

The first notice which was received of this melancholy disaster, were by the two following letters, dated January 25, 1809, the one from Dover and the other from Deal.

“It is with much concern that I inform you that the Admiral Gardner and Britannia, East India ships, outward bound, in bearing up for the Downs, early this morning, in the tremendous gale, got on shore on the South Sand Head, and it is much feared that both of them will be lost. Of the crews nothing certain is known here; but report says that the whole of one of them is lost, and the crew of the other is to be seen on the mast, but owing to the heavy sea, the Deal boats could not go alongside to rescue them. ---Five, P.M. One of our boatmen is just come down from the South Foreland, and he says that at 3 o'clock he saw some boats go alongside the ship where the men were seen, and bring them off; but he could see no men on board the other ship, which was nearly under water. Wind N. and now moderate.”

“Last night and this morning it blew a very heavy gale, from S.W. to W.N.W. and daylight presented to our view a most distressing scene, three vessels on the Goodwin Sands, with only their foremasts standing and a very heavy surf breaking over them. Vice-Admiral Campbell sent two gun-brigs and a cutter to anchor as near as possible, to render them every assistance in their power. The vessels are a large brig, the Admiral Gardner and the Britannia, outward bound East Indiamen, the crews of which it is feared are lost. Great credit is due to the boatmen of this place, Broadstairs, and Ramsgate for their exertions, in endeavoring to save the lives of their crews; they succeeded in getting to the Indiamen, and some of them are now (4 P.M.) coming on shore with part of the crews, both, of which are said to be saved, except seven of the Britannia's, and three of the Admiral Gardner's men; some of the cargoes may probably be saved, but the vessels must inevitably be lost.”

Much anxiety was entertained consequence of this imperfect information, which was considerably increased the next day by the following account:

“The Britannia and Admiral Gardner remain in the same situation as yesterday. The brig that was on the Goodwin Sands, is the Apollo, Captain Reddal, from London to Coracoa. She drove on the Sand early yesterday morning. At 10 A.M. the Captain and ten men took to the long boat, which soon after upset, and all perished. One man refused to venture in the boat, and remained in the rigging in that perilous situation till ten this morning, when he was taken from the wreck, and brought on shore by some of the Deal boats, and is in a fair way of recovery.”

The Admiral Gardner was not insured, the Britannia, we understand, for about 7,000L. Both had on board a very valuable cargo, particularly the latter, which, with the loss of the vessel was estimated at 100,000 L. The total loss of both was said to be about 200,000L.

The following is another account received on the 27th of January, which, though in a great degree a repetition of the former, we think it necessary to give.

“The effects of the gales of Tuesday night, the 24th of January, have been severely felt among our shipping on the coast. Two very valuable outward bound East Indiamen have been totally lost on the Goodwin Sands, besides other vessels; of which we believe the following particulars will be accurate. On the evening mentioned, great apprehensions were entertained for the fate of the Indiamen going through the Downs; but nothing was known of their situation till the following morning, when a most distressing scene presented itself to the spectators from Deal. Three large ships were seen on the Goodwin Sands, with only their foremast standing, hoisting

signals of distress, and the sea was dashing over them mountains high. The crews were all collected on the poops, waiting for that relief which the Deal boatmen seemed anxious to afford them. These men, by their indefatigable exertions, and at the imminent hazard of their lives, reached the wrecks of the *Indiamen*, and took out of the *Admiral Gardner* the whole of her crew.”

“The boatmen from *Ramsgate* and *Broad-stairs* joined those from *Deal*, and removed into their boats the people from the *Britannia*, previous to which this last ship had lost of her crew three *Lascars* and twenty-four seamen, and one died in one of the *Deal* boats from fatigue.”

“Of the crew of the *Admiral Gardner*, it is feared four have been lost; for in the night one of the seamen having been washed overboard, the third mate and three seamen volunteered their services to endeavor to pick him up in the ship's boat, which was never after heard of. Other accounts estimate the loss of the *Britannia* at only seven men.”

“We regret to state, that the boatmen were not in time to save a single man belonging to the third ship, (a large brig), and all the hands on board perished. There were proper pilots on board the *Indiamen*, but the violence of the weather baffled all their skill.”

“The *Admiral Garner* was the first vessel driven upon the sands; and as soon as the pilot of the *Britannia* found that ship shoaled her water, he let go one anchor, and after that two more, but such was the violence of the gale, that she was driven on the sand with three anchors ahead.”

“*Vice-Admiral Campbell*, at day light, sent two gun-brigs, a lugger and a cutter, to anchor as near as possible, in order to render the sufferers every assistance in their power. If the weather abated soon, it was expected that part of their cargoes might be saved.”