

The Story of Fred Newman - Lost in the Sea

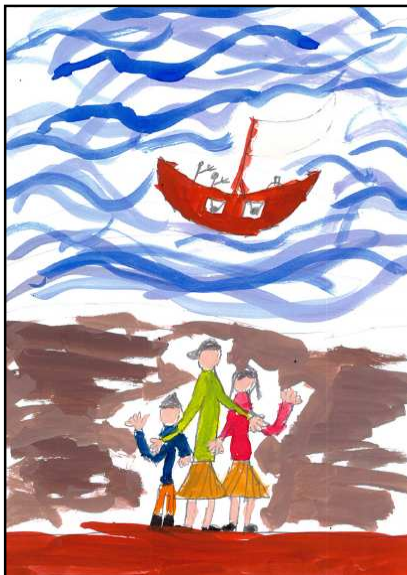


Fred Newman was born over one hundred years ago. When he was older he came to work in the Falkland Islands and married Hannah Holland, the daughter of Davis Holland, who was a German dairyman.

Fred, Hannah and their six children decided to move back to Stanley from Teal Inlet, where Fred had been working. On the day that they were moving, the cutter 'The Shamrock' of Stanley that was as fast as lightning, had come to collect the family and all of their furniture and belongings. During Fred's free time he had been working on a boat. He had built a small but magnificent boat and was planning to sail the thirty or forty miles to Stanley with his nine year old son, Frederick John. Fred expected to complete the voyage in nine hours.



(Illustration by Dorota Wzrosek)



(Illustration by Darcey Jarman)

The next day, Sunday 5th May, they set off a few hours before the Shamrock, so that they would get a good head start. As he and his son passed Volunteer Rocks 'The Shamrock', carrying his wife and five other children, passed them. Fred and his son were last seen from Johnson Harbour on the Monday afternoon, about three miles north of Volunteer Rocks. There was a great storm that night and by Tuesday morning the small boat was well out of sight of land. As they looked around, all they could see was the great ocean and Cape Pembroke Lighthouse. During the storm the rain had been too strong for the weak sail and had torn it to shreds.

For the next few days the boat drifted around the sea. Little Frederick and his father were lost and did not know where they were. They soon got hungry, but luckily had packed some vegetables, flour, bread, tea and cooked meat. They also had seven gallons of water, but once that ran out they had to use the moisture from the potatoes.

They soon realised there was a change in temperature and discovered that they were well north of the Falkland Islands. For the next few weeks they headed in the direction of what they thought was westward but was in fact the exact opposite. They eventually went in a different direction, as heading west

was getting them nowhere. By now both had swollen limbs and little Fred's feet and ankles were only saved by his father rubbing them with turpentine.

Fred's son was the first to spot the grey, pointy fin swimming around in the ocean. They instantly knew it was a shark; their hearts beat faster and faster. They sat tense, waiting for the shark to swim away - he didn't. They tried beating him away with an oar but it did not work. Frederick John threw a stick to distract the fast-moving shark. Luckily the shark swam away thinking the stick was a fish. When Fred and his son were sure that the shark had gone, they quietly and cautiously rowed away.



(Illustration by Alice Hope)

That night they were very hungry. They had already eaten all of the food. They were unable to catch any fish as it was dark so they sat, hungry and cold in the boat. For the weeks that followed they had to catch fish for food. They caught one big fish that served them for seven days. One night they had a big rainfall. They found a medium sized bucket to catch the water and left it outside all night. In the morning they collected the water in the bucket and stored it in the cabin.

A few days later, they felt the boat slow down. It was trickier to move through the water and they noticed the change of colour in the water. Fred later realised there was oil in the water. His son was worried about the animals in the ocean, even though some were dangerous. Then they saw the massive ship with the oil tank in the sea next to it. The men in the ship saw the little sailing boat and blew a whistle. A life boat was launched and quickly arrived at Fred and his son's safety. They left the boat in the ocean and jumped into the life boat. They were told that the ship was bringing oil to Stanley; exactly where Fred and Frederick John were travelling to.



(Illustration by Rachel Bailey)

On the ship they fell asleep (as they had hardly any sleep on the boat). When they arrived at Stanley, Fred and his son rejoined their family and his new baby daughter, who had been born whilst he and his son were at sea.

Story retold by Lottie Price