviken. The reef she struck was subsequently named after her. (Tønnessen, 1967.)

*CAMANA*, 1911, Husvik Harbour. She was a three-masted wooden sailing vessel and arrived at South Georgia as a transport ship for the Norwegian whaling company operating at Husvik Harbour. In the 1911–12 season it was intended that she become a wharf for coaling purposes. Therefore, she was laden with stones and sunk just off the beach at the whaling station, unluckily just too far off the beach for, instead of

her decks being comfortably above water, only the upper parts of her masts were not submerged and remained visible for many years. Today there is no sign of her however. She was built in 1865 and purchased by the company in 1910. Camana Rock, in Husvik Harbour, is named after her. (Matthews, 1931 and 1952; I. Hart.)

*BAYARD*, 1911, Ocean Harbour. This vessel was a transport ship for the Norwegian whaling station in Ocean Harbour. She is a rivetted iron three-masted sailing vessel of 1335 ton and 67 metres long, built by T. Vernon at Liverpool in 1864. On 6 June 1911 she was moored at the coaling jetty on the north side of the harbour when a very severe gale arose. Her moorings broke, she was blown across the harbour,



Fig. 2. *Bayard* aground in Ocean Harbour. (Author, March 1979.)

stranded and holed on the rocks on the southern side. Two whale catchers were used in attempts to pull her off but this was not successful. Some years later, during the First World War, it was proposed that she be resurveyed for possible repair but no action was taken. Presently she remains at Ocean Harbour, well out of the water with only a slight list to port, about 10 m offshore. (Magistrate's files.)

*HORATIO*, 1916, Stromness Bay. Originally she was a steel passenger vessel of 2078 tons, *Horsley Tower*, built in 1892 at Newcastle. In 1900 she was converted into a floating whaling factory for Christian Salvesen's Company and registered in Leith. Later she worked at Leith Harbour, South Georgia assisting the land station where she was moored alongside. On 11 March 1916 at 0300 she caught fire with 11000 barrels (approximately 1820 tonnes) of whale oil aboard her in wooden casks. Attempts to extinguish the fire were unsuccessful. She was towed out of the harbour to prevent the fire spreading ashore and left to burn. As well as the loss of the ship

(she sank in Stromness Bay) the oil lost was her complete season's production at a time when prices were very high. Her complement of 71, commanded by Captain Otto Poulsen, abandoned ship in whale boats. (Magistrate's files.)

*FORTUNA*, 1916, Cumberland East Bay. She was the first whale catcher to operate from South Georgia and arrived when Captain C. A. Larsen established Grytviken, the original whaling station in the Antarctic. She was built to Larsen's specifications in 1904 at Sandefjord, Norway, was of 164 tons, 30.3 metres long and registered in Buenos Aires. For 12 years she worked from Grytviken until at 0600 on 14 May 1916, at the beginning of a whaling voyage, she ran aground when close in-shore to avoid floating ice and sank just beyond Hope Point about 3 km from Grytviken. It was reported that her Master had handed the helm to the Mate who was reading a letter he had just received. *Fortuna's* complement was rescued and parts of her salvaged, notably her boiler which was used at the whaling station. Some of her remains, including bulkheads and a propeller shaft, may still be seen on the beach north of Hope Point. Fortuna Bay is named after her. (Magistrate's files.)

*ARGOS*, 1916, site unknown. She was an Uruguyan, steam-assisted, 537-ton, wood and iron sailing ship, under charter to a whaling company at South Georgia, built in 1874 at Oskarshamm, Sweden. On 7 May 1916 she sailed from Buenos Aires with a cargo of coal and empty barrels never to be seen again. Some marked timber of her cargo was later found in King Haakon Bay and it is probable she was wrecked off the western end of the island. In late 1916, when Prince Olav Harbour whaling station was reopened for the summer season, it was found that the shed for storing meat and bone meal had been broken open. Within were seven rough beds and, amongst other items, a scrap of paper with a note in Spanish. Unfortunately the man who found the note could not understand the language and lost it. Later that summer a partly decomposed body was found, a couple of kilometres from the whaling station, which was thought to be her fireman. It is likely that seven of the survivors of *Argos* landed on South Georgia, perhaps at King Haakon Bay, crossed Shackleton Gap to the northern side of the island, and reached Prince Olav Harbour which was then abandoned for the winter. They may have thence set out for an inhabited whaling station at Stromness Bay and perished on the way. (Sir Ernest Shackleton's crossing of South Georgia in May 1916 from King Haakon Bay to Stromness Bay should be considered in this context.) (Matthews, 1931; Magistrate's files; J. J. Thompson.)

