

LADY HOBART (1799)

William Dorsitt Fellowes, 16/12/1799 (America & W. Indies, later to Holyhead Route)

Built: 1799

In Packet service: 1799 - 1803 - Lost off Halifax (Iceberg)

Vessel	Commander	Sailing Date	Route	Return_due	Arrival Date	Duration	Arrival NOTES
LADY HOBART					15 Jan 1800	657087	(From Liverpool)
LADY HOBART		18 March 1800	N America		16 Aug 1800	152	Ex Hal 26/7
LADY HOBART		14 September 1800	Jamaica		21 Jan 1801	130	
LADY HOBART	Fellowes	31 March 1801	N America		13 Jul 1801	105	Ex Hal 23/6
LADY HOBART	Fellowes	13 August 1801	N America		14 Nov 1801	94	Ex Hal 31/10
LADY HOBART	Fellowes	09 May 1802	N America		11 Sep 1802	126	Ex Hal 19/8
LADY HOBART		25 October 1802	Leewards		13 Feb 1803	112	Ex Hal in 42 days
LADY HOBART	Fellowes	07 March 1803	N America	04/07/1803			LOST 30 June

Data sources include: M. E. Philbrick (R.I.C. Courtney Library, Truro) qf LL, RCG, SM, Penn Gaz etc.

Lost 28/1/1803 - picture in collision with an iceberg (plate 11 **David Mudd**)

* "By 1851, another Inn which was given up was the *Lady Hobart* near Fish Cross; William **Tregidgo**, a Greenwich Pensioner, had named it after a Packet, on which he had sailed and had been wrecked "on an Island of Ice" in 1803. The crew & passengers took to the boats and reached Newfoundland." After this loss, winter packet sailings to Halifax were stopped. [despite *Lady Hobart* being lost in June!]

RCG 16/7/1803: For Sale - House in Flushing - on 18th July, by public auction at the *Ship Inn*, village of Flushing. In (the) new road leading to Tregew and now in occupation of Captain **William Dorset Fellowes**. (sic)

Newly built,, very commodious, extensive garden behind, and a courtlage in front and commands a beautiful view of the town and harbour of Falmouth.

Apply Mr Tresidder, Attorney at Law

[NOTE: As his house was advertised for sale whilst he was away from Falmouth, it suggests he was intending either moving to another house in Flushing or Falmouth - or, transferring to the Holyhead service. (see later notes)]

RCG 13/8/1803: The *Lady Hobart* packet was lost on the banks of Newfoundland on 30th June 1803, by running foul of an island of ice; but the crew & passengers saved themselves in two of her boats, and arrived in Newfoundland after they had been in the boats 7 days and 6 nights, during that time constant gales of wind.

RCG 3/9/1803: Quoting the *Cornish Gazette* of September 3rd, 1803.

The loss of *Lady Hobart* packet - account by her Captain, William Dorset Fellowes.

Circumstances of the loss are so honourable to the character of Captain Fellowes.(sic).
(his account following)

"**The *Lady Hobart* sailed from Halifax on 22nd June 1803**, on a course South and East to clear **Sable Island**, then northwards to avoid enemy cruisers. On 26th at Seven o'clock A.M., we discovered a large schooner in French colours standing towards us with her deck full of men and concluded she had been apprized (sic) of the war and she took us for a merchant brig. I cleared the ship for action at 8, (and) being within range of our guns, fired a shot at her - when she struck colours.. sent on board and took possession of the vessel, *L'aimable Julie* of Port Liberté, 80 tons burthen, new, and bound thither from the island of St. Pierre, laden with salt fish and commanded by citizen **Charles Rossie**. All of the prisoners (I) sent to Newfoundland (with their vessel), except the Captain, mate and boy, the Captain's nephew, who remained in the Packet.

