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# INVESTIGATION INTO AN INCIDENT ONBOARD THE FV "RÓISE CATRÍONA" OFF THE COAST OF CORK, RESULTING IN THE DEATH OF A CREWMAN, ON THE 8th MAY 2008.

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/159

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## 1. SYNOPSIS

1.1 On the morning of Thursday 8th May 2008 the Irish fishing vessel FV "Róise Catríona" was preparing to shoot her fishing gear 25 nautical miles south of Fastnet Rock.

1.2 Shortly before 06.00 hrs. Mr. Sean Lynch, a crewman onboard, sustained a serious head injury. There were no witnesses to the accident.

1.3 Crew administered first aid and Mr. Lynch was transferred by helicopter to Cork airport and onward by ambulance to Cork University Hospital ("CUH"). Despite the efforts of both the vessel's crew and the helicopter paramedic Mr. Lynch was pronounced dead on arrival at CUH.

# 2. FACTUAL INFORMATION

## 2.1 Vessels Particulars

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of Vessel | FV "Róise Catríona" |
| Official Number | 403511 |
| Call Sign | EI6628 |
| Length overall | 24.36 metres |
| Registered length | 22.11 metres |
| Beam | 7.2 metres |
| Depth | 4.0 metres |
| Gross tonnage | 188 |
| Year of build | 1982 |
| Builder | Campbell Town Shipyard, Scotland |
| Main Engine | Cummins VTA 28 M2 |
| Power Output | 413 kw |

Appendix 8.1 shows a general arrangement plan of the FV "Róise Catríona"

## 2.2 Manning

2.2.1 At the time of the accident there were six crew on board the vessel. Five were regular crewmembers and the sixth person was undertaking research work for the Marine Institute.

2.2.2 The crew had all worked on the FV "Róise Catríona" together for a number of years and were extremely familiar with the vessel and its equipment.

2.2.3 The crew were:

| | |
|---|---|
| Mr. Gerard Harrington (Skipper) | Mr. Paul Fenner |
| Mr. Sean Lynch | Mr. Sean Sugrue |
| Mr. Gerard O'Driscoll | Mr. David Tully (Marine Institute) |

2.2.4 The skipper and crew all held the appropriate certification for their roles on the vessel.

## 3. EVENTS PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT

3.1 The FV "Róise Catríona" sailed from Castletownbere on Thursday 1st May 2008 for a fishing expedition off the southern Irish coast. The crew were as set out in section 2. On this occasion the owner did not sail with the vessel. Mr. Ger Harrington was skipper.

3.2 The vessel was engaged in seine fishing and had a successful trip. The vessel had about 300 boxes of fish onboard. The normal duration would have been seven days but they decided to spend another day fishing, intending to arrive back in Castletownbere late in the evening of the 8th May 2008 or early the following morning.

3.3 On the morning of 8th May 2008 the fishing gear was to be shot shortly before 06.00 hrs. The vessel was at position 050° 57' N 009° 35' W, approximately 25 nautical miles South of the Fastnet Rock. The location of the vessel at the time of the incident is shown on the chart in Appendix 8.2. Mr. Lynch had kept the bridge watch until 04.00 hrs. before calling the skipper and Mr. O'Driscoll around 05.00 hrs. The skipper was in the wheelhouse and Mr. O'Driscoll and Mr. Lynch prepared the gear for shooting.

3.4 The gear on the port side was shot first, Mr. Lynch then proceeded into the shelter deck to connect up the gear on the starboard side. The path most likely to have been taken by Mr. Lynch is shown in the diagram in Appendix 8.3.

3.5 After one or two minutes Mr. O'Driscoll noticed that Mr. Lynch had not returned. The skipper hadn't seen Mr. Lynch appear on the Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) camera that covered the starboard forward area of the shelter deck.

## 4. THE INCIDENT

4.1 As there was no other person in the shelter deck and the CCTV camera in use did not cover the area of the incident it is not clear how this incident occurred.