*Unknown barquentine*, 1916, off the north coast. On 26 July 1916 a mystery ship, a large four-masted barquentine, was sighted north of Leith Harbour by the whale catcher *Saima*. At first it was thought she was a transport ship for one of the whaling stations and attempts to contact her and guide her in were made unsuccessfully; she ignored all signals. The exceptional amount of pack-ice around at the time prevented *Saima* getting very close to her. On the next day a very severe storm blew up which lasted three days. There were massive icebergs and pack-ice reported as far as 60 nautical miles (110 km) north of the island at the time. After the weather moderated the pack-ice was found blown away and no sign of the barquentine seen. She may well have foundered during the severe storm. Her name and business remain unknown but it has been suggested she may have been a supply ship for a German commerce raider active during the First World War. It has also been suggested that she was *Argos*, though her different construction, failure to answer signals, and presence of cargo from *Argos* in King Haakon Bay (the direction of winds and currents being eastwards) contraindicate this. (Matthews, 1931; Magistrate's files.)

*MONTEBELLO*, 1916, Ocean Harbour. This small, four-year-old, steel schooner, registered in Larvik, suffered a fate similar to that of *Bayard*. She was caught in a storm on 4 August 1916 in Ocean Harbour, broke her moorings and sank in the

northern approach to the harbour. No one was aboard her at the time. Her wreck was a hazard to navigation and was sold for disposal by the Magistrate, acting as Receiver of Wrecks, for £80. (Magistrate's files.)

*T.W.I.*, 1921, off the north-east coast. This vessel was also a whale catcher, of 137 tons, built in 1911 and named after T. W. Irvin, one of the partners operating Prince Olav Harbour whaling station and registered in North Shields. She had departed from South Georgia in May 1921 bound for South Africa and under the command of Daniel Hansen. Shortly after her departure a severe storm arose, which fractured her engine-room casing, and she began to take water. *Southern Breeze*, another whale catcher accompanying her, took her in tow and later took her men aboard. Despite 16 hours of work to try to save her and tow her back to Prince Olav Harbour she sank at 0400 on 11 May 1921 near 36° 46' W by 53° 51' S, about 40 km from the island. (Magistrate's files.)

*SWONA [II]*, 1925, north-east of the island. She experienced a fate similar to that of *T.W.I.* and foundered on her way from South Georgia to Cape Town while very heavily laden with coal, approximately 340 kilometres from the island near 32° 51' W, 52° 01' S. She was built in 1913 at Oslo, and registered in Stanley. A storm arose after her departure, which broke her bunker covers, and she rapidly took water. Her complement took to the lifeboats and were rescued by *Spuma*, another whale catcher, which accompanied her and turned back after losing contact to arrive just before *Swona* foundered. She sank at 1615 on 7 March 1925. (Magistrate's files.)

*GRANAT*, 1925, Ice Fjord. She was a 159-ton, 32.9-m-long sealing vessel, built in Bergen, Norway, in 1916 as a whale catcher and registered in Buenos Aires. On 29 September 1925, commanded by Gotfred Thorsen, while on a sealing voyage from Grytviken, her anchor was lifted and engine started near Ice Fjord. Almost immediately she hit a reef, broke off two of her three propeller blades and lost her rudder. Both her anchors were dropped immediately and a distress call was sounded continually with her whistle but there was no vessel near enough to hear it. She was unable to move and during the following night a severe storm blew up which caused her anchors to begin to drag. As she moved towards a rocky shore the order to abandon ship was given and her complement landed on a nearby beach. *Granat* continued towards the rocks, struck them and foundered at about 1630 on 1 October 1925. Her complement made a beacon by burning elephant-seal blubber on a hillock and constructed a shelter on the beach. After two nights they were rescued by the whale catcher *Semla*. Dr L. Harrison Matthews, who was aboard when she sank, wrote an account of these events and later described her wheel with other wreckage washed ashore at Middle Bay. (Magistrate's files and Matthews, 1952.)