[Captain Fellowes does not state how many of his ship's crew were assigned the task of taking his prize to Newfoundland]

Tuesday 28th June: 1 A.M., at seven miles per hour by (the) log, we struck an island of ice, with a force causing several of the crew to be pitched out of their hammocks. Being roused out of my sleep by the shudders of the shock, ran up on deck. The helm being put hard-a-port, the ship struck again on the chest-tree and swinging around on the heel, her stern post being stove in, and the rudder carried away, before we could haul her off. The island of ice appeared to hang over the ship, at least twice the height of our mast-head; we suppose the isle to be 1/4 to 1/2 a mile in length.

The sea was breaking over the ice, water was rushing in so as to fill the hold in a few minutes. Hove the guns overboard, cut away anchors from the bows, got two sails under the ship's bottom, kept both pumps going and bailing with buckets at the main hatch in the hope of preventing her from sinking. In a quarter of an hour, she settled down into her fore chains in the water.

"Our situation was now become most perilous. Aware of the danger of a moments delay in hoisting the boats, I consulted **Captain Thomas** of the Navy, and **Mr Bargus**, my master, as to the propriety of making any further efforts to save the ship or the mail; these gentlemen agreed with me that no time was to be lost in hoisting the boats; and that as the vessel was settling fast, our first and only consideration was to endeavour to preserve the crew."

"And here I must pay the tribute of praise which the steady discipline and good conduct of every one on board so justly merit. From the first moment of the ship striking, not a word was uttered expressive of a desire to leave the wreck: My orders were promptly obeyed, and though the danger of perishing was every instant increasing, each man waited for his turn to get into the boats with a coolness and composure that could not be surpassed.

Having fortunately succeeded in hoisting the cutter and jolly-boat, the sea then running high, we placed the ladies (Mrs Fellowes, Mrs Scott, Miss Cotenham) in the former. Miss Cotenham was so terrified that she sprung from the gunwale, and pitched into the bottom of the boat with a considerable violence.

The few provisions which had been saved from the men's berths were then put into the boats, which were quickly veered astern. By this time the main deck forward was under water and nothing but the quarter-deck appeared. I then ordered my men to the boats and having previously lashed iron pigs of ballast to **the mail, it was thrown overboard.**

I had now perceived the ship was sinking fast; and called out to the men to haul up and receive me, intending to drop myself into the cutter from the end of the trysail boom, fearing she might be stove under the counter; and I desired Mr Bargus, who continued with me on the wreck, to go over first. In this instance he replied that he begged leave to disobey my orders; and that he must see me safely over before he attempted to go himself. Such conduct and at such a moment requires no comment.

Whilst the cutter was getting out, I perceived one of the seamen (**John Tipper**) emptying a demijohn, or bottle, containing about 5 gallons which on enquiry, I found to be rum. he said he was emptying it for the purpose of filling it with water from the scuttle cask on the quarter deck, which had been generally filled overnight, and which was then the only fresh water to be got at: it became afterwards our principal supply; I relate this circumstance as being so highly credible to the character of a British sailor.

" We had scarce quitted the ship, when she suddenly gave a heavy lurch to port, and then went down head foremast, (sic) I had ordered the colours to be hoisted on the main-top-gallant-mast-head with the union downwards, as a signal of distress. that if any vessel should happen to be near us at the dawn of day, our calamitous situation might be perceived from her, and she might afford us relief.

At this awful crisis of the ship sinking, when it is natural to suppose that fear would be so predominant principle of the human mind, the coolness of a British seaman was very conspicuously manifested by John Andrew exclaiming, "*There my brave fellows, there goes the pride of Old England*"

"I cannot describe my own feelings or the sensations of my people. Exposed as we were in two small open boats upon the great Atlantic Ocean, bereft of all assistance, but that which our own exertions, under Providence, could afford us, we narrowly escaped being swallowed up in the vortex.

At the moment when the ship was sinking, she was surrounded by what seamen term a 'school', or an incalculable number of whales, we were extremely apprehensive, from their near approaches to the boats, that they might strike and materially damage them; we therefore shouted and used every effort to drive them away, but without effect; they seemed to pursue us and remained about the boats for the space of half an hour; when they disappeared."

