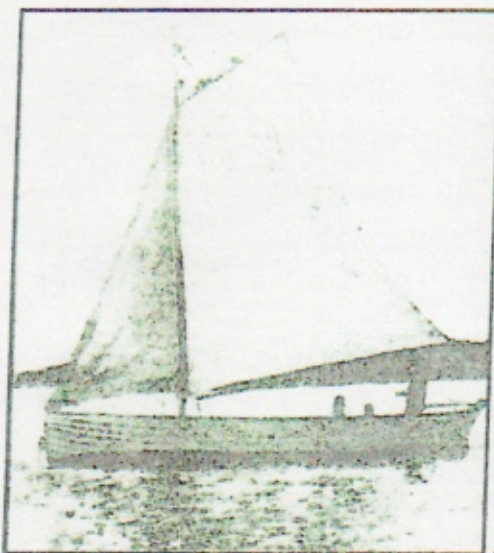


*A wee bit
of maritime
history...*



FREE

The Hutton Disaster of 1913



At 5 p.m. on April 11 1913 one of the ferry boats, the *Lizzie*, set off under sail to travel from Strangford to Portaferry. On board were widower Henry Hutton, owner of the boat and an experienced boatman, and his son John Hutton aged 18.

Their passengers were John McCausland, son of James McCausland, the well-known salvage contractor from Portaferry, John McCausland's wife and her sister Mrs. Ellen Mason aged 46. They were on their way back from visiting an ailing relative in Downpatrick.

There was a strong ebb tide and stiff North West wind. McCausland had the tiller and was aft with the women, Harry Hutton was in charge of the sheets and John Hutton was forward. Abreast of the Katherine Quay at Oldcourt, about 200 yards from the slip, the boat was struck by a heavy squall and capsized. All five on board were thrown into the water. John McCausland removed his coat and supported his wife and Mrs. Mason until help arrived. Rescue boats set out promptly.

Dick Farrow, Dr. McLaughlin's yachtsman, rowed out in his 14-ft punt and saved Mr. and Mrs. McCausland with the help of George Swail (Snr) and Harry Swail. Thomas Quayle, accompanied by John Swail and George McDonnell, picked up Mrs. Mason, apparently already deceased, in his motorboat.

There was no sign of the Huttons

On the next day the *Lizzie* was located underwater off Church Point and retrieved along with an umbrella and oilskins as well as a pair of boots, purchased by John Hutton in Strangford. On June 2nd, over seven weeks later, Harry Hutton's body was found floating beside Ballydorn Quay about ten miles to the North. His son John's body was never found

A list opened for subscriptions in aid of the Hutton dependents and raised £265. This was distributed among the three daughters (Eliza, Rosina and Mary Jane) and one son, Tommy.

STRANGFORD LOUGH DISASTER.

THREE PERSONS DROWNED.

Last night intelligence reached us of a shocking accident in Strangford Lough, off Oldcourt, whereby three Portaferry residents, Henry Hutton, ferryman, his son, John, aged about 17 years, and Mrs. Mason, lost their lives.

It appears that Mr. John M'Causeland, son of Mr. James M'Causeland, salvage contractor, Portaferry, with his wife and his sister-in-law, Mrs. Mason, visited an ailing relative in Downpatrick yesterday. Returning to Strangford in the evening, they set out for Portaferry at five o'clock in a ferryboat, manned by the Huttons, father and son.

There was a strong ebb tide, with a stiff north-west wind. As the boat, under sail, was standing up past Oldcourt, at a point about 200 yards from the Slip, she was struck by a heavy squall, and capsized. The five occupants were flung into the water. It was with consternation that the accident was observed from the Strangford shore. But prompt measures were taken.

Several boats were manned and put off. Dick Farrow, Dr. MacLaughlin's yachtman, in a boat that was first to reach the scene, succeeded in saving Mr. M'Causeland and his wife. Powerful swimmer though Mr. M'Causeland is, he was nearly exhausted in the struggle to support his wife. Meantime, James Quayle, in his motor-boat, picked up Mrs. Mason, in an apparently lifeless condition. Of the Huttons, however, there was no sign. They had been swept away by the strong current.