*SOUTHERN SKY*, 1929, Welcome Islands. This whale catcher from Prince Olav Harbour, registered in Cape Town, commanded by Hans Kristoffersen, left Undine Harbour on 12 April 1929 in a heavy gale with sleet, to return to the whaling station. She was not seen again and it was assumed that she was overwhelmed by breakers near Welcome Islands. Wreckage was found near Cape Buller during the subsequent searches. Thirteen men died; her company of 12 and a passenger from the transport ship *Southern King*. In 1916 *Southern Sky* had made a difficult voyage from South Georgia to Elephant Island with Sir Ernest Shackleton aboard to make the first attempt to rescue the men from the *Endurance* expedition stranded there. Sky Rock, near the Welcome Islands, was named after her in 1930. (Magistrate's files.)

*SHOMA*, 1934, Rookery Bay. She was a 341-ton whale catcher owned by Christian Salvesen's Company of Leith Harbour, built in 1929 by Smith's Docks, Middlesbrough, and registered in Leith. On 7 February 1929, in a storm with 30 m s<sup>-1</sup> winds, she struck a rock at the western Skrap Skerry, off the Barff Peninsula, and lost her

propeller. Her Master, Otto Larsen, made a wireless distress call, which was received by two whaling stations and some whale catchers, before he and the crew abandoned ship as she was drifting ashore in the storm. On 8 February *Shoma* was found by *Narwal* afloat and abandoned in Rookery Bay, sitting low in the water; she sank there that night. No trace of the 12 men aboard was found despite searches along the eastern coast of the Barff Peninsula. Her upturned lifeboat was found, floating in kelp, near Rookery Bay, which was called Shomer Bay by whalers after these events. (Magistrate's files.)

*SEPTA*, 1936, Stromness Bay. This 133-ton whale catcher was built in 1883 at Trondheim, Norway. She had formerly been *Nancy Grey*, *Mathilda*, and *Kiberg*. Her owners, Christian Salvesens, had converted her into a meal barge and operated her from Leith Harbour. In 1936 she sank outside the harbour. (Vamplew, 1975.)

*JAMES TURPIE*, 1946, Leith Harbour. This vessel was at first a transport ship for Leith Harbour whaling station. She was built in 1881 by A. Leslie of Newcastle for Christian Salvesen's Company, was 82.5 metres long and 1732 tons. From 17 May 1910 she was moored at Leith Harbour and became a coaling hulk, until oil replaced coal as a fuel for whale catchers after the Second World War. During the winter of 1945 she sank at her moorings in the harbour. Some of her plates may still be seen on the beach at 'Jericho' – the site of the first whaling station at Leith Harbour. Turpie Rock, off Hercules Bay, is named after her. (Vamplew, 1975.)

*ERNESTO TORNQUIST*, 1950, Tornquist Bay. This was a transport vessel of the Grytviken whaling station, registered in Buenos Aires, 137.5 metres long and of 6547 tons, built in 1897 by C. Connell of Glasgow as *Craftsman*. After several changes of ownership she was sold to the whaling company in 1927 and became *Ernesto Tornquist*. She was a floating whale factory from 1924 to 1931 and then became a transport ship. On 16 October 1950, commanded by Captain A. Ferro, she struck rocks off Cape Constance in a gale with a blinding snow storm and heavy seas. She then ran aground in 'Windy Hole'. The 260 persons aboard included her company, employees of the whaling station going to begin the season, and government employees, some of whom were accompanied by their wives. Fortunately all reached shore and were rescued, mainly by *Petrel*. On the next day *Ernesto Tornquist* broke in two and her wreck was a prominent feature in the bay for many years – which resulted in its being named after her. She is the largest vessel to be lost at South Georgia. (Magistrate's files.)

*DON SAMUEL*, 1951, near Samuel Islands. This was the second modern sealing vessel to be lost on South Georgia. She was built in 1925 in Oslo, was 35.1 metres long, 204 tons, operated from Grytviken whaling station and was registered in Buenos Aires. On 11 November 1951, commanded by Thorleif Hammestad, she struck a rock outside Queen Maud Bay, began to take water rapidly and sank within half an hour near some islands later named after her. Those aboard abandoned ship in her boats, landed and set up camp at Nilse Hullet. The assistant engineer, Hetland, made a 100-km journey around the north-western end of South Georgia in her motor-boat to obtain assistance. He met a whale catcher, which rescued the others. Radio was introduced to sealing vessels following this loss and petrol depots established round the island. (Magistrate's files.)

