

**REPORT INTO THE FIRE  
AND SUBSEQUENT GROUNDING  
OF THE MV "PATRIARCH"  
ON 1ST SEPTEMBER, 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

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	PAGE
1. SYNOPSIS	4
2. FACTUAL INFORMATION	5
3. EVENTS PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT	6
4. THE INCIDENT	7
5. EVENTS FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT	8
6. CONCLUSIONS	9
7. RECOMMENDATIONS	10
8. LIST OF APPENDICES	11
9. LIST OF CORRESPONDENCE	19

## 1. SYNOPSIS

- 1.1 On the morning of September 1st the motor vessel "Patriarch" Ex. Fishing vessel "Terano" departed Kilronan Harbour bound for Blacksod Bay.
- 1.2 About three hours into the voyage a fire broke out which soon became out of control, a May Day was declared and the three crewmembers were rescued.
- 1.3 The vessel later grounded and subsequently burned out.

## 2. FACTUAL INFORMATION

### 2.1 Description of vessel:

The vessel was an 82 ft timber hull double planked ex fishing vessel green in colour with yellow aluminium superstructure. The vessel was built in 1961 and registered in Skibbereen as "TERANO"

Official number      402562.  
Gross Tons:            94.96  
Reg. Tons:              58.44

Engine type:          6 cylinder internal combustion vertically geared.  
B.H.P.                    720  
Makers:                Jenkopings, Sweden.

### 2.2 Navigation equipment on board:

1 x G.P.S. receiver.  
1 x Radar.  
1 x Magnetic compass.  
Set of charts for the intended voyage.  
1 x V.H.F. set.

### 2.3 Life saving equipment carried:

2 x Life rafts: one six man and one eight man reported to be in date.  
2 x Boxes of flares also reported to be in date.  
6 x Lifejackets.  
1 x Honda salvage pump in addition to vessel's own electric pump and mechanical pump.

### 2.4 Details of owner and crew:

Owner: Bishop Cox, St Coleman's Church, Co. Offaly

(Note: Bishop Cox purchased the vessel on 26th June 2003 and was in the process of registering the vessel as the "Patriarch")

### 2.5 Skipper: Donal O'Neill, Castletownbere, Co. Cork

### 2.6 Crew: Pat O'Neill Finbar Harrington.

### 3. EVENTS PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT

- 3.1 The vessel sailed from Fenit harbour and arrived at Kilronan, Inis Mór, Aran Islands on the 31st August where the crew of three spent the night. The following morning the vessel departed Kilronan at approximately 08.20hours en route to Blacksod Bay where she was to undergo some minor alterations to convert the shelter deck area into a place of worship. It is understood that the owner, Bishop Cox intended to operate the vessel as a floating church.
- 3.2 The weather throughout the morning was force 3 - 4 South Westerly in direction with a moderate swell. Visibility was initially good becoming overcast and closing to approximately 500 yards by mid - morning.
- 3.3 According to the crew, the voyage had been pretty uneventful until shortly before 11.00hours when a smell of burning was noticed. The crew could not furnish exact times.

## 4. THE INCIDENT

- 4.1 Shortly before 11.00hours on the morning of 1st of September 2004 whilst on passage from Kilronan to Blacksod Bay the crew of the motor vessel "Patriarch" detected the smell of burning.

In response to this the engine room was searched for a possible fire but nothing out of the ordinary was observed. The crew returned to the wheelhouse and approximately ten minutes later could see smoke coming up from a cable duct which channels electric cables from the engine room and battery compartment into the wheelhouse.

- 4.2 A fire extinguisher was discharged into the duct in an attempt to extinguish any fire. The engine was stopped and the crew, now unable to use the V.H.F. due to power failure made a mobile phone call to the Coxswain of the Kilronan lifeboat, Mr. John O'Donnell explaining that they were now broken down and adrift.
- 4.3 On receipt of this call at approximately 10.56hours, Mr. O'Donnell notified Valentia Coast Guard. A decision was made to launch the Kilronan lifeboat and proceed to the location of the casualty, which was now adrift in the North Sound Aran Islands.
- 4.4 At 11.06hours the crew reported a fire in the engine room. Coast Guard were advised that the vessel was carrying 1,200 litres of diesel in the fuel tanks, 10 gallons of lube oil and 5 gallons of hydraulic oil in plastic drums located on top of the hatch covers, which were now on fire. In addition there were two domestic butane gas cylinders and one large acetylene cylinder onboard.
- 4.5 A Mayday was declared and Rescue Helicopter 115 tasked to proceed. Meanwhile the Valentia Coast Guard advised the crew to launch a life raft in the mean time.

