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**REPORT OF INVESTIGATION
INTO INCIDENT ONBOARD THE
MV “CLAIRE BUOYANT”
ON
MONDAY 1st AUGUST 2011**

The Marine Casualty Investigation Board was established on the 25th March, 2003 under the Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) Act, 2000.

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**REPORT No. MCIB/205
(No.3 of 2012)**

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1. SYNOPSIS

(Note: All times are in UCT)

On 1st August 2011 at approximately 17.00 hrs. the unregistered MV "*Claire Buoyant*" departed Beginish Island, Co. Kerry with a crew of one onboard, Skipper/Owner Mr. Eoin Firtear, five passengers and a cargo of twenty one sheep. Whilst on passage the vessel got into difficulties and began taking water. A Mayday message was sent out on VHF Channel 16 at 18.03 hrs. Local craft came to the assistance of the crew and passengers, none suffered any injuries. All sheep were jettisoned overboard but eighteen were subsequently rescued.

2. FACTUAL INFORMATION

2.1 Particulars of the Vessel.

Name of Vessel:	"CLAIRE BUOYANT"
Builder:	Seamark Ltd.
Year of Build:	APPROXIMATELY 2003
Overall Length:	7.92 metres
Breadth:	3.04 metres
Draft:	0.76 metres
Engine Capacity:	Ford 4 cylinder engine of approximately 55.00 KW
Name & Address of Owner:	Mr. Eoin Firtear, Ventry, Co. Kerry.

General Description of Craft: Traditionally built craft of fibre reinforced plastic, of carvel form, with a raked stem and transom stern. Craft was of decked design (raised foredeck, open sealed aft deck with freeing ports).

Craft powered by a Ford 4 cylinder, 4-stroke engine of rated 55.00 KW capacity.

A small wheelhouse fitted at the forward end of the vessel.

A pot hauler fitted on starboard aft end of wheelhouse superstructure.



General View of MV "Claire Buoyant"

- 2.2. The vessel was un-licenced and un-registered.
- 2.3 The crew of the MV "*Claire Buoyant*" on 1st August 2011 was Skipper/Owner:-
Mr. Eoin Firtear.

Mr. Firtear was in possession of a Short Range VHF Licence and had completed a BIM Safety Course in 2006.

He had no other formal marine qualifications and only very limited sea-going experience.

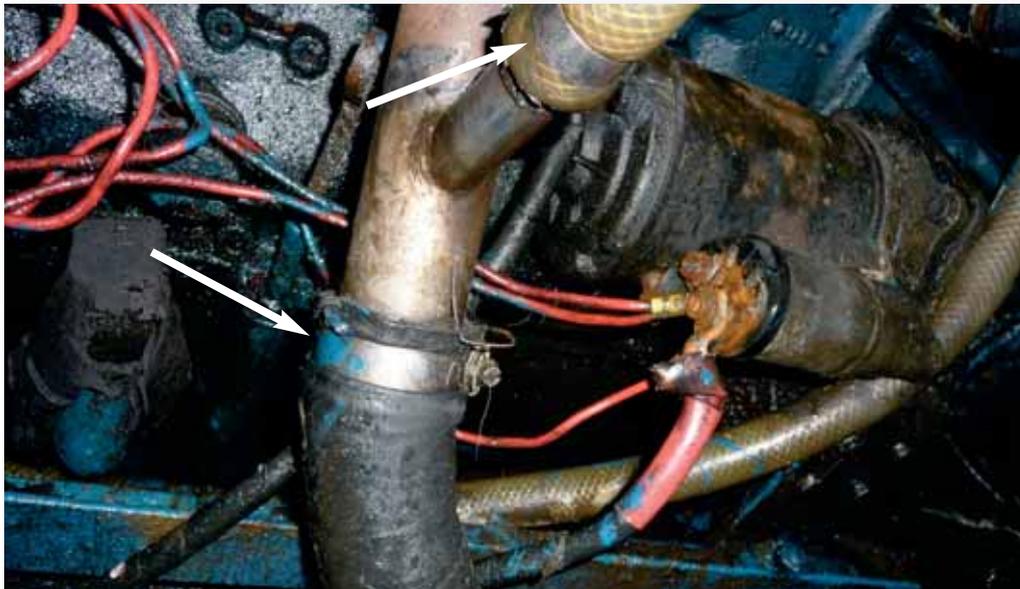
- 2.4 At the time of the incident five friends of the skipper were being carried as passengers.
- 2.5 Met Éireann estimate of weather conditions in the area off Sleah Head, on 1st August 2011 was, Winds: light, Force 3, gusting up to Force 4 at times, variable in direction but mainly from a west-north-west direction. Waves slight to moderate, with a significant wave height of 1 metre and 1.5 metres.