*SOUTHERN WAVE*, *SOUTHERN SHORE* and *STINA*; 1953, 1954 and 1955; off Stromness Bay. These three whale catchers, owned by Christian Salvesen's Company, built in 1925, 1928 and 1928, of 319, 328 and 251 tons, respectively, from Smith's Dock, Middlesbrough, and registered in Stanley, were stripped and scuttled off Stromness Bay from Leith Harbour. This became a common way of disposing of outdated and redundant whale catchers at South Georgia as transport costs were such



that it was uneconomic to take them elsewhere and there was no market for scrap iron on the island. Stina Rock bears the name of one of them. (J. J. Thompson.)

*BUSEN 6*, *BUSEN 8* and *BUSEN 10*; 1955, 1956 and 1959; off Stromness Bay. These three whale catchers, built in 1925, 1928 and 1930, of 266, 394 and 374 tons respectively, and registered in Tønsberg, were stripped and scuttled by the Tønsbergs Hvalfangeri which operated the Husvik whaling station. (I. Hart.)

*FANTOME*, 1961, Bird Sound. This was one of HMS *Owen's* motor launches, which was used during a general survey of the island in early 1961. She was lost in heavy seas, near a rock later named after her, in February 1961. Those aboard were rescued by an accompanying launch. (Hattersley-Smith, 1980.)

*SOUTHERN SPRAY* and *SOUTHERN CHIEF*, 1961, Stromness Bay. These redundant whale catchers, registered in Stanley, were disposed of by Christian Salvesen's Company of Leith Harbour. They were built in 1925 and 1926 at Smith's Dock Middlesbrough and were of 319 and 295 tons respectively. In February 1961 they were stripped and scuttled off Stromness Bay. (J. J. Thompson.)

*STORA* and *SOUTHERN STAR*, 1963, Stromness Bay. These whale catchers also registered in Stanley, were similarly stripped and scuttled on 8 January and 21 January 1963 off Cape Saunders. They too were built at Smith's Dock, in 1929 and 1930, of 341 and 340 tons respectively. (J. J. Thompson.)

*Seven whaling vessels*, 1964, Leith Harbour. The winter of 1964 was severe and very heavy falls of snow occurred. Three whale catchers and four service boats were sunk at their moorings in Leith Harbour by the weight of snow which fell on them in September; *Solvra* (built 1937, 433 tons), *Sondra* (built 1937, 433 tons), *Sorsra* (built 1937, 433 tons), *Sabra* (built 1930, 244 tons), and *Bouvet I* (built 1930, 244 tons) all from Smith's Dock; *Southern Peter* and *Southern Paul* (both 1944 and 172 tons) former wooden motor mine-sweepers built in Grimsby. The top of a mast with a crow's nest from one of them is still visible above the water at the head of the harbour. No attempts were made to raise these vessels as whaling was drawing to a close at South Georgia in 1964-65. (J. J. Thompson.)

*SOUTHERN FOSTER*, 1964, Jason Island. Another casualty of the severe winter of 1964 was *Southern Foster*, built in 1948 by Smith's Dock and of 438 tons. In September she broke her moorings in a storm and was blown across Stromness Bay to Jason Island where she ran aground between the island and the Busen Peninsula. Her lifeboat broke free and washed up at Jumbo Cove. She remains stranded on a rocky shelf, partly out of the water and occasionally rocks with the swell. (J. J. Thompson.)

*Floating Dock*, 1973, Grytviken. This was deployed at the whaling station about 1928. It sank in August 1973 owing to corrosion of its plates near the water-line and remains at its moorings, partly above water at low tide. The maximum it could lift was 750 tons and its external dimensions were 15 by 51 metres.

*YOLDIA*, 1973, King Edward Cove. This was a 7.6-m steel launch built in 1972 for the British Antarctic Survey. She was used mainly within King Edward Cove as many problems were experienced with her design. In 1973 she sank at her moorings at King Edward Point during a severe storm. Subsequently she was raised and taken back to the United Kingdom. (British Antarctic Survey file.)

*DIAS*, 1974, Grytviken. She was a sealing vessel which had operated from Grytviken since 1927, built in 1906 as *Viola* at Beverley, near Hull, and registered in Stanley. Her length is 33.1 m and registered tonnage 167. In December 1964 she was laid up at Grytviken when the whaling station closed. A caretaker, Ragnor Thorsen, remained there, repainted her and turned over her engines weekly until March 1971 when he left. In the winter of 1974 she sank at her moorings owing to the weight of



Fig. 3. Life boat from *Southern Foster* at Jumbo Cove. (R. Edwins, August 1980.)

snow aboard her. Presently she remains partly submerged against *Albatros* (sank in 1975) at Grytviken. A proposal to salvage and restore her was made in 1983. Some 'prams' (specialised Norwegian dinghies) used when *Dias* or other sealing vessels landed men on South Georgia's rocky beaches, also remain at Grytviken. Diaz Cove (*sic*) is named after her.

