

= SS Suevic =

SS Suevic was a steamship built by Harland and Wolff in Belfast for the White Star Line . Suevic was the fifth and last of the " Jubilee Class " ocean liners , built specifically to service the Liverpool @-@ Cape Town @-@ Sydney route . In 1907 she was shipwrecked off the south coast of England , but in the largest rescue of its kind , all passengers and crew were saved . The ship herself was deliberately broken in two , and a new bow was attached to the salvaged stern portion . Later serving as a Norwegian whaling factory ship carrying the name Skytteren , she was scuttled off the Swedish coast in 1942 to prevent her capture by ships of Nazi Germany .

= = Design and construction = =

When White Star inaugurated service from Liverpool to Sydney in 1899 , they commissioned three steam ships to be built for that route : Afric , Medic and Persic . All three were single @-@ funnel liners which measured just under 12 @, @ 000 gross register tons (GRT) and were configured to carry 320 steerage or third class passengers . Because these ships were launched in the last year of the 19th century , they were referred to as the " Jubilee Class " , reflecting the popular mood regarding the coming of the new century . With the popularity of this route amongst immigrants to Australia , White Star quickly decided to order two more of the class , both of which would be slightly larger than the first three . The first of these was Runic (the second ship of that name) , launched on 25 October 1900 . The second , and largest of the class , was Suevic , at 12 @, @ 531 GRT . Runic and Suevic had several minor design changes , the most noticeable of which were the lengthening of the poop deck , and the moving of the bridge closer to the bow . These ships could carry 400 passengers and had seven cargo holds , some of which were refrigerated .

= = White Star service = =

Suevic was launched on 8 December 1900 , and set sail on her maiden voyage to Sydney on 23 March 1901 . Shortly thereafter , Suevic and her four sisters were pressed into service carrying troops to fight in the Boer War in South Africa . In August 1901 she made her one and only voyage from Liverpool to New York City . Once the Boer War was over , White Star was finally able to institute regular monthly service to Australia using the Jubilee @-@ class ships .

On one 1903 voyage , a young officer named Charles Lightoller was assigned to crew Suevic as a punishment . During the voyage , he met an 18 @-@ year @-@ old woman who was returning to her home in Sydney , and after a shipboard courtship , the two were married in Sydney on 15 December 1903 . Lightoller would later become the second officer on board the RMS Titanic , and the most senior of her crew to survive the disaster .

= = Shipwreck = =

= = = Navigational errors = = =

Suevic 's first six years of service were uneventful , but then disaster struck . On 2 February 1907 she left Melbourne with scheduled stops at Cape Town , Tenerife , Plymouth , London and finally Liverpool , under the command of Thomas Jones . On 17 March 1907 , she was inbound to Liverpool with 382 passengers , 141 crew members and a nearly @-@ full cargo , including thousands of sheep carcasses worth £ 400 @, @ 000 .

By noon , she was 140 miles off the southwest coast of England . This section of the English coast was hazardous , due to shallow waters , sharp rocks , and often @-@ dense fog , so it was normally avoided by ships . By the afternoon Suevic had entered a typically dense fog bank . By 10 pm , the ship 's officers were not able to fix their position using stellar navigation , so they intended to use instead the Lizard lighthouse on Lizard Point , Cornwall (known simply as " The Lizard ") , which

they soon spotted . Upon seeing the light , they calculated that it was at least 10 miles away , and thus thought themselves safe . Despite the fog , they pressed ahead at full speed , without using the sounding line to ensure they were not approaching the shore .

Twenty minutes after sighting the lighthouse , the ship ran aground violently at full speed amongst the rocks of Maenheere Reef , a quarter of a mile off The Lizard . Suevic was about 16 miles closer to the shore than her command crew believed .

= = = Rescue = = =

Jones first made several attempts to back the ship off the rocks , running the engines at full astern , to no avail . Despite her position , the ship did not appear to be in danger of sinking . The captain ordered the distress rockets to be fired , and a local rescue effort ensued , with all the passengers and crew escaping to shore safely .

The rescue was led by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) , and it became the largest rescue in that institution 's 190 @-@ year history . RNLI lifeboats , manned by local volunteers from stations at the Lizard , Cadgwith , Coverack and Porthleven , rescued all the passengers , including 70 babies , as well as the crew . The operation took 16 hours to complete . As a result of the successful efforts of the rescuers , four silver RNLI medals were awarded to various volunteers and two were awarded to Suevic crew members for their actions . In March 2007 a ceremony was held to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the rescue .

