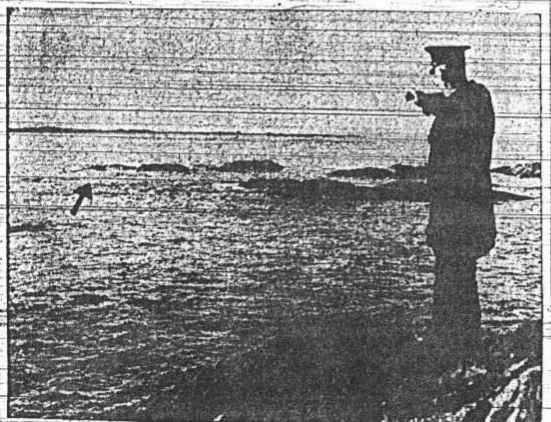
Many Victorians Visit Scene of Marine Tragedy

Scores of Victorians visited small beach on southern side of Victoria Golf Course yesterday to see, and collect, pieces of wreckage from cabin cruiser Discovery Isle. Fifty-two-foot pleasure craft sank in heavy seas a short distance offshore Tuesday afternoon. Pictured above, looking over section of cruiser's housing, are, left to right, Thomas Harrison, 298 Beach Drive; Douglas Richmond, 820 Matchosin Street and Keith Palmer, 712 Transit Road.



Oak Bay Chief of Police Hugh Reston looks over rock-infested waterway lying between Trial Island (in background) and Victoria Golf Course where Discovery Isle was lost. Arrow points to remains of 52-foot pleasure craft, seen at low tide yesterday morning. Most of wreckage was washed up on nearby beach to right of scene pictured above. R.C.M.P. and R.C.N. patrol vessels at daybreak yesterday started search for engineer Joseph Robert Gale, lost when the cabin cruiser was abandoned.

—Colonist Photos.

Searchers Fail to Find Engineer of Wrecked Boat

By RAY WORMALD

Waters about Trial Island and off the Victoria Golf Course were combed yesterday for the body of engineer Joseph R. Gale, missing since Monday afternoon when the 52-foot cabin cruiser Discovery Isle was lost in a heavy sea.

A patrol vessel of the R.C.N. and another operated by the R.C.M.P. searched the area without success.

(Oak Bay Police Chief H. C. F. Reston reported last night that investigations have shown that the flashing light seen Tuesday night was a flashlight being used by the Trial Island lightkeeper. The chief explained that the keeper was searching for the missing engineer. Tuesday night, the flashing light had given rise to faint hope for Gale's safety).

Meanwhile, Major Ernest G. Beaumont—76-year-old owner of the lost vessel—was resting comfortably in Royal Jubilee Hospital following his escape from death.

Shortly after 4:30 p.m. Tuesday he was found clinging to jagged rocks a short distance off a beach on southern slopes of the golf course, and brought to shore by Victor Hirst, proprietor of the Oak Bay Boathouse, Oak Bay Police Constable W. J. Green, and an unidentified third person.

TOTAL LOSS

The pleasure craft, built in Hongkong about 25 years ago, is a total loss. Wreckage from the craft was washed onto nearby beaches throughout Tuesday night and yesterday. It included planking, housing, gradwork, personal properties of the owner, groceries, luggage, life rings, and furnishings. A large number of persons visited the scene of the disaster throughout yesterday—most of them taking away "souvenir" sections.

Early in the afternoon a large truck was there, its operator busy loading every available piece of wreckage he could find along the waterfront.

Newspapermen, looking about the area, found pieces of planking, doors, and other items "hidden" in large clumps of bushes nearby by some early morning beachcomber, who evidently planned picking them up at a later time. Oak Bay police were at the beach throughout the day, but did not stop anyone from collecting bits of the wreckage.

TELLS OF ESCAPE

In an interview with Major Beaumont, arranged especially for The Daily Colonist, the survivor recalled his close shave with death.

"I must have been almost unconscious most of the time I was in the water," Major Beaumont stated. "I did not notice the coldness of the water at all . . . I was too busy worrying about getting out of it."

In addition to leg injuries and severe shock, the Discovery Island owner had numerous cuts and bruises about his arms and hands.

"I wasn't actually in the water very long," he said, "but it sure seemed like a long time.

"I managed to reach the rocks, and threw my arms around one part that was sticking up . . . the waves kept pounding over me and I lost my grip several times . . . but each time was thrown onto the rocks again."

RECOLLECTION VAGUE

He had only vague recollections of being taken out of the water by his rescuers.

"Sure, I'm going to get another boat . . . why not? And besides living on the island as I have since 1918 I really need one. The next one, though, is going to be smaller," he added.

The Discovery Isle, he said, was not covered by insurance.

Over the past 25 years, he estimates, he had traveled at least 100,000 miles in the Discovery Isle, and during that time had carried "somewhere around 20,000 persons." The vessel was known to many Victorians who participated in picnic cruises arranged by Major Beaumont.

DAUGHTER ARRIVES

Yesterday it was learned the 84-year-old engineer had been employed by Major Beaumont since last August. Previously he had served with Imperial Oil and lived in Vancouver. His wife is now living on Discovery Island. Mrs. F. G. McCance, Vancouver, his daughter, arrived here yesterday and was taken to the Beaumont home on Discovery Island by Mr. Hirst from the Oak Bay Boathouse.

Major Beaumont, while in the hospital, is under the care of Dr. W. A. McKimmie. He is to leave the hospital in several days.

The two men left the Discovery Isle after her rudder had broken. They abandoned the cabin cruiser in a small rowboat, which was swamped almost immediately. Mr. Gale disappeared, while Major Beaumont struggled about 50 yards to the offshore rocks.

It is possible, Major Beaumont said yesterday that an attempt will be made to salvage the $5,000 engine of the lost vessel.

FUTILE ATTEMPT

An R.C.A.F. Dakota aircraft made a futile attempt to battle coastal storms today with supplies for six men stranded in their ice-locked fishing boats in Dean Channel, 300 miles north of Vancouver.

LIKES PAINTING

A cheque for $25 was offered in the Arts Centre Gallery this week toward the purchase of a painting by Campbell Pinning in the current National Gallery Watercolor exhibit for 1950.

Mrs. H. R. Bevan who made the offer believes that the painting would be a fine addition to the Victoria gallery's growing permanent collection.

If other friends of the gallery would like to make up the price of $150 for the painting, they are asked to phone G 3123.

NOTICE
Schedule Change
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on the Following Routes:
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VICTORIA-SOOKE
VICTORIA-SIDNEY-DEEP COVE
VICTORIA-SWARTZ BAY
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