*Floating Dock*, 1974, Stromness Harbour. This 700-ton floating dock was deployed at Stromness whaling station for ship repair purposes about 1927; its dimensions were 14 m by 41.5 m. The whaling station closed in 1931 but the site continued in use as a ship repair yard until 1961 when it was abandoned. The dock sank during the winter of 1974, presumably owing to the weight of snow aboard it. Only a bed of kelp now indicates its presence for the bay was sufficiently deep close off shore to submerge it entirely.

*ALBATROS*, 1975, Grytviken. She was originally a whale catcher built for the Grytviken whaling station but later became a sealing vessel last registered in Stanley. She was built in Svelvik, Norway, in 1921, is 32.8 m long and of 210 tons. Her subsequent history is roughly the same as that of *Dias* and she lies alongside her, also partly submerged, having sunk during the subsequent winter.

*SANTA FÉ*, 1982, King Edward Cove. This Argentine naval submarine, commanded by Lt.-Cdr. Bicain, was patrolling the region around South Georgia during the short period when Argentine forces occupied Leith Harbour and King Edward Point. In the morning of 25 April 1982 she was detected on the surface at the mouth of Cumberland Bay. Helicopters from HMS *Antrim* and *Endurance* attacked her with a depth charge and missiles, others from HMS *Brilliant* and *Plymouth* continued the

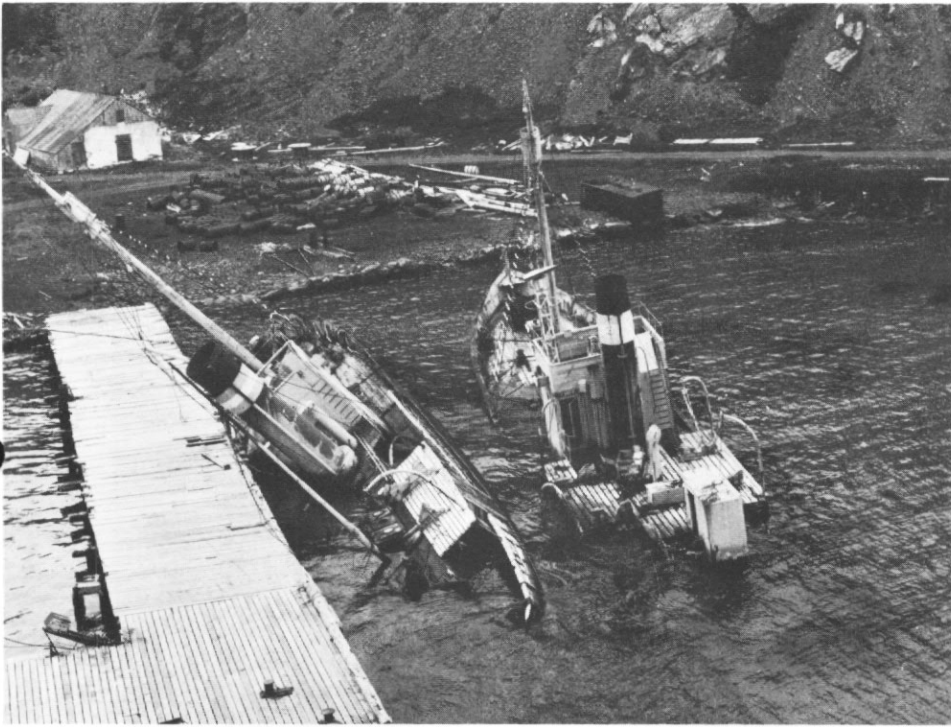


Fig. 4. *Albatros* (port) and *Dias* (starboard) sunken at their moorings at Grytviken. (C. J. Gilbert, January 1980.)

attack as the disabled submarine retreated towards King Edward Point. The attacking helicopters came under mortar and machine gun fire as they approached the point. Her master surrendered the vessel at 1405 local time when the Argentine garrison at King Edward Point raised a white flag. On 26 April *Santa Fé* was moved by some of her complement, under Royal Naval supervision, from King Edward Point to Grytviken. In an unfortunate incident during this operation her Chief Petty Officer was killed: he was buried at Grytviken with full military honours. Subsequently *Santa Fé* sank at Grytviken. After much difficult work by men from HMS *Endurance* she was refloated and beached off Hestesletten. There she remained until an attempt to dispose of her was made. Originally USS *Catfish* (SS 339) she was built in March 1945, displaced 2420 tons submerged and 1870 on the surface, was powered by diesel electric engines and equipped with ten 21-inch torpedo tubes. Her complement was 84. As well as patrolling the vicinity she had a large cargo of munitions for the garrison (amounting to 9.5 tonnes of high explosive) which has presented a difficult problem of disposal.