3. EVENTS PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT

- 3.1 On 1st August 2011 at approximately 12.00 hrs. the MV "*Claire Buoyant*" departed Ventry, Co. Kerry with a crew of one and five passengers onboard and proceeded to Beginish Island.
- 3.2 On arrival at Beginish the boat lay off the island and sheep were ferried out to the MV "*Claire Buoyant*" by tender about seven at a time.
- 3.3 During the afternoon a total of twenty one sheep were stated to have been loaded on-board the MV "*Claire Buoyant*".
- 3.4 The craft then departed for Ventry at approximately 17.30 hrs.

4. THE INCIDENT

- 4.1 Whilst on passage between Beginish and Ventry the skipper noted the boat becoming tender and the deck edge becoming submerged, thus indicating stability issues.
- 4.2 On investigation it was found that water was entering the engine room from the water-cooled exhaust system, due to the water injection pipe coming adrift from the exhaust pipe. The engine was stopped to prevent a further ingress of water, the water level was stated to have been to a depth of approximately 280 mm.
- 4.3 The flexible pipework on the exhaust system was only secured with single hose clamps instead of industry standard of two per connection. If the pipes had been adequately secured in the normal manner the chances of the flooding would have been vastly reduced.



Single Hose Clips on Exhaust System

- 4.4 Fearing for the safety of the vessel the skipper sent out a Mayday Call on Channel 16 timed at 18.03 hrs. and jettisoned all the sheep overboard.
- 4.5 Valentia MRCC tasked Coast Guard Helicopter R115.
- 4.6 At 18.09 hrs. the Passenger Ferry "*Basket Princess*" and the Passenger Boat "*Runa Na Mara*" arrived alongside the casualty.
- 4.7 At 18.13 hrs. the Coast Guard Helicopter was stood down.

5. EVENTS FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT

- 5.1 The crew and passengers of MV "*Claire Buoyant*" were safely transferred on-board the passenger ferry "*Blasket Princess*".
- 5.2 When it was found that the MV "*Claire Buoyant*" was not sinking, the skipper and one passenger re-boarded the MV "*Claire Buoyant*" and hand pumped water from the engine compartment.
- 5.3 It was stated that the electric bilge pump did not function proficiently due to debris blocking the pump suction.
- 5.4 A total of 18 sheep were rescued and divided between the MV "*Claire Buoyant*", the passenger ferry "*Blasket Princess*" and the passenger boat "*Runa na Mara*".
- 5.5 Two passengers from the MV "*Claire Buoyant*" were transferred from the "*Blasket Princess*" to the "*Runa na Mara*".
- 5.6 The MV "*Claire Buoyant*" was taken under tow by the "*Blasket Princess*" and towed into Ventry Pier, arriving safely at 19.38 hrs. on 1st August 2011.
- 5.7 At 19.38 hrs. incident considered closed.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The vessel departed Beginish Island heavily laden, water found its way into the boat thus partially flooding it which had a significant further adverse effect on its buoyancy and stability, the boat became unsafe and in danger of capsizing and sinking.
- 6.2 Jettisoning of the sheep and transferring the passengers to another vessel, allowed sufficient weight to be removed from the vessel to enable it to be pumped out and brought back into a safe condition.
- 6.3 Weather conditions are not considered to be a contributory factor in this incident.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 All craft should develop a maintenance regime and regularly check all fittings, both internal and external, which are open to the sea. Bilge pumps should be regularly inspected to ensure that they are clear from blockage and that no loose debris is in the bilge area.
- 7.2 The carriage of livestock should only be undertaken in appropriately certified vessels.

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Appendix 8.1 Photographs of Deck of boat.