4.2 Mr. O'Driscoll went into the shelter deck space to see what was delaying Mr. Lynch in preparing the starboard gear. As he came past the side of the deckhouse he saw Mr. Lynch lying on the deck between the port rope reel and the fish hold hatch facing aft (location shown in diagrams in Appendices 8.3 and 8.4 and photographs in Appendices 8.5 and 8.6)

4.3 Mr. O'Driscoll saw Mr. Lynch had a head injury and appeared unconscious. He called the skipper who came down from the wheelhouse.

## 5. EVENTS FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT

5.1 The skipper quickly assessed Mr. Lynch’s condition and concluded he had suffered a severe head injury. He returned to the wheelhouse and pressed the general alarm to call the crew and made contact by VHF radio with Valentia Coastguard. This call is timed at 05.51 hrs.

5.2 From the skippers initial assessment he told Valentia Coastguard he needed a helicopter to evacuate Mr. Lynch. Valentia Coastguard immediately put the vessel in contact with Medico Cork at Cork University Hospital at 05.52 hrs. for radio medical advice.

5.3 Medico Cork were given details of Mr. Lynch’s injury and indicated that Mr. Lynch should be put in the recovery position (which the crew of the vessel had already done) and his vital signs monitored. At 05.55 hrs. the Shannon rescue helicopter R115 was tasked to the casualty and at 06.40 hrs. R115 informed Valentia Coastguard they were departing Shannon Airport.

5.4 The condition of Mr. Lynch seemed to deteriorate around 06.50 hrs. and another link call was made to Medico Cork. The crew were instructed to commence Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (“CPR”). Despite the efforts of the crew onboard the FV "Róise Catríona" to administer first aid and CPR to Mr. Lynch his condition did not improve. R115 arrived on scene at 07.37 hrs. and the winch man was lowered to the vessel. The winch man also administered first aid to Mr. Lynch and made arrangements for his removal from the vessel.

5.5 Mr. Lynch was taken on board R115 at 08.15 hrs. and the helicopter flew to Cork Airport landing at 08.45 hrs. Mr. Lynch was transferred by ambulance to CUH where he was pronounced dead shortly after arrival.

5.6 The FV "Róise Catríona" hauled her fishing gear and sailed directly back to Castletownbere. She arrived shortly after midday. Members of An Garda Síochána and the MCIB investigator boarded the vessel and an initial examination was made of the accident site.

5.7 Crewmembers showed the location where Mr. Lynch was found. Adjacent to the area was a wristwatch (with broken strap) a right shoe and a bump cap (light duty head protection). There were items associated with first aid treatment in the area adjacent to the recovery position.

5.8 Over the following days the MCIB and Health and Safety Authority (HSA) Inspectors inspected the accident area. The port rope and reel were examined and a number of trials were made in order to replicate possible scenarios of ropes becoming snagged.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 As there were no witnesses to this accident the exact cause cannot be concluded.

6.2 The injuries sustained by Mr. Lynch were recorded at Post Mortem as being consistent with a heavy fall against a protruding object or being struck by a heavy swinging object.

6.3 The location where Mr. Lynch was discovered, between the port reel and the supporting stanchion has very little clearance for a man of Mr. Lynch's height and build. It is considered probable that he was standing at, or very close to this location at the time of the accident.

6.4 It is considered less probable that a slip or fall alone would have caused Mr. Lynch to strike any object adjacent to where he was discovered with sufficient force to cause the injuries he sustained.

6.5 Given the area where Mr. Lynch was found, consideration has been given to the possibility that the lazy deckie rope, which was leading from the capstan out the cowl in the top of the shelter deck, became snagged on the fish hold hatch. The rope may have either freed itself as Mr. Lynch came past it on his way to the starboard workstation or Mr. Lynch may have attempted to clear the rope.

6.6 The injury may have been caused by the direct impact of the rope as it sprung into its normal leading direction or by Mr. Lynch kicking the rope and the resultant spring in the rope as it came free caused Mr. Lynch to be thrown forcefully backward and striking his head against the port rope reel frame.