"We now rigged the foremast, the wind blowing from the precise point on what it was necessary to sail, to reach the nearest land. An hour had scarcely elapsed from the time the ship struck, till she foundered. The distribution of the crew had already been made in the following order."

"In the cutter - of 20' long, 6'4" broad and 2'6" deep, we embarked 3 ladies and myself, **Capt. Richard Thomas**, of the navy, the French Captain, the master's mate,

gunner, steward, carpenter and eight seamen - in all 18 people: which together with the provisions, brought the boat's gunwale down to within 6-7" of the water. From this confined space, some idea may be found of our crowded state; but it is scarcely possible for the imagination to conceive the extent of our sufferings in consequence of it.

In the jolly-boat - 14' from stem to stern, 5'3" broad and 2' deep, embarked Mr Samuel Bargus, master; Lt. Col.. George Crooke, of the 1st regiment of Guards, the boatswain, sail maker and seven seamen, in all 11 persons.

The only provisions we were able to save consisted of between 40 and 50 lbs of biscuits; 1 demijohn containing 5 gallons of water: a small jug of the same, and part of a barrel of spruce beer, 1 demijohn of rum, a few bottles of port wine. [later found, a small ham]

With 2 compasses, a quadrant, a spy-glass, a small tin mug, and a wine glass. The deck-lantern which had a few spare candles in it, had likewise been thrown into the boat and the cook having had the precaution to secure his tinder-box and some matches that were kept in a bladder, we were afterwards enabled to steer by night.

The wind was now blowing strong from the westward, with a heavy sea and the day had just dawned. Estimating ourselves to be at the distance of 350 miles from St John's in Newfoundland, with a prospect of a continuance of westerly wind, it became at once necessary to use the strictest economy. I represented to my companions in distress, that our resolution, once made, might not be changed; and that we must begin by suffering privations, which I foresaw would be greater than I ventured to explain. To each person were served out half a biscuit, and a glass of wine (port), which was the only allowance for the next 24 hours, all agreeing to leave the water intact as long as possible. The main hatch tarpaulin had been thrown into the cutter; which being cut into lengths, enabled us to form a temporary bulwark against the waves. Soon after day-light we made sail, with the jolly-boat in tow, and stood close-hauled for Newfoundland.

We now said prayers and returned thanks to God for our deliverance. At noon observed in Lat 46.33 N, St John's bearing W 3/4 N, distant about **350 miles**.

Wednesday 25th June: We had passed a long and sleepless night, I found myself at dawn with 28 people looking up to me with anxiety for the direction of our course, as well as for the distribution of their scanty allowance. On examining our provisions, we found the bag of biscuits much damaged by salt water, it therefore became necessary to curtail the allowance, to which precaution all cheerfully assented.

A thick fog soon after came on; it continued all day with heavy rain, which as we had no means of collecting, afforded us no relief, our crowded and exposed situation was rendered more distressing from being thoroughly wet, no time having been permitted to take more than a great coat or a blanket with the clothes on his back.

"Kept the oars in both boats going constantly, and steering W.N.W course. All hands anxiously looking out for a strange sail. At noon, served a 1/4 of a biscuit and a glass of rum t each person. St. John's bore W by N 1/4 N, distant 310 miles. No

observation. [sun]. One of the ladies now read prayers to us, particularly those after a storm and those for safety at sea.

Thursday 30th June. At day break we were all so benumbed with wet and extreme cold that 1/2 a glass of rum and a mouthful of biscuit, were served out to each person; the ladies, who had hitherto refused to taste the spirits, were now prevailed upon to take the stated allowance, which afforded them immediate relief, and enabled them the better to resist the severity of the weather.