Mr. and Mrs. M'Causeland were taken ashore, and received every attention. Unhappily, there was no hope for Mrs. Mason, though every effort was made to restore animation, first by members of the rescue party, and then by Drs. McDonald and Smyth, who had come across from Portaferry.

When the dire news became known on both sides of the Lough it created a painful impression. Portaferry has been suddenly plunged into mourning, and deep sympathy is felt with those who have been so swiftly and cruelly bereaved.

Harry Hutton was an experienced boatman, as ready to undertake a trip to the Isle of Man as to cross the ferry. It is only a few short weeks ago, on the 13th ult., to be exact, that he helped to succour a boat's crew in danger of being swamped in one of the whirlpools of the Lough. His son was equally handy and courageous.

Widely known as a skilled yachtman, and even better known for his salvage work on different parts of the coast of the United Kingdom, Mr. M'Causeland has on several occasions shown signal heroism. One of his achievements was the part he played in the rescue on a tempestuous night of the crew of the Cannebiera, wrecked in Dundrum Bay some years ago, for which act of bravery the French Government rewarded him with a gold medal.

Yesterday's calamity is another reminder of the treacherous nature of the wind-swept, eddying currents of the lower reaches of the Lough, which has so often taken toll of human life.

THE STRANGFORD DISASTER.

NO TRACE OF THE HUTTONS.

Little that is material can be said by way of supplementing the particulars published in our last issue of the catastrophe in the Lough in daylight on the evening of the 11th inst., when, off Oldcourt, the ferryboat, *Fizzie*, crossing from Strangford to Portaferry, was capsized by a squall, with the loss of her owner, Harry Hutton, of Portaferry, his son and assistant, John, aged 18, and a passenger, Mrs. Mason, wife of Mr. John Mason, farmer, of Tullymally, while two other passengers, Mrs. Mason's sister, Mrs. M'Causeland, of Portaferry, and her husband, Mr. John M'Causeland, son of the well-known salvage contractor, narrowly escaped drowning.

What is established is that the Huttons never reappeared, nor have the bodies yet been recovered. On the other hand, the three passengers got clear of the overturned boat. It is thrilling to think of Mr. M'Causeland stripping off his coat in the water, and by superhuman efforts keeping up his wife and Mrs. Mason until he became exhausted. Every minute must have been an agony. Yet all accounts agree that no rescue could have been more quickly effected. Alas, in the case of Mrs. Mason, she never regained consciousness. All hearts go out to those on whom a terrible affliction has fallen. The Mason family numbers eight: the motherless Hutton family, now bereaved of a father and brother, numbers four, viz., a son and three daughters.

At ebb tide on Saturday the ill-fated boat was discerned under water off Church Point, and on the following day she was raised. Below the seats were an umbrella and oilskins, besides a pair of boots which had been purchased in Strangford for John Hutton—sad relics of the tragedy on 11th April that has made a deep impression on the public mind. By a melancholy coincidence, it was on 11th April eighteen years ago that six servants from Londonderry-house and two boatmen were drowned in the Lough. And touched by the memory of that event Lady Londonderry now sent a message of condolence to the stricken families in Portaferry. Similar messages have been received from many other quarters.

Patrick Mason *George Watson*
 20 Sept. 1892.
 John Mason = Ellen Watson.
 George 1895 1897 1900 1901 1902 1904 1909
 1894 1899 1900 Ellen 1908.
 21 Aug. 1905 with (1901-1911)
 HENRY HUTTON = ELIZA M'CALLAGHY
 Eliza Rosemary Mary Jane John Thomas Henry
 1890 1892 1894 1897
 70
 * DROWNED.
 11th April 1913
 15 Sabella
 ac. 1905



Tommy Hutton in later life. He used his share of the disaster fund to purchase his own ferry - the *Star of the Sea*.

**This leaflet is produced
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