6.7 Attempts were made to replicate scenarios with the rope snagged. Although it was possible to snag the rope application of low levels of force caused the rope to come free with relatively minor deflection, which would not cause injury. However it is often difficult if not impossible to replicate the conditions at the time of the accident with the fishing gear shot that may have caused a rope snag.

6.8 Although Mr. Lynch had kept watch during the early morning hours before the accident, the rest periods afforded Mr. Lynch and the other crew members of the FV "Róise Catríona" were in general compliance with the European Communities (Workers on Board Sea-going Fishing Vessels) (Organisation of Working Time) Regulations 2003. Fatigue is not considered a contributory factor in the accident.

6.9 The area where the accident occurred is adequately illuminated and the deck area did not present a significant slip hazard. While a number of slip and trip hazards are inevitable in all fishing vessels there were few in this area and Mr. Lynch would have been familiar with them. The weather conditions at the time of the accident were moderate and would not have caused a sudden motion in the FV "Róise Catríona" that may have caused Mr. Lynch to fall.

6.10 The footwear worn by Mr. Lynch while not of a ‘safety shoe’ type had more than sufficient grip characteristics for work in this area. The bump cap worn would have provided protection against light knocks, but even if a safety helmet had been worn it is unlikely to have prevented the injury that Mr. Lynch sustained.

6.11 The Skipper and crew of the FV "Róise Catríona" under the guidance of staff at Medico Cork took all available steps to treat Mr. Lynch including a prolonged period of CPR.

6.12 The availability of a Category B Medical First Aid Kit onboard the vessel may not have been known to staff at Medico Cork and the statutory training in elementary first aid required to be undertaken by all persons onboard the vessel does not cover the use of some equipment in the Category B Medical First Aid Kit.

6.12.1 Only the Skipper held a ‘Certificate of Proficiency in Medical First Aid Aboard Ship’, which covers the use of the Category B equipment.

6.13 Following the accident the skipper had to maintain radio communications, manoeuvre the vessel, liase with both Medico Cork and the rescue helicopter and commence recovery of the fishing gear.

6.14 The Coroners Court at Cork on the 6th November 2008 returned an open verdict.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 That the Minister for Transport shall ensure that the requirements of Council Directive 92/29/EEC on the minimum safety and health requirements for improved medical treatment on board vessels be fully implemented.

7.2 Marine Notices relevant to the provision of medical treatment onboard fishing vessels should be revised and reissued.