*FENIX*, 1982, King Edward Cove. She was a 16-m-long Argentine landing craft from the ship *Bahía Buen Suceso*, an Argentine naval ship whose unlawful arrival on 18 March 1982 at Leith Harbour marked the overt beginning of the Argentine Invasion of the Falkland Islands and Dependencies later that year. After the invaders were defeated she was captured and later sank near the King Edward Point jetty.

*Floating dock*, 1982, Stromness Harbour. This was the second, more recent floating



Fig. 5. *Santa Fé* beached off Hestesletten. (Author, October 1982.)

dock at Stromness which could lift 1000 tones and was 14.08 by 54.20 m. It sank in June 1982 at its moorings and no trace of it is now above the surface.

*ALBATROS*, 1983, Susa Point. This was a British Antarctic Survey glass-fibre launch named after the whale catcher and sealer *Albatros* described above. She was 8.2 metres long and built in 1975 on the Isle of Wight. During the winter of 1983, while in the charge of the garrison, she broke loose from her moorings at King Edward Point and was blown across the cove and wrecked on the opposite side. She had been a highly versatile launch for the Survey's purposes which involved transport of men and supplies around Cumberland Bay, trawling and diving work for marine research, carrying the Magistrate to and from visiting ships, and much else.

#### *Wrecks found on the island*

*Cape Crew.* In 1927 Dr L. Harrison Matthews found a wreck which he reported as follows: 'On the west side of Cape Crew there still lies the remains of a wooden

vessel... from the condition of the timber it appears that this ship was afire when she piled up.' (Matthews, 1931.)

*Diaz Cove.* On 6 April 1929 the Kohl-Larsen Expedition landed at Diaz Cove from the sealer *Dias*. There they found the wreck of a sailing ship and remains of a dwelling; together with a flintlock barrel, parts of a telescope, clothing and some ship's equipment. They concluded these remains were from British or United States sealers and reported them to the Magistrate who made further inquiries. There are still substantial remains apparent today. (Kohl-Larsen, 1930.)

*Mouse Cove.* The remains of a wooden sailing vessel were found at this site by the South Georgia Surveys led by Duncan Carse. They consist principally of a series of timbers protruding from the sand and gave rise to the name Shallop Cove for an adjoining larger cove which was also the site of activities of sealers during the last century. The remains indicate that the vessel was about 18 m long. In the bed of a



Fig. 6. Remains of vessel at Mouse Cove. (W. N. Bonner, January 1978.)

small adjacent stream is her anchor – a large one, about 2.5 m long and 1.8 m across the flukes. A large eye bolt is attached to part of her timbers and nearby lies a broken try-pot used for boiling down elephant seal blubber to extract oil. (W. N. Bonner.)

*Rosita Harbour.* Some wreckage, notably several spars, is known from this harbour, which was regularly used by sealers in the last century. It may represent a former sealing vessel. (W. N. Bonner.)

*Sitka Bay.* An Austrian traveller and geographer, H. W. Klutschak, visited South Georgia in 1877 aboard the United States sealing vessel *Flying Fish*. He published an account of the voyage which included a note about the wreck of a vessel in 'French Harbour' and that she still lies on the rocks of that so-called harbour. 'French Harbour' is probably what is now known as Sitka Bay and lies just west of Cape Buller. Though the vessel may have been built in France she was probably a British sealer

taken as a prize during the Napoleonic Wars as were several other sealers working at South Georgia in that century. (Boumphrey, 1967.)

*Other vessels at the island*

*Shallop*, King Edward Point. In 1902 two members of the Swedish South-Polar expedition, J. G. Andersson and S. Duse, crossed from Maiviken to King Edward Point and the former wrote,

'Close under the mountains crept a little bay I had not seen before, with a low point shooting out between it and the main fjord – and now comes the strange part of the story – on this point, and drawn up some distance from the shore, lay a large green-painted boat. The boat had evidently lain there for many years, for the tussac grass grew high and close around it. It was a large undecked centre-board boat, thirty feet long and eleven feet wide, almost too large to have been brought here as a deck boat on board a vessel, but too small to have sailed alone here to this stormy coast.'

