

**REPORT OF THE  
INVESTIGATION INTO  
JET SKI COLLISION WITH  
MOORED FISHING VESSEL  
IN BALLYVAUGHAN HARBOUR,  
CO. CLARE  
ON 27th OF JUNE 2004**

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

The copyright in the enclosed report remains with the Marine Casualty Investigation Board by virtue of section 35(5) of the Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) Act, 2000. No person may produce, reproduce or transmit in any form or by any means this report or any part thereof without the express permission of the Marine Casualty Investigation Board. This report may be freely used for educational purposes.

Published by The Marine Casualty Investigation Board  
30th September 2005



	PAGE
1. SYNOPSIS	4
2. FACTUAL INFORMATION	5
3. EVENTS PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT	6
4. THE INCIDENT	7
5. EVENTS AFTER THE INCIDENT	8
6. CONCLUSIONS	9
7. RECOMMENDATIONS	10
8. LIST OF APPENDICES	11
9. LIST OF CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED	22

## 1. SYNOPSIS

- 1.1 On the 27th of June 2004 at approximately 15:30 hours a jet ski collided with a moored fishing vessel in Ballyvaughan Harbour, Co. Clare. The collision occurred approximately 55 metres from the quay wall (See Appendix 8.2), in position:

Lat .53° 07".5 North Long. 009° 09".0 West.

The vessel was unoccupied at the time.

The weather at the time was good with light to moderate winds and good visibility.

The jet ski penetrated the hull of the vessel resulting in the vessel taking in water. The jet ski operator sustained a deep laceration to his right leg, cuts and some bruises. There were no other casualties.

## 2. FACTUAL INFORMATION

### 2.1 Description of jet ski:

1200 cc Yamaha Waverunner, blue in colour with white designs inlaid on canopy and a white hull. The name Yamaha and Waverunner are visible in several places on the jet ski.

### 2.2 The declared owner was also the operator/driver at the time of the incident.

Name: Mr. Brendan Burke  
Age: 21  
Address: Kinvara, Co. Galway.

#### 2.2.1 Mr. Burke states that he was wearing a wet suit and a personal floatation device at the time of the incident.

### 2.3 Description of boat:

Name of V/L: "Gotcha"

The v/l is described as a 19ft G.R.P. Canadian built, high-speed fishing skiff of "Arcadian" make with a dark blue hull and white upper works. The vessel had a forward cabin and was fitted with two mahogany timber rubbing strakes, one all round at deck edge level and the second at bilge level which ran approximately two thirds of the vessel from aft to forward.

The vessel was fitted with two engines, the primary was a 55 horse power 3-cylinder tilt and trim oil injection Suzuki D.T. 55 the stand by engine was a 15 horse power tilt and trim Johnson.

### 2.4 The owner of the "Gotcha" is:

Name: Mr. Thomas Casey  
Address: Ardnataggle, O'Briens Bridge, Co. Clare.

### 2.5 See Appendix 8.5 for list of equipment onboard.

### 3. EVENTS PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT

- 3.1 On Sunday 27th of June 2004 at approximately 15:00 hrs, three friends headed to Ballyvaughan Harbour for an afternoon riding their jet skis.
- 3.2 They launched the jet skis from the slipway, carried out the usual checks and ventured off around the harbour.
- 3.3 The jet skiers were using a floating pontoon adjacent to the quay wall as a landing stage.
- 3.4 Mr. Brendan Burke had only once before manoeuvred a jet ski and that was at a different location for a period of approximately twenty minutes. Mr. Burke, by his own admission was inexperienced in the use of jet skis.
- 3.5 The weather at the time was dry apart from the odd isolated shower, with good bright or sunny periods. Winds at the time were Southwest to West with a mean speed of 10 to 17 knots with perhaps some higher gusts. (See Met Eireann report at Appendix 8.1).

## 4. THE INCIDENT

- 4.1 Mr. Burke had been jet skiing for approximately 10 minutes when he decided to turn into the pier to manoeuvre along side the pontoon.
- 4.2 Mr Burke was in a position just north of the "Gotcha," which was lying to a single mooring heading approximately east-northeast.
- 4.3 The wind direction at the time was southwest to west 10 to 17 knots with possible higher gusts.
- 4.4 The tide was on the ebb with high water Galway occurring at 13:19 hours L.M.T.
- 4.5 Mr. Burke describes in his statement to Garda Brendan Burke of Ballyvaughan Garda station that at around 15:30 hours he was attempting to return to the pier in a safe and slow manner. He describes the day as fine and sunny.
- 4.6 Mr. Burke maintains that as he was attempting to make a right turn he noticed that the sea was a bit rough, which compromised his manoeuvre resulting in a collision with the "Gotcha".
- 4.7 When later questioned by the M.C.I.B. investigator, paying particular reference to the extent of the damage, the degree of penetration and the angle of approach, Mr. Burke conceded that he may have been using excessive power and due to his inexperience was unable to avoid contact with the "Gotcha".
- 4.8 Mr. Burke's jet ski struck the port side of the "Gotcha" just aft of the cabin. (See Figure 2 a and b at Appendix 8.4). The jet ski then travelled the breadth of the boat and came to rest with the forepart of the jet ski slightly protruding out the starboard hull.
- 4.9 Mr. Burke was thrown onto the canopy, which fortunately broke his fall; his injuries were minor sustaining a deep laceration to the shin of his right leg, some minor cuts and bruises.