The Cadgwith lifeboat was Minnie Moon . Two silver RNLI gallantry medals were awarded to members of the Cadgwith Lifeboat crew : Edwin Rutter , Coxswain Superintendent and Rev. ? Harry ? Vyvyan , Honorary Secretary .

= = = Salvage = = =

The bow section was badly damaged , but not irreparably so , and the rest of the ship , including the boilers and engines , were not damaged at all . It was determined that if the ship could be lightened , the tide would then lift her off the bottom and she could be sailed to port . With this in mind , three days later , on 20 March , the cargo was unloaded into small coastal freighters . Initially , it appeared that the attempt would succeed , but a week later , after various other vessels had attempted to pull Suevic off the rocks , the weather deteriorated , and waves drove her farther onto shore , from whence she could not be moved .

With the bow now irretrievably stuck , and the threat of even worse weather coming which could completely destroy the ship , White Star officials decided to attempt an unorthodox method of saving the stern half of the ship , which was not grounded nor damaged , by separating it from the damaged bow . Suevic , like other White Star liners , had been built with watertight compartments as a safety precaution . Depending on the integrity of this design , engineers used carefully placed charges of dynamite to sever the bow at a bulkhead just aft of the bridge on 4 April . This move was successful , and the aft half of the ship floated free . The watertight compartments held their integrity , and Suevic was able to steam under her own power , in reverse and guided by tugs , to Southampton . The damaged bow was left to break up on the rocks .

= = = Rebuilding = = =

White Star then ordered a new 212 @-@ foot bow section from Harland and Wolff in Belfast , which was launched head @-@ first in October 1907 . It was popularly said at the time that Suevic was the longest ship in the world , with her bow in Belfast and her stern in Southampton . The new bow was then towed to the shipyard of J.I. Thornycroft in Southampton , where it arrived on 26 October . By mid @-@ November it was in position and being joined to the rest of the ship . The bow was a good fit , a testimony to the craftsmanship of the Harland and Wolff shipwrights . Ten months later , after the largest ship rebuilding effort ever undertaken at the time , on 14 January 1908 , Suevic was completed and returned to service .

= = War service = =

When the First World War began , many British ships were pressed into war service . The ability to carry frozen meat in their refrigerated holds meant that the " Jubilee Class " liners were left in commercial service so that they could bring provisions for the war effort , although they also carried troops on their normal route . Suevic did make one dedicated war run , in March 1915 , carrying British troops to Mudros , as a part of the Dardanelles Campaign . From that point , until 1919 , Suevic operated under the Royal Navy 's Liner Requisition Scheme rather than under White Star management , although she continued on her commercial route to Australia .

= = Skytteren = =

Following the war , White Star refitted Suevic , adding the capacity for 266 second @-@ class passengers , after which she returned to her Australian route . In March 1924 , she completed her 50th voyage on that route . In 1928 , though , Suevic was showing her age , and White Star sold her to Yngvar Hvestendahl 's Finnhval A / S for £ 35 @,@ 000 , who renamed her Skytteren and sent her to Germaniawerft at Kiel to be converted into a whaling factory ship . She served with the Norwegian whaling fleets in Antarctic waters . 1936 AS Finnhval came under control of the Norwegian shipping agent Jørgen Krag who handled on behalf of the German Margarine Union . So until the war her hunting results were delivered to Germany .

When Nazi Germany invaded Norway in the Second World War , Skytteren was interned in the neutral port of Gothenburg , Sweden , with several other Norwegian ships in April 1940 . The exiled Norwegian government claimed these ships as its property , which was contested by the collaborationist Nasjonal Samling government in occupied Norway . However , a court ruling favoured the exiled government 's claim .

On 1 April 1942 , 10 Norwegian ships at Gothenburg made an attempt to escape into Allied @-@ controlled waters , where they would be met and protected by a group of British warships . However , Sweden would not allow the Norwegian ships to use their neutral waters for this , and Swedish ships steered the escapees towards waiting German warships . Of the 10 , two made it through to the British , six were sunk by the Germans or scuttled by their crew , of which Skytteren was one , two turned back to Gothenburg . Skytteren was scuttled in the waters off Måseskär , Sweden . Her crew were taken as prisoners of war . The wreck of Skytteren remains in those waters , with her bow facing to the west .