

**Organisation:** Wadebridge & District Museum

**Title of the Object:** Half-hull model of schooner “Doris”



**Description of the object and story:** The “Doris” was built in Appledore in 1904 for a group of Padstow and Wadebridge owners. She was a steel-hulled and three-masted cargo schooner.

On Friday 14th December 1907 she was in the North Sea, sailing from Plymouth to Ghent with a crew of five and a cargo of China clay when she encountered storm-force winds. In the early hours of Saturday morning, she ran aground on the Rassen sandbank near Westkapelle in the Netherlands.

With the sea breaking over the deck, the crew climbed the masts. With daylight, she was spotted from shore, but the storm prevented the Vlissingen lifeboat and a tug from approaching. The storm eventually died down somewhat and a fishing boat crewed by seven members of the Schoevers family put out that night. They kept station during the night and in daylight managed to approach and throw a line to rescue three of the Doris' crew who had spent 30 hours up the mizzen mast. They informed the lifeboat crew, who rescued a fourth man from the foremast, but the fifth, Ernest Crowther, the 18-year-old ship's cook, had disappeared in the night.

Wadebridge is no longer an inland port with a community earning a dangerous and poorly paid living from the sea, but this was a major part of the Town's life in earlier days and deserves to be remembered. The story of the Doris highlights the risks of that living and celebrates the heroism of the Dutch fishing family.

