

The Vooruit

By Eric Shaw

The Shipping & Mercantile Gazette of 17 January 1879 announced that the ship, the Vooruit, had sailed from Veendam in Holland with Harm Adde Hazewinkle as master, for Clarecastle.ⁱ The same publication on 5 February 1879 reported that the Vooruit had left Clarecastle on 2 February 1879 bound for Liverpool with a cargo of pitwood from the Clare Sawmills in the Quay Road that was owned by Patrick O'Brien.ⁱⁱ During the night as the ship made its way down the Fergus, it was forced to drop anchor due to thick and foggy weather. At about 7 a.m. it was discovered that the ship was lying on rocks; the pumps were sounded and 18 inches of water was found in the hold. Twelve hours later, there was seven feet of water in the hold. At midnight, the master, crew and pilot left the vessel in their boat and rowed back to Clarecastle as it was impossible to remain any longer on board with safety.

The Irish Times of 8 February 1879 gave a more detailed account of the incident. The Vooruit had lurched on to Boland's Rock near Island de Van (Islandavanna) and ended up lying on its side. Steam tugs had been sent to the scene but failed to move the ship off the Rock. The ship had been chartered by Patrick O'Brien and had an experienced pilot on board named Culligan. The cargo of pitwood was floating down the Fergus and some had been washed ashore on the islands in the river.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Irish Examiner of 8 February 1879 added that O'Brien's cargo of pitwood comprised of about 200 tons of forest timber for a mining district in England. It stated also that the vessel was insured for £2,000 and that as the ship was not in deep water, an effort to tow her into the docks at Limerick by steam launches was being considered.^{iv} However, Lloyd's List of 15 February 1879 shows the Vooruit still lying in the Fergus.^v

At a meeting of Limerick Harbour Commissioners on 18 February 1879, a letter was read from the Harbour Department of the Board of Trade, drawing attention to the recent wreck of the Dutch brig Vooruit in the Fergus.^{vi} The Commissioners stated that they were not responsible for the placing of buoys and marks in the Fergus as they derived no revenue from the River Fergus navigation. The matter was referred to the pilot committee.

The Clare Journal of 24 February 1879 carried the above advertisement for the auction of the wreck. The details in the notice add greatly to the information on the ship and its cargo.^{vii}

WRECK AUCTION.
OF THE
DUTCH SCHOONER "VOORUIT."
WITH ITS CARGO OF
**115 TONS OF IRISH ASH TIMBER, CHAINS,
ANCHORS, SAILS, BOATS, &c. &c.**
For account of whom it concerns,
On **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22nd Inst.**
AT
**ISLAND OF VAN, IN THE FERGUS RIVER,
5 Miles from CLARE CASTLE,**
Where the Wreck now lays

THE hull of the Dutch Schooner "Vooruit," 115 Tons register, carries 190 dead weight, on 11 feet draught of water, with the anchors, chains, mooring chains, spars, rigging, sails, ship's boats, and all other fittings.

The VOORUIT is a most desirable Vessel for coasting, was classed at Glasgow 13th December, 6-6-14 French Vessels, for 4 years.

The Cargo consists of
115 TONS OF PRIME IRISH ASH
The Vessel can be seen at low water.

Full particulars of
PATRICK S. CONNOLLY, Esq.,
Solicitor for the Owners; or
of
M. ENRIGHT, Ship Agent,
Lower Cecil Street, Limerick
or
JOHN BERNAL,
Auctioneer.

Notice—The Eunis train leaves the Limerick Terminus at 10.10 a.m. Buyers will get out at Clare Castle, where a steam Launch will be in waiting to take them to the place of Sale, free of charge and return same evening.
Sale at one o'clock sharp. Condition at Sale.
Feb. 22.

The Shipping & Mercantile Gazette of 26 February 1879 had a report from the master of the Vooruit, H.A. Hazewinkle:^{viii}

Shipping and Mercantile Gazette - Wednesday 26
February 1879

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VOORUIT.—Report of H. A. Hazewinkel, Master of the galliot Vooruit, of Veendam, 113 tons, from Clare Castle, Feb. 2, 10 A.M., for Liverpool (pitwood):—On the 3d, at 1 A.M., tide about high water, weather thick and foggy, wind N.N.E., light, ship was anchored by order of the Pilot, and about 7 A.M., same morning, discovered, with daylight, that the ship was lying on rocks. Sounded the pumps, and found 18 inches of water. About 7, same evening, found about seven feet of water in the hold; and about midnight, by the advice of the Pilot, deponent, Crew, and Pilot left the ship in the boat, and came to Clare Castle, it being impossible to remain any longer on board with safety. No services were rendered by any one.—Limerick, Feb. 5.

Notes:

- A) Timber (Irish
- B) ash) for use as pit props in the coal mines in England was harvested in east Clare and brought to Clarecastle Quay for export. Patrick O'Brien carried out this trade as did Patrick Power in a later period. The scene below is of a ship being loaded at Clarecastle with pitwood probably about 1900.^{ix}



B) The Vooruit is variously described in the newspapers of the day as a brig, a schooner and a galliot (a single-masted Dutch cargo boat). We have a photo of a schooner linked to Patrick O'Brien but there is no way to link it to the Vooruit.

ⁱ The Shipping & Mercantile Gazette of 17 January 1879

ⁱⁱ The Shipping & Mercantile Gazette of 2 February 1879

ⁱⁱⁱ The Irish Times of 8 February 1879

^{iv} The Irish Examiner of 8 February 1879

^v Lloyd's List of 15 February 1879

^{vi} Freeman's Journal 18 February 1879

^{vii} Clare Journal 24 February 1879

^{viii} Shipping & Mercantile Gazette 26 February 1879

^{ix} Photograph of 1900 ship courtesy of John Power

I am indebted to Joe Power for bringing the loss of the Vooruit to my attention.