

## The '*Ardmore*' Inquest

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The South Wexford Coroner, Mr. Jimmy Murphy, performed an unusual task on Friday, 19<sup>th</sup>. November 1999, when he opened an inquest into the deaths of the twenty-four seamen killed on board the s.s. '*Ardmore*' in November 1940. The Inquest, which Mr. Murphy described as unusual, was held in Wexford Courthouse by special permission of the Minister for Justice under Section 23 of the Coroners Act. There was no medical evidence and the sole witness, Mr. Peter Mulvany of Clontarf, Dublin, told of the vessel's last sightings from contemporary Irish

Military Records. Following this the jury retired for a few minutes and returned a verdict that all twenty-four sailors had been killed '*as a result of an explosion on board the 'Ardmore' off the Great Saltee Island.*'

This Inquest had to be held, because when the wreck of the ship was located some four years ago, she was lying only 2.6 nautical miles from the Baseline, and still inside Irish Territorial Waters. This meant that Death Certificates could not be issued for those lost under the existing Law.