

[Page 14 - The Wreck of the "Watford"](#)ISSUE : [Issue 16](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1977/6/1

shoal over the ledge, the Watford could not sink, could not even capsize. She was driven farther and farther in, sideways, roaring and grinding over the bottom. The stokers' work was done forever as far as the Watford was concerned. They climbed the ladders to the main deck and stared at the incredible sight. The ship was hard aground, in the very landwash, lashed by towering surf. Everything moveable was being pounded away. On the starboard side a cliff reared up; it seemed almost within arms length of them. The grinding of the ship's bottom on the rocks, the roar of the waves, the howling wind shut each man off from his fellows as if he had been surrounded by a wall. Through all this frenzy came the scream of the Watford's whistle, blast after blast, shrieking into the wilderness as long as there was steam to use. Time seemed to have stopped. They remained soaked and battered by the water, the wind, the unbelievable noise. The stokers, nearly naked as they had been working in the heat below, shook with chill and shock. The land they could see seemed to all hands an utter wilderness. Remember, most of these people, though not quite all, were city folk, and their contact with the shore at either end of the monotonous plodding journey from Sydney to Montreal and back where they would see nothing of the country beyond the waterfront, with perhaps a short jaunt ashore to the shops at Whitney Pier in Sydney, the Seamen's Mission hall, or to drink in some place near the wharves. Beetling cliffs streaming with rain and thrashing boughs of the trees they could see ashore seemed almost as threatening as the sea itself • and no one, no one at all, appeared to answer the cry for help from the Watford's siren. But help was on its way nonetheless. Three carloads of men had begun the trip towards the northern head of Morien Bay from Glace Bay and Donkin; but the load across the bar at Schooner Pond was under water, so they had to walk for three miles, heading straight into the hurricane, scrambling up a steep incline, slipping on the wet grass, fighting their way through over a mile of tuckamore, the prostrate spruce forest that grows on headlands where the wind off the sea is so fierce that the trees are unable to grow upright. This stuff is much like walking on a wire bedspring with holes in it. It both supports and impedes the person trying to cross it. From the south, two more men were working their way around the cliff top from Port Morien. By the time the rescuers arrived the crew of the Watford were trying all means to would be a few hours ashore at either place, help themselves. Someone had put off a Isle Royale Beverages Limited Your Mrihorizwi COCA-COLA boHI?r 564-8130 562-4439 CHICKEN . • CHALET No " (wkn jf 4 outlets to serve you- Blowers St, North Sydney 794-3534 Sydn'f Shopping Centre, Prince St 564-6322 Steriing Road, Glace Bay 849-6689 C.B. Shopping Plaza, Sydney River 564-6646 At. Our New Location . Better Health Centre 364 Charlotte Street, Sydney Offers a Large Range of Health, Vegetarian, Special Diet & Diabetic Foods and Vitamins C.O.D.Orders Accepted/Bulk Rates OPEN MON-FRI PfiONE: 5'2-1237 Health is Happiness Qualified Dispensers Always in Attendance OWL DRUG STORE D?? I • MacDonald, Prop. Your Northside DOROTHY GRAY DISTRIBUTOR



Convalescent and Sick Room Supplies Sales & Rental Drug Sundries and Cosmetics
P.O.Box 125 794-3611 North Sydney ' ALWAYS AT YOUR SERVICE