The sea was mostly calm, with thick fog and sleet; the air raw and cold: we had kept at our oars all night, and we continued to row during the whole of this day. The jolly-boat having unfortunately put off from the ship with only 3 oars, and having but a small sail, converted into a fore-sail from a top-gallant-steering sail, without needles or twine, we were obliged to keep her constantly in tow. The cutter also having lost two of her oars in hoisting out, was now so deep in the water, that with the least sea she made little way so that we were not enabled to profit much by the light winds.

"Some one from the jolly-boat called out that there was a part of a cold ham, which had not been discovered before. [the cook?!] - a small bit, about the size of a nutmeg, was immediately served out to each person, and the remainder was thrown overboard, as I was fearful of it's increasing our thirst, which we had not the means of assuaging.

At noon we judged ourselves to be on the North East edge of the Grand Bank, St. John's being W by N 1/4 N, distant 246 miles. No observation. Performed divine service.

Friday 1st July. During the greater part of the last 24 hours, it blew a hard gale of wind from the W.S.W. with a heavy confused sea from the same quarter, a thick fog and sleet throughout, the weather extremely cold, for the spray of the sea freezing as it blew over the boat, rendering our situation truly deplorable. It was at this time that we all felt a most painful depression of spirits; the want of nourishment, and the continued cold and wet weather has rendered us almost incapable of exertion. The very confined space in the boat would not allow of our stretching our limbs, and several of the men whose feet were constantly swelled, repeatedly called out for water.

On my reminding them of the resolution, we had made, and of the absolute necessity of our persevering in it, they acknowledged the justice and propriety of my refusal to comply with their desire, and the water remained untouched.

The cutter was now so low in the water, and had shipped so much sea, we were obliged to cast off the jolly-boat's tow-rope, and very soon lost sight of her in the fog. This unlucky circumstance was productive of the utmost distress to us all. To add to the misery of our situation, we lost with the boat, not only a considerable part of our stores, but with them our quadrant and spy-glass. At about four A.M. the gale increasing, with a prodigious heavy sea, we brought the cutter to, by heaving the boat's sail loose over the bow, and veering it out with a rope bent to each yard-arm, which kept our head to the sea, so as to break it's force before it reached us. Under all the circumstances, the ladies particularly, with a heroism that no coward (?) can describe, afforded us the best example of patience and fortitude. We joined in

prayer, which tranquillised (sic) our minds, and afforded us the consolatory hope of bettering our conditions; on these occasions we were all bare-headed, notwithstanding the incessant rain.

Saturday 2nd July. It rained hard during the night, and the cold became so severe, that almost every one in the boat was unable to move, our hands and feet were so swelled that many of them became quite black. At day-break I served out about a third of a wine-glass of rum to each person, with a 1/4 of a biscuit, and before noon a small quantity of spruce beer, which afforded us great relief.

At half past eleven A.M., a sail was discovered to the eastward, standing to the N.W. Out joy at such a sight with the inward hope of deliverance gave us all a new life. I immediately ordered the people to sit as close together as possible, to protect us having the appearance of an armed boat, and having tied a lady's shawl to the boat-hook, I rose myself as well as I could and from the bow, waved it as long as my strength would allow me. Having hauled close to the wind, we neared each other fast, and in less than a quarter of an hour we perceived the jolly-boat.

I cannot attempt to describe the various sensations of joy and disappointment, which were by turn expressed on all our countenances. As soon as we approached the jolly-boat, we threw out to her a tow-rope, and bore away to the North West. The jolly-boat had been steered two nights without any light, and on meeting again after such tempestuous weather could not have happened but from the interposition of Providence.

Our hopes of deliverance had now been buoyed up to the highest pitch. The excitement arising from our joy began perceptibly to lose its effect, and to a state of artificial strength succeeded such a despondency that no entreaty nor argument, could rouse some of the men even to the common exertions of making sail.