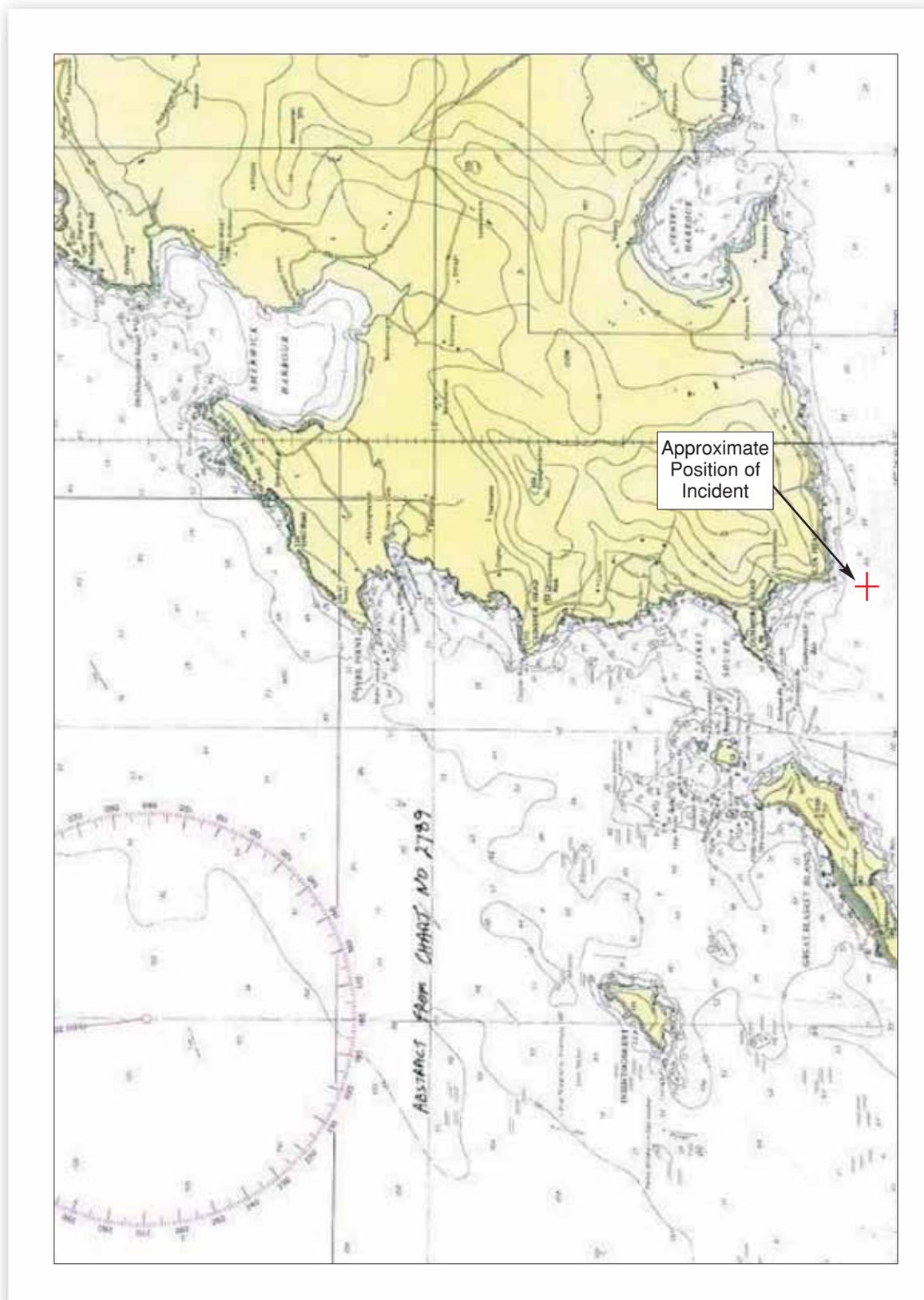
(a) Deck of boat looking from Forward to Aft.



(b) Deck of boat looking Aft to Forward.

APPENDIX 8.2

Appendix 8.2 Location of incident. Extract from Chart No. 2789.



Appendix 8.3 Met Éireann Weather Report.



MET ÉIREANN
The Irish Meteorological Service

Glasnevin Hill, Dublin 9, Ireland.	Cnoc Ghlas Naion Baile Átha Cliath 9, Éire. www.met.ie	Tel: +353-1-806 4200 Fax: +353-1-806 4247 E-mail: met.eireann@met.ie
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4/8/2011

Our Ref. WS3018/2C_14222
Your Ref. MCIB 205

Estimate of weather conditions in the sea area off Sleah Head, Co. Kerry near 52°06'N and 10° 29'W on the 1st August 2011, between 15 and 21 hours Local Time.

General Situation

A deep Low Pressure area in the North Atlantic with central pressure of 992 hPa, was situated south of Iceland. An associated frontal trough was rippling north-eastwards mainly over southern and eastern Ireland. A slack ridge of High Pressure remained over the Sleah Head area.

Details:

Winds: The winds were mostly Light, Force 3, gusting up to Force 4 at times. The winds were variable in direction but mainly from a west-north-west direction.

Waves: Slight to Moderate waves, between 1 and 1.5 metres significant wave height, throughout. These were mainly swell waves from the Low pressure area to the north-west of Ireland.

Weather: dry and mostly sunny in the afternoon. Some cloud pushed in from the Atlantic late in the period.

Visibility: was good throughout.

Air and Sea Temperatures: were both close to 15°C

.....continued



Appendix 8.3 Met Éireann Weather Report.