This was a sealer's shallop and may well have been constructed on the island. About 1912 she was filled with stones and sunk to become a landing platform at King Edward Point for the *Magistrate* and remained in place when a new jetty was erected in 1926. She reportedly still forms part of the foundations of the approaches to the reconstructed jetty now at the point. (Nordenskjöld and others, 1905.)

*LOUISE*, Grytviken. She is the best-preserved example of a 'Down Easter', a United States of American deep-ocean sailing vessel which largely supplanted the Clipper ships in the Cape Horn trade after a railway was built across North America. On 16 November 1904 she arrived at the island with Captain C. A. Larsen when he founded the Grytviken whaling station, the first in Antarctic regions. Originally she was a cargo vessel and later provided accommodation before being converted to a



Fig. 7. *Louise* aground in King Edward Cove. (R. I. Lewis Smith, February 1970.)

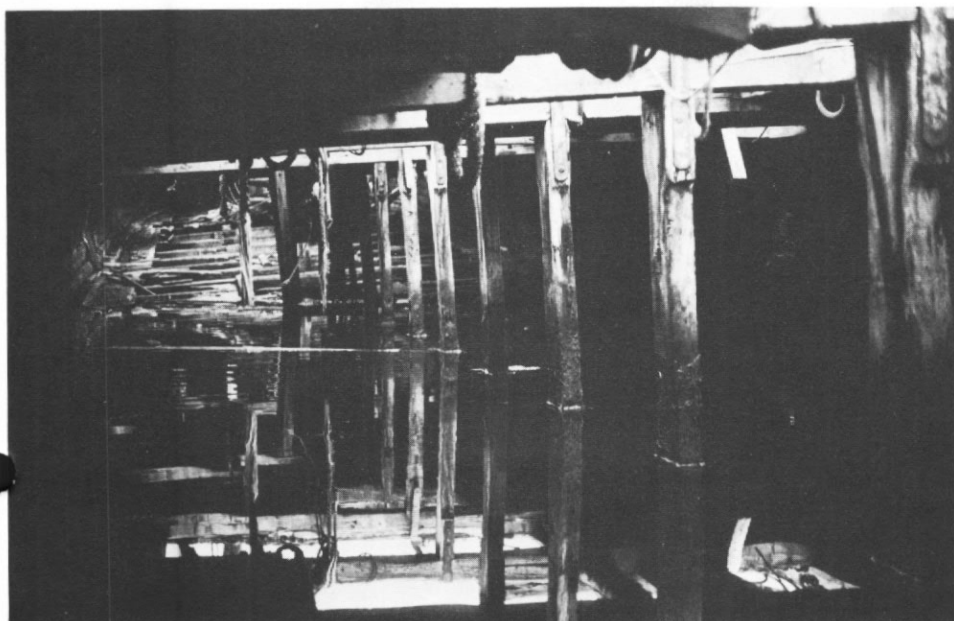


Fig. 8. Interior of hold of *Louise*. (R. I. Lewis Smith, February 1970.)



Fig. 9. *Brutus* aground at Prince Olav Harbour. (D. Sanders, February 1981.)

coal hulk until oil replaced coal as a fuel for whale catchers. At first she was moored near the whaling station but now remains on the southern side of King Edward Cove, aground and mainly out of the water. She was built in 1869 by G. and C. Bliss of Freeport, Maryland, as the *Jennie S. Barker*. In 1880 she was sold to a Sandefjord Company which used her in the Baltic timber trade, hence the baulk ports in her bows, until purchased by Larsen in 1904. She was a three-masted copper clad wooden barque 52.8 m long and of 1065 tons. Louisa Bay (*sic*) is named after her.

*PETREL*, Grytviken. Originally a whale catcher at Grytviken, she was later converted to become a sealing vessel and was last registered in Stanley. Like *Dias* and *Albatros* she was laid up at Grytviken after the station closed and was abandoned. In contrast, she remained afloat, with some assistance from the British Antarctic Survey. She was built in 1928 at Oslo, is 35.1 metres long and of 245 tons. Petrel Peak is named after her. A plan to salvage and restore her in Oslo was proposed in 1983.

