

voyage on the *Stella* and she did not survive. The other, Mary Rogers, managed to put all the women in her charge into the boats, but she gave up her life-belt to a woman who didn't have one, and when she saw so many people in the boat, she refused to get into it saying that one more would sink it. She stayed on the deck until the ship sank and was drowned. By this time, the *Stella* was almost under water. The bow was up in the air and those still on board had to jump into the water which was like ice. It was very cold in the boats as well – the temperature was in the forties. As one of the boats was leaving the *Stella*, the captain threw his binoculars into the boat; he knew that he had used them for the last time.

The fifth boat capsized and the people on board were drowned. Another two minutes and perhaps twenty passengers could have been saved. The officers tried to put other boats into the water when the bow of the *Stella* went straight up in the air, hesitated a moment and then disappeared under the water. The Captain and Chief Engineer were still on the bridge and they were drowned with the others who were on board.

Even though he had made the voyage hundreds of times before, that day Captain Reeks had not calculated his position near the Casquets correctly. When the *Stella* was a few miles from the rocks, he thought that the tide would have taken him a mile and a half to the west of the Casquets reef. But the neap-tide that day didn't take him as far to the west as he thought, and because the fog was so thick, he couldn't see the tower of the Casquets to take his marks and change course. At the enquiry it was suggested that the strong currents around the rocks had affected the navigation when the ship found itself so close to the reef. All kinds of suggestions were made, but it was very difficult to decide exactly what had happened. The men in the lighthouse heard a ship which was giving off steam, but quite often there was so much fog, that the ships which found themselves near the Casquets anchored and let off steam. These men didn't think anything of it and didn't know that it had arrived so close to their lighthouse.

It was at eight o'clock in the morning on Good Friday when the *Vera* and the *Ibex* arrived in Guernsey with survivors whom they had found that the first news of the tragedy was known. There had been fog everywhere on the island on the Thursday, and when the *Stella* didn't arrive at half past five as usual, it was supposed that it was going slowly because of the weather. On Friday morning, there was a great crowd of people at the White Rock and on the other jetties around the harbour. These people saw the *Vera* arrive with some survivors and soon the story of the tragedy was all round the town. The news was sent to Jersey, but the authorities did not believe it at first. Later, when the *Lynx* arrived there, the jetties were full of very worried people. Even though the relatives of people on board the *Stella* tried to find out what had happened at the offices of the LSWR in the islands, at Southampton and at Waterloo, no-one could help them. The only list of passengers was aboard the ship and when the survivors landed, their names were not recorded as they should have been. Therefore there were many mistakes made in the reports of the names of the drowned and those who had survived. Even some months later, the exact number of drowned was not known.

Some drowned people were found all over the Channel, near Alderney, Cherbourg and even at the mouth of the Seine. The English papers published the news and very soon everyone knew about the disaster. By Saturday morning, all Guernsey was in mourning and flags were flying at half-mast. In Jersey and in England it was the same. Reports of the disaster continued for a long time in the press and the enquiries took months because there had been so many people drowned.