### 5. EVENTS AFTER THE INCIDENT

- 5.1 At 12.07 all three crewmen were airlifted to safety, the Aran Island lifeboat remained on station. Later that afternoon the lifeboat was released and the L.E. Róisín was tasked. The vessel now well ablaze and drifting north finally grounded on southeast corner of Inishlackan Island.
- 5.2 By the following morning the L.E. Róisín inspected the now extinguished wreck and monitored pollution in conjunction with Rescue Helicopter 115 and Galway County Council.



## 6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 From interviews with the crew, it is suggested that the burning smell emanated from either plastic or rubber burning.
- 6.2 The above information combined with the apparent seat of the fire suggests an electrical fire, however the vessel was so badly burned out it was not possible to prove this to a satisfactory conclusion.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 It is recommended that pleasure craft in addition to routine maintenance of hull and machinery should undergo checks of cables and wiring. These checks should be consistent with the age of the vessel.
- 7.2 It should be noted that these inspections be undertaken by competent and approved persons in order to maintain standards acceptable to the Industry.
- 7.3 In addition any repairs should be carried out using only approved materials in compliance with manufacturers recommendations and then only by a competent person.

**8. LIST OF APPENDICES**

8.1 Chartlet

8.2 Photographs taken on 1st September 2004

8.3 Photograph taken by L.E. Róisín

8.4 Photographs taken on 2nd September 2004

# APPENDIX 8.1

## Appendix 8.1

### Chartlet



Appendix 8.2

Photographs of Patriarch taken by Coast Guard helicopter based in Shannon on 1st September 2004.

Photo 1



Photo 2



**Appendix 8.2**

Photographs of Patriarch taken by Coast Guard helicopter based in Shannon on 1st September 2004.

Photo 3



Photo 4



## Appendix 8.2

Photographs of Patriarch taken by Coast Guard helicopter based in Shannon on 1st September 2004.

Photo 5



Photo 6



### Appendix 8.3

Photo of the Patriarch taken on the morning of the 2nd. September 2004 by LE Roisin.





Appendix 8.4

Selection of photographs of Patriarch taken on the morning of 2nd. September 2004.

Photo 1



Photo 2



**Appendix 8.4**

Photo 3



**9. LIST OF CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED**

Correspondent	Page No.
Most Rev. Dr. Michael Cox D.D.	20
MCIB Response	20
Galway County Council	21
MCIB Response	21



**+Most Rev. Dr. Michael Cox DD MA**

St. Coleman's Church Cree, Birr Co. Offaly

Phone: 0509 31339

Mobile: 0882256589

0876747055

7-12-2004



Dear officer  
 I most respectfully reply to your (DRAFT) report concerning MV PATRIARCH. I thank you for your report and wish to state I have nothing to add or further to say about it. I sincerely hope this my most respectful reply meets with your most kind consideration and approval may God bless you I wish each of you a very Happy Holy Peacefull Christmas and a good New year.

I remain yours in Christ Jesus

Signed Most Rev DR Michael Cox DD.

Thank you.

#### MCIB RESPONSE

The MCIB notes the contents of this letter.

Post Office Box No. 27,  
Áras an Chontae,  
Prospect Hill,  
Galway.

Mo Thag:

Do Thag.

Housing Loans/Grants  
(091) 509 301

Housing Applications  
(091) 509 300

Environment  
(091) 509 302

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(091) 509 303

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(091) 509 309

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Higher Ed. Grants  
(091) 509 310



**JF/MG**  
**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE**  
**GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL**

30<sup>th</sup> November, 2004

**Mr. John O' Donnell,**  
**Marine Casualty Investigation Board,**  
**Leeson Lane,**  
**Dublin 2**

**Re: M.V. Patriarch**

**Dear Mr. O' Donnell,**

Thank you for forwarding a copy of the Draft Report on the above Vessel.

Galway County Council has nothing further to add to your Report.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Yours sincerely,**



**John Crowley**  
**Acting Senior Executive Engineer**  
**Environment Section**

**MCIB RESPONSE**

The MCIB notes the contents of this letter.

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**MCIB RESPONSE**  
The MCIB notes the contents of this letter.