MET ÉIREANN
The Irish Meteorological Service

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Dublin 9, Ireland. Baile Átha Cliath 9, Éire. Fax: +353-1-806 4247
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Beaufort Scale of Wind

Force	Description	Speed* knots	km/hr	Specification -sea	Wave height** (metres)
0	Calm	<1	<1	Sea like mirror	
1	Light air	1-3	1-5	Ripples	0.1 (0.1)
2	Light breeze	4-6	6-11	Small wavelets	0.2 (0.3)
3	Gentle breeze	7-10	12-19	Large wavelets, crests begin to break	0.6 (1)
4	Moderate breeze	11-16	20-28	Small waves becoming longer, frequent white horses	1 (1.5)
5	Fresh breeze	17-21	29-38	Moderate waves, many white horses, chance of spray	2 (2.5)
6	Strong breeze	22-27	39-49	Large waves, white foam crests, probably some spray	3 (4)
7	Near gale	28-33	50-61	Sea heeps up, streaks of white foam	4 (5.5)
8	Gale	34-40	62-74	Moderately high waves of greater length	5.5 (7.5)
9	Strong gale	41-47	75-88	High waves, dense streaks of foam, spray may reduce visibility	7 (10)
10	Storm	48-55	89-102	Very high waves, long overhanging crests, visibility affected	9 (12.5)
11	Violent storm	56-63	103-117	Exceptionally high waves, long white foam patches cover sea	11.5 (16)
12	Hurricane	64+	117 & over	Air filled with foam and spray, sea completely white	14 (-)

*Speed = mean speed at a standard height of 10 metres.
**Wave height is only intended as a guide to what may be expected in the open sea.
Bracketed figures indicate the probable maximum wave height.

Wave Heights / State of Sea

The wave height is the vertical distance between the crest and the preceding or following trough. The table below gives a description of the wave system associated with a range of significant wave heights.

Sea State (Descriptive)	Significant Wave height in meters
Calm	0 – 0.1
Smooth (Wavelets)	0.1 – 0.5
Slight	0.5 – 1.25
Moderate	1.25 – 2.5
Rough	2.5 – 4
Very rough	4 – 6
High	6 – 9
Very high	9 – 14
Phenomenal	Over 14

Individual waves in the wave train will have heights in excess of the significant height. The highest wave of all will have a height about twice the significant height.

Visibility

Descriptions of visibility mean the following:

Visibility (Descriptive)	Visibility in nautical miles (kilometres)
Good	More than 5 nm (> 9 km)
Moderate	2 – 5 nm (4 – 9 km)
Poor	0.5 – 2 nm (1 – 4 km)
Fog	Less than 0.5 nm (< 1km)

9. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

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An Garda Síochána

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(Oibríochtaí)
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Phoenix Park
Dublin 8

Web Site : www.garda.ie

E-mail : commissioner_ops@garda.ie

OPS 79.13/11
P.S. 1365-11
SR 04.94/11

Your Ref: MCIB/12/205



Ms. Eve Reddin,
Secretariat,
Marine Casualty Investigation Board,
Leeson Lane,
Dublin 2.

Re: Marine Casualty Investigation Board – DRAFT Report of the Investigation into the loss of sheep arising out of the loss of buoyancy and partial flooding of unregistered craft "Claire Buoyant" on Monday 1 August 2011.

Dear Ms. Reddin,

I am directed by Deputy Commissioner, Operations to refer to previous correspondence from the Marine Casualty Investigation Board to the Commissioner in above matter, resting with yours of the 18th November, 2011.

I wish to advise that the draft report in relation to this incident has been reviewed and An Garda Síochána is satisfied that the facts, as presented, accurately represent the events surrounding the above incident.

Yours sincerely,


Frank Walsh
Superintendent for
Deputy Commissioner
12th December 2011



Ráiteas Mísin / Mission Statement :
Ag obair le Pobail chun iad a chosaint agus chun freastal orthu / Working with Communities to Protect and Serve

MCIB RESPONSE

The Board notes the contents of this correspondence.



24 November 2011

Your Ref. MCIB/12/205
Our Ref. 22/52/2

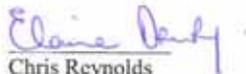
Ms. Eve Reddin
Secretariat
Marine Casualty Investigation Board
Leeson Lane
Dublin 2

Draft Report of the Investigation into the loss of sheep arising out of the loss of buoyancy and partial flooding of unregistered craft "Claire Buoyant" on Monday 1st August 2011

Dear Ms Reddin,

I wish to advise that the draft report in relation to this incident has been reviewed and the Coast Guard has no observations to make on the matter.

Yours sincerely,

pp. 
Chris Reynolds
Director



Administration Office, Irish Coast Guard, Department of Transport, Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, Ireland.
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MCIB RESPONSE

The Board notes the contents of this correspondence.