### 5. EVENTS AFTER THE INCIDENT

- 5.1 Immediately after the collision Mr. Burke's two friends Ollie and Paddy Conole, swam to his assistance. A Mr. Sylvie Mullins also attended in his boat. As Mr. Burke appeared to be okay all four concentrated on preventing the "Gotcha" from sinking and towed the boat with the jet ski still impaled towards the slip.
- 5.2 With the vessel in a sinking condition a line was attached to a secure point on the bow, the jet ski was then removed and by means of a mechanical digger the boat was towed up the slipway and beached.
- 5.3 An ambulance was called and the Gardai at Ennistymon were notified. A short time later MRSC Valentia received notification of the occurrence by the owner of the boat.
- 5.4 Mr. Brendan Burke states that his girlfriend drove him to the Casualty Department of Galway University Hospital, where he was treated for his injuries and later released. Mr. Burke was issued with a crutch to assist him with walking and given an appointment to attend the hospital for a check up the following day.



## 6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Mr. Burke's inexperience combined with his lack of knowledge of the sea gave him a false sense of security while manoeuvring his jet ski in close proximity to other vessels.
- 6.2 Mr. Burke was unable to manoeuvre his jet ski with any degree of proficiency.
- 6.3 Mr. Burke, while attempting to execute a right turn appeared to impact the "Gotcha" at near right angles and at speed. It was fortunate that the boat was unoccupied at the time as the outcome could have been fatal. Mr Burke was also very fortunate to have escaped serious injury which would have been highly likely had he made contact with the forward cabin or the engines.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 It is understood that much of the conclusions will be dealt with in the forthcoming Maritime Safety Bill of 2004. When enacted this will give power to local authorities to introduce Bye-laws prohibiting the use of such craft in certain areas and restricting the speed of these craft when within close proximity to such areas.
- 7.2 It is recommended that Bye-laws under this Act should identify dedicated areas of operation, routes to and from these areas, speed restrictions when proceeding to and from such locations etc. In deciding upon such dedicated areas the following factors inter-alia should be considered:
- a) Proximity to areas frequented by bathers.
  - b) Proximity to areas used by anglers both from the shore and from boats.
  - c) Proximity to areas historically frequented by other forms of pleasure craft in particular yachts.
  - d) Proximity to shipping routes, navigational channels and port approaches.
  - e) Proximity to areas of conservation with respect to wild life.
  - f) Proximity to areas of natural heritage significance.
  - g) Proximity to areas frequented by divers.
  - h) Proximity to areas providing rescue facilities.

The above areas could then; (as suggested in the draft Bye-laws) be promulgated to the public by means of newspaper advertisements, public notices or indeed maps displayed in key locations.

- 7.3 It recommended that operators of jet skis have appropriate training.

**8. LIST OF APPENDICES**

8.1 Met Eireann weather report.

8.2 Chartlet of area.

8.3 Aerial photograph of location of incident.


8.4 Photographs.

8.5 List of equipment onboard the "Gotcha".

8.6 Insurance assessor's report.

## Appendix 8.1

Met Éireann weather report.



**MET ÉIREANN**  
*The Irish Meteorological Service*

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

Your Ref. (Phone call of today)  
Our Ref. WS1730/0407\_06

5<sup>th</sup> July 2004

Captain Cantwell  
Marine Survey Office  
Maritime Safety Directorate  
26 / 27 Eden Quay  
DUBLIN 1

DEPT. OF COMMUNICATIONS  
MARINE AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
- 6 JUL 2004  
RECEIVED AT M.S.O.  
DUBLIN 41381

Re: Estimate of weather conditions in the Ballyvaughan / Galway Bay area on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2004 at approx. 15.00 hours.

Dear Cap. Cantwell,

On the date in question, a showery trough moved Eastwards over Ireland followed by a shallow ridge of high pressure.

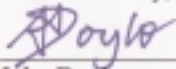
In the Ballyvaughan area at the time of the incident the weather was dry, apart from the odd isolated light shower, with good bright or sunny periods. However, heavier showers (possibly thundery) had affected the region some hours earlier.

Winds at the time were Southwest to West in direction, mean speed 10 to 17 Kt with perhaps some higher gusts.

The temperature at the time was around 15 or 16 degrees Celsius.

