



The Lifeboat 'MONA' Disaster 8th December 1959



Report from the Master of the North Carr Lightvessel.

North Carr Lightvessel

14th December 1959

Dear Sir

I beg to report that at 02.02 on Tuesday 8th December 1959 whilst riding out a gale of Southeast wind and very heavy sea the main anchor cable parted.

We took immediate steps to get the port bower anchor over the side and managed to get the ship brought up to anchor again at approximately 02.50. I hove out 90 fathoms of cable and at 06.30 the port bower cable parted with the result we were adrift again driving in a north-westerly direction. We got the starboard bower anchor over the side and had the ship riding to this anchor at 06.45 approximately.

I hove out 140 fathoms of this cable, I also dropped about 100 fathoms that was in the locker belonging to the main anchor cable to help hold the ship and also to lighten her head and make it easier for her to ride the heavy seas that were running. She kept this position until she was taken in tow by the Tug "Earner" at 11.20 on the 11th November.

The m.v. "Pharos" arrived alongside the North Carr at 12.15 on Tuesday 8th December and the tug "Earner" arrived at 13.00 approximately and tried several times to get a line on board the North Carr without success. We also tried to put a line on board the tug "Earner" by using distress rockets with a light line attached. I also dropped a lifebuoy with a light attached to it but all attempts failed and the "Earner" reckoned it was getting dark and that they would not make any further attempts to get a line on board until day light next day Wednesday 9th November.

When the tug "Earner" came alongside to try and get a line on board the Master requested me to be all prepared to slip everything for as quick a getaway as possible. I therefore slipped the remainder of the main anchor cable so as not to detain the tug if he did get us in tow. After all attempts failed to get a line on board and the tug left us we got the 5cwt kedge anchor and dragged it forward and shackled it on to the remainder of the port bower cable and dropped it over the side to help hold the ship. The time was now 22.30 and the ship was holding her position. The M.V. "Pharos" and the tug "Earner" stood by us all night. The weather was still very bad, a gale of south-east wind and a very heavy south-easterly swell.



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Wednesday 9th December the tug "Earner" arrived at 10.00 to make further attempts to get a line on board but all attempts failed. We also dropped a marking buoy attached to a deep sea lead line. The tug picked up the buoy but the lead line parted due to the heavy swell between the two vessels. At 12.00 approximately it was considered that the position was getting worse and it would be advisable to get the crew off the lightship by helicopter as soon as possible. At 12.20 I got a message from the helicopter requesting me if I could cut the mast adrift as the helicopter could not come in between the mast and the light tower. We immediately took steps to carry out this request by cutting the mast at the bottom with axes and letting go the stays. I then took one stay in through the after hawse pipe and led it to the windlass and heaved the mast over the stern. This job was completed about 12.50 and the first man was picked up by the helicopter about 13.00 and the last man about 13.45. After having a meal at the Golf Hotel, Crail, we left for home at 15.20 and arrived in Edinburgh at 18.00.

At 09.10 on Friday 11th December 1959 the S.V. "Pharos" arrived at the North Carr Lightship and landed the Senior and Junior Masters of the North Carr and 8 ratings. We got everything ready to start heaving in the cables as soon as the tug "Earner" arrived. The "Earner" arrived at 10.00 and got his towing wire made fast. We immediately started to heave in cables and managed to get the kedge anchor up and made secure, but before we got the remainder of the starboard bower cable in the weather was rapidly getting worse and as we were in a dangerous position it was decided for the safety of the lightship to slip the cable. We started in tow for Leith at 11.20 and arrived in Leith roads at 16.30 and slipped tug "Earner" and were taken in tow by 2 Leith tugs and berthed at General Steam Navigation wharf at 18.00.

I wish to recommend my crew on their behaviour in face of all these dangers, they never showed any sign of panic and carried out every order promptly and efficiently.

I am,

Sir, your obedient servant,

(signed) G. Rosie,

Senior Master.