## 8. LIST OF APPENDICES


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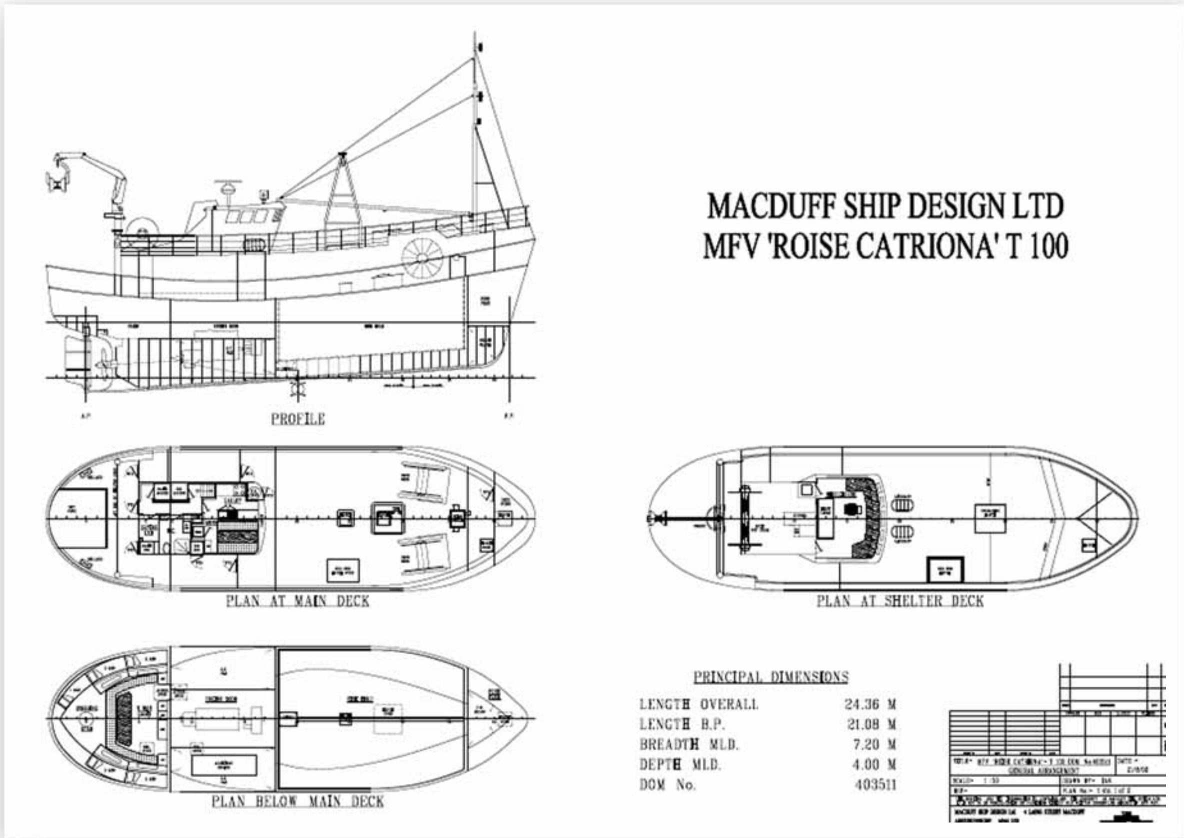
