

NAVAL DRIFTER LOST.

THREE OFFICERS AND TWELVE MEN MISSING.

The Secretary of the Admiralty regrets to announce that his Majesty's drifter Blue Sky, which left Portsmouth on Monday, June 12, for Invergordon, must be presumed to have been lost with all hands. Wreckage of the Blue Sky has been washed ashore. Inquiry is being made into the cause of the loss.

The following officers and men were on board:—

Lieutenant Francis H. C. Jennings, R.N., Midshipman Richard B. Cator, R.N., and Midshipman David Dundas.

Other ranks:—Brewer, William Ernest, telegraphist, J.41903; Downs, George, first stoker, S.S.125714; Gage, Walter, leading stoker, K.10712; Gilchrist, John, first stoker, K.58766; Gregson, John Robert, acting mechanician, K.31502; Harrold, Arthur Sinion Claud, able seaman, J.65203; Kirk, Henry, able seaman, J.16149; Leech, William Duke, J.5899; Nicholass, Adolphus Charles Theodore, able seaman, J.33795; Smith, William, first stoker, S.S.125760; Stevens, Frank Richard, signalman, J.88422; and Walker, Robert Harry, leading seaman, 238522.

Our Portsmouth Correspondent telegraphs:—

The Blue Sky was tender to the Queen Elizabeth, flagship of the Atlantic Fleet, and went to Invergordon to take part in fleet gunnery practice. Her officers and crew were supplied from the flagship, which she preceded by twenty-four hours on the voyage northwards.

Lieutenant Jennings, who had been lent to the Queen Elizabeth for navigation purposes, belonged to Brackley House, Beckenham, Kent.

BODY WASHED ASHORE.

A quantity of wreckage, believed to be from the Admiralty drifter Blue Sky, last seen off the Nore, has been washed ashore in the neighbourhood of Birchington. A body, thought to be that of a member of the crew, has been cast up near the same place, and will be the subject of an inquest, probably to-day.

Blue Sky Disaster 12th June 1922

The granddaughter of William Duke Leech got in touch with us to see if we had anything more to tell her about the disaster.

There was nothing in our maritime records, but she later tracked down 4 articles from the press on the Internet.

I had checked the Burial Register for that period, but as it turned out, Mr Leech's body was identified and was taken to his own area for burial. This was why, although his body was washed ashore in one of our bays, he was not buried in our churchyard.