

Herald Express

Torquay Wednesday 18 August 1926

STEAMER ASHORE

Disaster Off Devon Coast

TORBAY LIFEBOAT CALL

Vessel High And Dry On Rocks

In dense fog the Dutch steamer Betsy Anna went ashore off Prawle Point, and it is feared she will become a total wreck.

The vessel is badly holed, and is high and dry on the rocks.

Hope Cove coastguard station was quickly in touch with the vessel after she had struck, but she signalled that no assistance was required, being apparently undamaged. Tugs from Dartmouth stood by in case any help was needed, but their services were not required, and 16 men who comprise the crew reached the shore safely. The vessel is, in fact, so far on the rocks that the crew have been able to employ a gangway in order to reach the land.

As the tide dropped the vessel's bow became firmly wedged between two projecting rocks, and, through the stern scraping across other boulders, the propellers were stripped bodily off.

LIFEBOAT NOT AVAILABLE

The Torbay lifeboat Alfred and Clara Heath received a call to the Betsy Anna, but unfortunately the boat had been temporarily taken off service for the installation of electric navigation lights. Coxswain W. G. Sanders, with several of the lifeboatmen proceeded to the scene of the wreck in the motor fishing boat Cygnet.

The Betsy Anna is a steel screw steamer of 880 tons gross. She was built in 1892 at Newcastle, and was engaged in the coal trade. She was bound for Amsterdam with little cargo.

Numbers of holidaymakers have visited the scene. The vessel lies just under Prawle Point signal station, being wedged between a big rock and the shore rocks.

Mr. Royal, district officer H.M. Coastguards from Torquay, visited the wreck last night. If she can keep her hold flooded she will rest on the bed where she is now lying, and there will be a chance of salvage operations being successful if these are started immediately.