To the French Captain and several of the people who appeared to have suffered most, I now, for the first time, served out a wine glass full of water. I had earnestly cautioned the crew not to taste the salt water, but some of these unhappy men had, nevertheless; taken large draughts of it, and become delirious; some were seized with violent cramps and twitching of the stomach and bowels, I again took occasion to point out to the rest of them the extreme danger of such indiscretion.

Performed divine service at noon. St John's bore W by N 3/4 N, distant 110 miles. No observation of the sun.

Sunday 3rd July. The cold, wet, hunger and thirst which we now experienced are not to be described, and made our situation very deplorable. At 8 P.M., having a strong breeze from the Southward we stood on under the canvass we could spread, the jolly-boat followed in our wake, and pulling her oars to keep up with us. The French Captain, who for some days had behaved under a despondency which admitted no consolation, jumped over-board in a fit of delirium and instantly sunk. One of the prisoners in the jolly-boat became so outrageous, that it was found necessary to lash him to the bottom of the boat.

We were all deeply affected by the circumstances, the least trifling accident, or disappointment was sufficient to render our irritable state more painful: and I was

seized with such melancholy, that I lost all recollection of my situation for many hours; a violent shivering had seized me, which returned at intervals; and as I had refused all sustenance, my state was very alarming; toward night I enjoyed, for the first time, three or four hours sound sleep, a perspiration came on, and I awoke as from a dream, free from delirium, but painfully alive to all the horrors that surrounded me.

The sea continued to break over the boats so much, that those who had force enough, were obliged to bale out without intermission. Those who sat in the stern of the cutter were so confined, that it was, that it was difficult for anyone to put his hand into his pocket, and the greater part of the crew lay in water upon the boat's bottom. The sun had never cheered us but once during the whole of our perilous voyage.

A very heavy gale of wind now came in from the southward, with so tremendous a sea, that the greatest vigilance was necessary in managing the helm, as the slightest deviation would have broached the boats to, and consequently must have hurried our destruction. We scudded before it, expecting every wave to overwhelm us; but through the providence of Almighty God, we weathered the storm, which began to abate towards night. We had nearly run the distance we had supposed ourselves from St. John's; but owing to the thickness of the fog we were prevented from discerning to any great extent.

Towards evening, a beautiful white bird, web-footed, and not unlike a dove in size and plumage, hovered over the mast head of the cutter; notwithstanding the pitching of the boat, it frequently attempted to perch on it, and continued fluttering there until dark. Trifling as this circumstance may appear, it was considered by us all as a propitious omen.

The impressive manner in which it left us, and returned to gladden us with its presence, anchored (?) in us a superstition, to which sailors are at all times said to be prone: we indulged ourselves on this occasion, with the most consolatory assurances that some hand which had provided their solace to our distresses, would extricate us from the danger which surrounded us.

Monday 4th July: As the day dawned, the fog became so thick, that we could not see very far from the boat. During the night we had been under the necessity of casting off the jolly-boat's tow-rope - to induce her crew to exert themselves by rowing. We again lost sight of her and I perceived that this unlucky accident excited great uneasiness among us and we were no so reduced that the most trifling remarks or exclamation agitated us very much.

Soon after first daylight, the sun rose in view for the second time since we quitted the wreck. It is worthy of remark, that during the period of 7 days, that we were in the boat, we never had an opportunity of taking an observation, either of the sun, moon or stars, or of any drying of our clothes.

The fog at length beginning to disperse, we instantly caught a glimpse of the land within a mile distance, between Kettle Cove and Island Cove in Conception Bay, 14 leagues from the harbour of St. John's. Almost at the same moment we had the

inexpressible satisfaction to discover the jolly-boat, and a schooner in shore, standing off towards us!

I wish it were possible for me to describe our emotions at this interesting moment. From the constant watching and fatigue, and from the languor and depression arising from our exhausted state, such accumulated irritability was brought on, that the joy of a speedy relief affected us all in a most remarkable way; many burst into tears, some looked at each other with a stupid stare, as if doubtful of the reality of what they saw, as if doubtful of the reality of what they saw: several were in such a lethargic state that no consolation, no animating language, could rouse them to exertions.