*Motor Boats*, Grytviken. Two motor launches remain at the abandoned whaling station, both formerly used to tow whales to the flensing plan and for other duties in the harbour. One has discernable on the remains of her paintwork her name, *El Tala*, and that she had been associated with the Uruguyan Yacht Club. They are both on cradles in the station in a rather dilapidated state.

*Motor Boats*, Leith Harbour. Three similar launches that lie on the floating plan at Leith Harbour, each about 8 m long, served purposes equivalent to those at Grytviken.

*BRUTUS*, Prince Olav Harbour. She is a three-masted, iron-hulled, sailing vessel presently aground and well above water off Pig Point, near the whaling station at



Fig. 10. *Karakatta* on a slipway at Husvik. (Author, February 1982.)



Prince Olav Harbour. Originally *Sierra Pedrosa*, she was built in 1883 by J. Reid and Co. of Glasgow, is 75.9 m long and of 1686 tons. She arrived at South Georgia from Cape Town under tow by four whale catchers to become a coaling hulk while the whaling station operated. She was abandoned in 1931 when the station closed and subsequently wrecked when blown ashore and stranded. Brutus Island, in Prince Olav Harbour, is named after her.

*KARRAKATTA*, Husvik. She remains high and dry in a cradle on a slip-way at the abandoned whaling station Husvik. She was built in 1912 in Oslo and originally served as a whale catcher at a station in Western Australia. Her length is 32.4 m and tonnage 179. She was last used at the slip-way to provide steam to an adjacent engineering shop, probably until 1959. A lagged steam pipe runs from near her harpoon cannon mounting to the workshop and an adjacent slip-way allowed other vessels to be hauled up for repairs. Her bell is presently hanging from the flag pole at King Edward Point.

*Jolle*, Godthul. Three wooden 'jolle' remain ashore at the abandoned shore depot used by *Thor I* and several other floating factories anchored in the bay from 1908 to 1929. *Jolle* (a Norwegian term) are a type of barge which was used when whales were being flensed alongside the old floating factories as a platform for flensers. Those at Godthul are about 8 m long and 1.5 m high. Presently they are very rotten and beginning to fall to pieces. Several small dinghies also remain ashore at Godthul – in a similar condition.

Received 18 June 1984; accepted 19 June 1984



Fig. 11. 'Jolle' at Godthul. (R. Edwins, September 1979.)

## REFERENCES

- BOUMPHREY, R. S. (Translator) 1967. A visit to South Georgia by H. W. Klutschak, 1877. *British Antarctic Survey Bulletin*, No. 12, 85-92.
- FANNING, E. 1833. *Voyages and Discoveries in the South Seas, 1792-1834*. New York, Collins & Hannet and Salem, Massachusetts, Marine Research Society (1924).
- FILCHNER, W. 1922. *Zum Sechsten Erdteil*. Berlin, Ullstein.
- HATTERSLEY-SMITH, G. 1980. The history of place-names in the Falkland Islands Dependencies (South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands). *British Antarctic Survey Scientific Reports*, No. 101, 112 pp.
- HEADLAND, R. K. 1984. *The Island of South Georgia*, Cambridge University Press.
- JONES, A. G. E. 1973. Voyages to South Georgia 1795-1820. *British Antarctic Survey Bulletin*, No. 32, 15-22.
- JONES, A. G. E. 1975. Captain Matthew Brisbane. *Falkland Islands Journal*, 1975, 1-4.
- KOHL-LARSEN, L. 1930. Die Deutsche Sud Georgien Expedition 1928-29. *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin*, 9-10, 321-50.
- MATTHEWS, L. H. 1931. *South Georgia: The British Empire's sub-Antarctic outpost*. Bristol, John Wright, and London, Simpkin Marshall.
- MATTHEWS, L. H. 1952. *Sea elephant; The life and death of the elephant seal*. London, MacGibbon and Key.
- NORDENSKJÖLD, O., ANDERSSON, J. G. and LARSEN, C. A. 1905. *Antarctica, or two years amongst the ice of the South Pole*. London, Hurst and Blackett.
- SMITH, T. W. 1844. *A narrative of the life, travels and sufferings etc.* Boston, W. C. Hill.
- TØNNESEN, J. N. 1967. *Den moderne hvalfangsts historie. Volume 2*. Sandefjord, Norges Hvalfangst Forbund.
- VAMPLEW, W. 1975. *Salvesen of Leith*. Edinburgh and London, Scottish Academic Press.