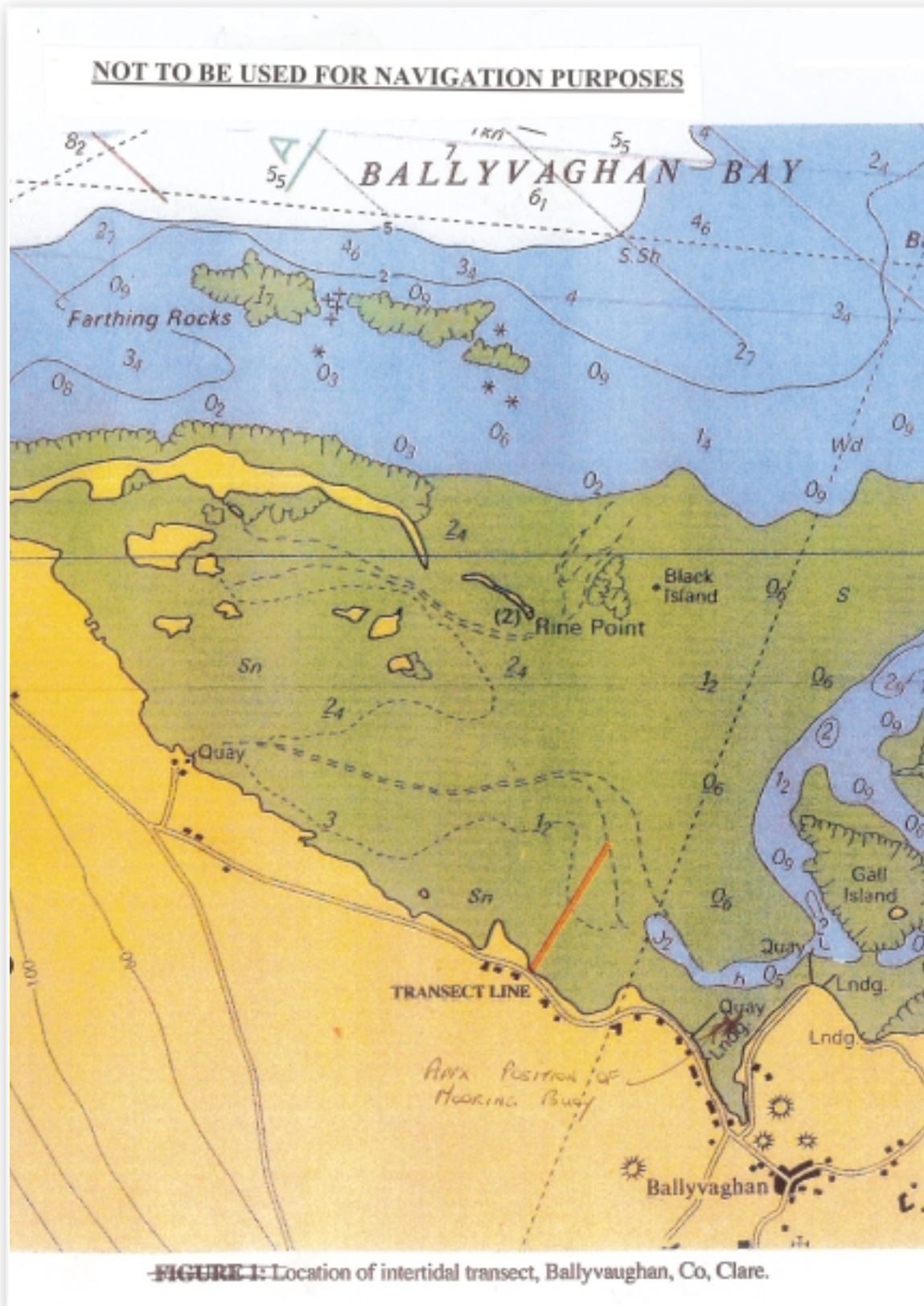
Visibility at the time was good (over 20 Km).

*An Invoice for €135 in respect of this urgent request will follow.*

Yours sincerely,  
  
John Doyle  
Consultant Meteorologist (Climatology & Observations Div.)  
Ph 01- 8064252 e-mail: john.doyle@met.ie

Appendix 8.2

Chartlet of area.



## APPENDIX 8.3

### Appendix 8.3

Aerial photograph of location of incident.



Appendix 8.4

Photographs Fig 1



**Appendix 8.4**

Photographs. Fig. 2, A, B and C.





**Appendix 8.4**

Photographs 1, 2, & 3.



Photograph 1.



Photograph 2.  
Colour Dept Sounder/Fish Finder



Photograph 3.  
Search Light

**Appendix 8.4**

Photographs 4, 5 & 6.



Photograph 4.  
Swist Tech VHF Radio



Photograph 5.  
GPS Chart Plotter with NT+.