At this affecting period, though overpowered by our feelings, and impressed with the recollection of our sufferings, and the sight of the many deplorable objects, I proposed to offer up our solemn thanks to heaven for our miraculous deliverance. Every one cheerfully assented; and as soon as I opened the prayer book (which I had secured the last time I went down to my cabin) - there was an universal silence; a spirit of elation was so singularly manifested on this occasion, that to the benefits of a religious sense, in uncultivated minds, must be ascribed that discipline, good order, and exertion, which even the sight of land could scarcely produce!

By the editor of the *Cornish Gazette*;

Thus far, with the exception of a few trifling abridgements, we have given the narrative of Captain Fellowes's own language. We shall now briefly state, that they were all taken on board the schooner, and soon after, arrived at St. John's, Newfoundland, where they were received in the most humane and handsome manner by Brigadier-General Skerrit, who commanded there.

Captain Fellowes soon after hired a vessel, which brought him with Mrs Fellowes, Mr Bargus and the passengers to Bristol, [the clearest implication that Mrs Fellowes was, indeed, his wife] where they arrived on 3rd August (1803), now past. Mr Robert Jenkins, master's mate was left in charge of the crew, who may return via Halifax. [on a packet?]

We subjoin a list of persons this providentially escaped;

William Dorset Fellowes Esq., Commander	Crew
Mr. Samuel Bargus , Master	John Harris
Mr. Robert Jenkins , Master's mate	John Andrew
Peter Germain , Gunner	John Anderson
Benjamin Saule , Boatswain	P. Martin
John Gard , Carpenter	John Tipper
Francis Lambrick , Sailmaker	William Tregido [see Mudd]
Thomas Bell , Ship's Cook	Christian McCleaver
Edward Roberts , Captain's Steward	John Watson
Richard Harris , Captain's Servant	Timothy Donuhaugh
	Richard Pearce
French Prisoners of war	Passengers

Charles Rosse (Rossie?) - afterwards drowned		Mrs Scott
G. Goslin	" "	Miss Cotenham
V. Francois	" "	Mrs Fellowes
		Lt. Col. Cooke
		Capt. Richard Thomas RN

Lost:

[Captain Charles Rossie, French prisoner of War, master of *L'aimable Julie* jumped overboard & drowned, 3/7/1803].

[From which one may deduce that at least 8 men were assigned by Captain Fellowes to carry *Lady Hobart's* prize, *L'aimable Julie* to Newfoundland, given a normal compliment of 28 men (possibly more in a period of war)

Quoting Howard Robinson, (p.77)

The Holyhead service was very profitable for the commanders, on account of the large income from passenger fares and because of its freedom from attack by privateers. Captains would even leave Falmouth for Holyhead, and regard it as a promotion. Captain Skinner of the *Princess Royal* had transferred to Holyhead in 1799. [ibid., XIII, 112-116; Repts. PMG., XXIII, 123-9.]

Two other Falmouth Captains who transferred to Holyhead, were Captain Fellowes of the *Lady Hobart*, and Captain Stevens of the *Lady Mary Pelham*

RCG 0/6/1804:(Sat) Died suddenly at Falmouth on Wednesday last, John Tipper, seaman, who had been married but 16 days.

This is the same John Tipper whose name is so honourably recorded in Captain Fellowes's narration into the loss of the *Lady Hobart* packet (given in our paper of 3rd September last)

Commanders Appointed By The General Post Office

**History Round The Fal Part 1*, 1980 (p.72) – and

Innkeepers & Lodging Houses In Flushing. by

M E Philbrick. (Courtney Library, R.I.C., Truro)

Cornish Gazette of September 3rd 1803.

The Falmouth Packets, by David Mudd

Carrying British Mails Overseas, Howard Robinson (Allen & Unwin 1964)