

**Extract from the Journal of the ship Gaspé written by Captain Phillip Vibert commencing from the fifth of December 1830 to the final sinking of the ship. The ship had departed from Falmouth having discharged a cargo of pilchards and was bound for Naples Italy when it hit bad weather in the Bay of Biscay.**

**Sunday the fifth of December 1830**

First part of these 24 hours strong gales and squally with rain. At 5 p.m. the gale was increasing, breached the top sail at eight and another sail went to pieces and a very heavy sea is running. At 9 p.m. fore sheets give way. At 10 p.m. a heavy sea struck the ship and carried away many things and washed three men overboard with a long boat and nearly everything movable from the deck. The people were immediately called up to equal the deck and to clean the ship and in this act of so doing another sea came and washed away five more men of the crew, the two mates included and all of the ballast fore and aft . Broke out the pumps and found 5 feet of water in her hold the ship labouring so much and sea breaking over us that it was impossible to man the pumps . We were in danger of being washed overboard by this tremendous sea so remain all night and unable to do anything for our safety. At daylight the weather moderated a little and the men began to to pump the hold.

**Monday the sixth of December 1830**

First part of the 24 hours strong gales and a heavy sea running, the people employed pumping ship and nailing canvas over the broken parts to keep the water out and as much as we could and some others heaving some of the cargo overboard. The latter part, still stormy gales and the ship taking a great deal of water and my little crew hard at the pumps the ship being utterly unrecognisable.

**Thursday the seventh of December 1830**

First part of the 24 hours the weather more moderate. Still about 6 feet of water in the hold. The people employed pumping the ship and two of the men disabled. Still 6 feet water in her hold and the people very much exhausted.

**Wednesday the eighth of December 1830**

First part of the 24 hours strong gales and a heavy sea. The people employed pumping with very little progress. Saw two sails and made mayday signal of distress light. Night comes on and we are left another long night to the mercy of our Saviour. Latter part the weather more moderate. At daylight saw two vessels to windward of us, made the signal of distress but to no effect. We have now gained the water two feet, but the exhausted state of the crew disabled us of making much more progress.

### Thursday the ninth of December 1830

First part of the 24 hours continuation of strong gales and squally weather. The people employed pumping but later the worn out state of my little crew, two of them disabled, and the two boys, would not permit me to undertake further work. Several sails sighted and our Ensign flying on the foremast but none of them come to assistance. At 8 p.m. saw a Brig suddenly appear which neared us and whom we showed our distress and she hailed us and she promised to keep company for the night which she did. At daylight the said Brig at great hazard got a long boat out and the master and three men came on board but were in constant danger of swamping their boat. The brig proved to be the Rapid of Penzance, James Rosewall master, and was bound to Naples. All along the weather looked threatening. The said master promised to remain on board with me as long as he could keep his boat safe having only that boat himself having suffered greatly in the gales. Considering the wicked state of the vessel we thought preferable of trying to make a little way to keep out of the trough of the sea and with much difficulty and the assistance of said master and crew got a sail hoisted on the foremast to try and make a little way to the southward. Wind flying about from north to north-west. The master of the little brig promising to stop by me to see if the weather would improve.

About noon saw another brig coming down toward us, immediately the master of the Rapid hailed this vessel and ordered his mate to speak to the said vessel and to request the Master his assistance the weather continuing to increase. Accordingly the brig bore down to us as asked, but always with great difficulty, that she could speak to us. We told her what we were doing but she was so alarmed at our situation that he advised us to abandon ship instantly and promised to take all the people on board his vessel. On repeating his promise we requested him to send his longboat to which he did with great difficulty, and with the opinion of the master of the brig agreeing with our own that nothing can be done with regards to the Gaspé, and the gale still increasing, the master of the Rapid and myself determined to abandon her before night came on, and so sent some of the the members of the crew on board the brig and requested them to come back directly for more.

They were afraid to come again and requested the Rapid's boat to bring the others . Accordingly by then we put on board the boat with great difficulty and we requested the master of the Brig to stay by until we got safe to the Rapid but his vessel being in ballast and finding impossible to keep with us any longer he went on his way.

Midnight 9th December Latitude 45° 54 seconds, longitude eight degrees 33 seconds.

We were then in confusion not sure of the brigs name but think it is Azure of Portsmouth apparently in ballast, master's name unknown. After over an hour myself and three men finally got to the Rapid and got safe on board being then nearly dark.

Having omitted to state some particulars that happened to the ship, I have to state that the masts from the ship and the covering board split in several places and the main mast carried early below the deck which was in constant risk when the water washed over .

Done on board the brig rapid 12th of December 1830 latitude observed 41 degrees 41 seconds North longitude 10° 29 West

Signed

*Capt Philip Vibert*