Photograph 6.  
Sea rods and reels.

## Appendix 8.5

List of equipment onboard the "Gotcha".

### Contents of " Gotcha ".

- 1 x Gimballed Compass.
- 1 x GPS Standard Horizon Chartplotter with NT + Cartridge of Mutton head to Slyne head.
- 1 x Eagle colour CRT depthsounder / fishfinder.
- 1 x Swiftech VHF Radio.
- 3 x fishing tackle boxes.
- 1 x Main outboard ( 55 H.P. Suzuki oil injection/Power Tilt/Trim/Electric Start).
- 1 x Auxilliary / Back-up outboard ( 15 H.P. Johnson manual start).
- Assorted fishing rods and reels.
- 1 x 400,000 candle power searchlight.

The above items sustained salt water damage due to the vessel being partially submerged as a result of the collision, consequently they have been rendered useless.

The following contents were salvageable.

- 1 x watertight container of assorted flares.
- 6 x fishing rod holders.
- 1 x bait cutting platform.
- 1 x electric bilge pump with float switch.
- 1 x manual bilge pump.
- 1 x portable fog horn.
- 1 x lifesaver life jacket.
- 1 x deep cycle marine battery.
- 1 x GPS mushroom antenna.
- 1 x VHF High gain antenna.
- 2 x Admiralty charts of Galway bay and Arann Islands.
- 1 x fishing gaff.
- Assorted fish containers / filleting knives.
- Full navigation lights.
- 1 x large chained metal anchor.
- 1 x sea – anchor ( drogue ) with rope.
- Various fenders.
- Various warps.
- 1 x fish scales.

### Appendix 8.6

Insurance assessor's report.



## Ryan & Roberts Marine Services Ltd.

Boatbuilders & Repairs in Timber, Steel & GRP. Irish Distributors for Beta Marine Diesel Engines & Generators. Irish Builders of the Lochin Range of Fast Off-Shore Craft.

**Toomdeely, Askeaton, Co.Limerick.**

Tel: (061) 392198 or 087 4179128 Fax: (061) 392344 Email: rrmarine@indigo.ie

**Attn: Bili Cullen**

**From: Cyril Ryan**

**Date: 02/07/2004**

Collision report on sea skiff "Gotcha" owner Mr. Thomas Casey.

Boat has been struck by a jet ski while on its moorings in ballyvaughan.

Impact occurred on port side 7' forward from transom.

It is obvious from the damage incurred that this was a high speed collision.

A section of the hull 1.2 metres long by .7 metres high has been totally removed to a point below the waterline on the chine.

The rubbing strake, gunnels and coamings have also been totally removed in this section of hull.

The identical damage has occurred opposite on the starboard side with a 1.2 metre section being forced out board again occurring damage below the chine and the water line.

Numerous other breaks and cracking are obvious on the hull and super structure from the shock loading of the high speed impact.

The structural integrity of the hull has been totally compromised and in my opinion is a total write off.

Directors: Cyril Ryan, Andrew Ryan, Registered Office: Toomdeely, Askeaton, Co. Limerick, Company


Registered No. 215599, VAT No. R2158995.

Member of Irish Marine Federation



Appendix 8.6

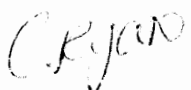
Insurance assessor's report.



**Evan & Roberts Marine Services Ltd.**  
Boatbuilders & Repairs in Timber, Steel & GRP. Irish Distributors for Beta Marine Diesel Engines & Generators. Irish Builders of the Lochin Range of Fast Off-Shore Craft.  
**Toomdeely, Askeaton, Co.Limerick.**  
Tel: (061) 392198 or 087 4179128 Fax: (061) 392344 Email: rmarine@indigo.ie


Both the 55HP Suzuki and the Johnson auxiliary and all the electronics have been totally submerged in sea water which renders them unusable.

Thanking you



Cyril Ryan  
Director

Director: Cyril Ryan, Under: Ryan, Boatyard Office, Toomdeely, Askeaton, Co. Limerick, Company Registered No. 225990 VAT No. R2255995.  
Member of Irish Marine Federation.



## 9. LIST OF CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Correspondent	Page No.
Garda James Burke, An Garda Siochana	23
MCIB Response	23

GAIRDA SIOCHANA  
Ballyvaughan Station

30 NOV 2004

Erinistymon District  
Co. Clare

To Whom it may Concern.  
Thank you for your report.

I recommend that all Jet Ski would be registered to its owners - like motor car registrations each ski would have a reg no + owners and what driver would have permissions to use such Jet Skies. Perhaps training to drive Jetskees would be helpful. Notifying the necessary authorities as to what areas jetskee drivers could be use along the coast line

Signd James Burke Garda  
JAMES BURKE.

**MCIB RESPONSE**

The MCIB notes the contents of this letter.