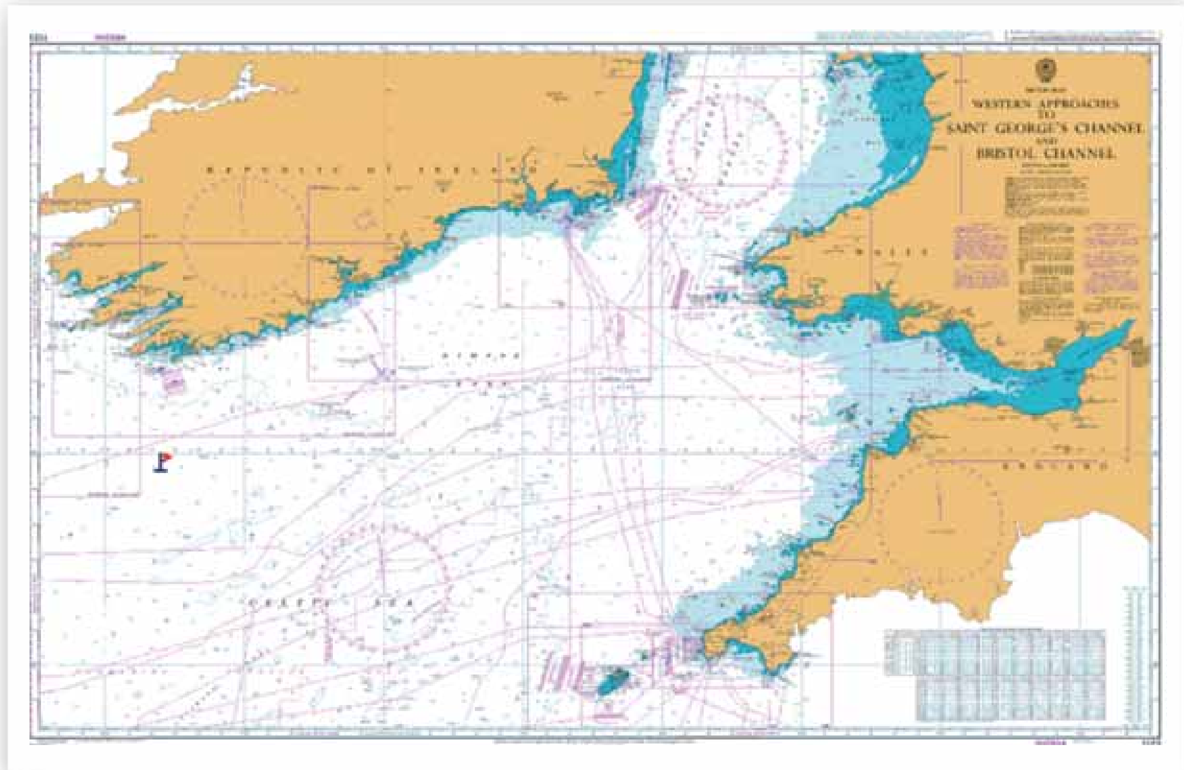
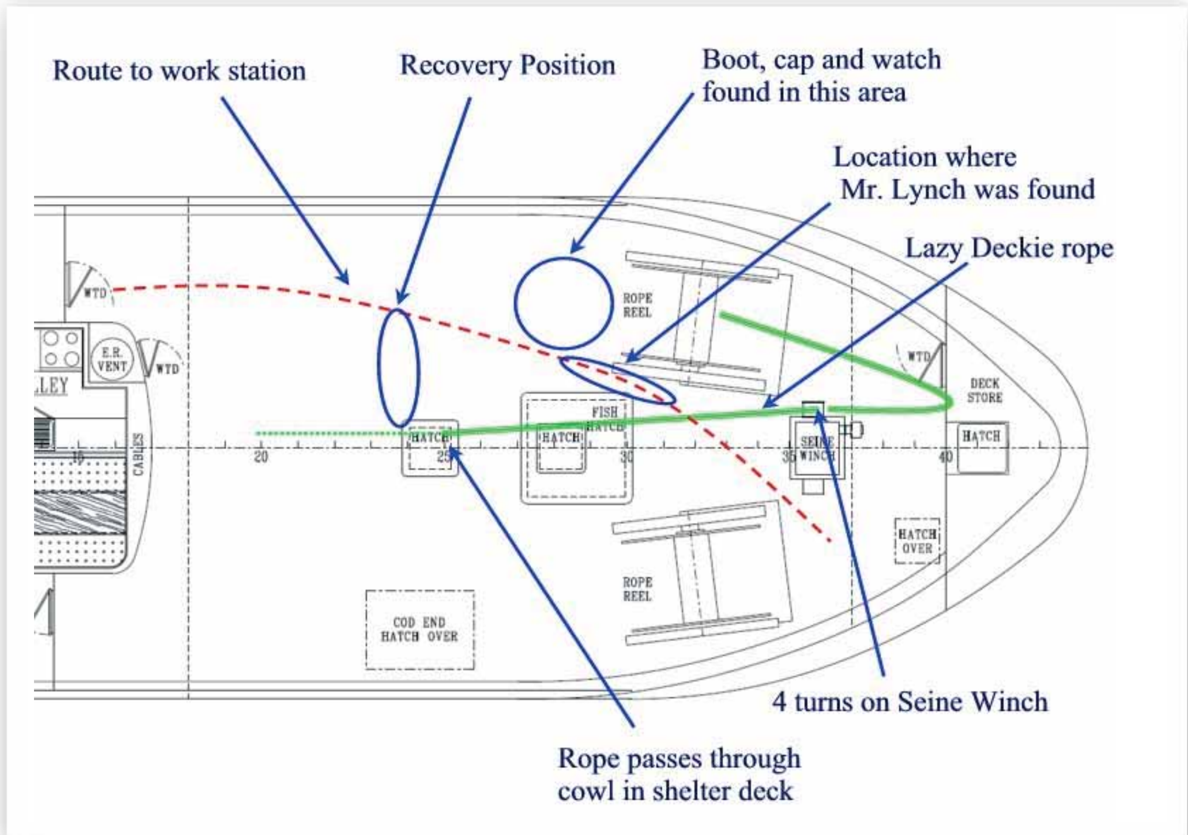
**Appendix 8.1** Macduff Ship Design.



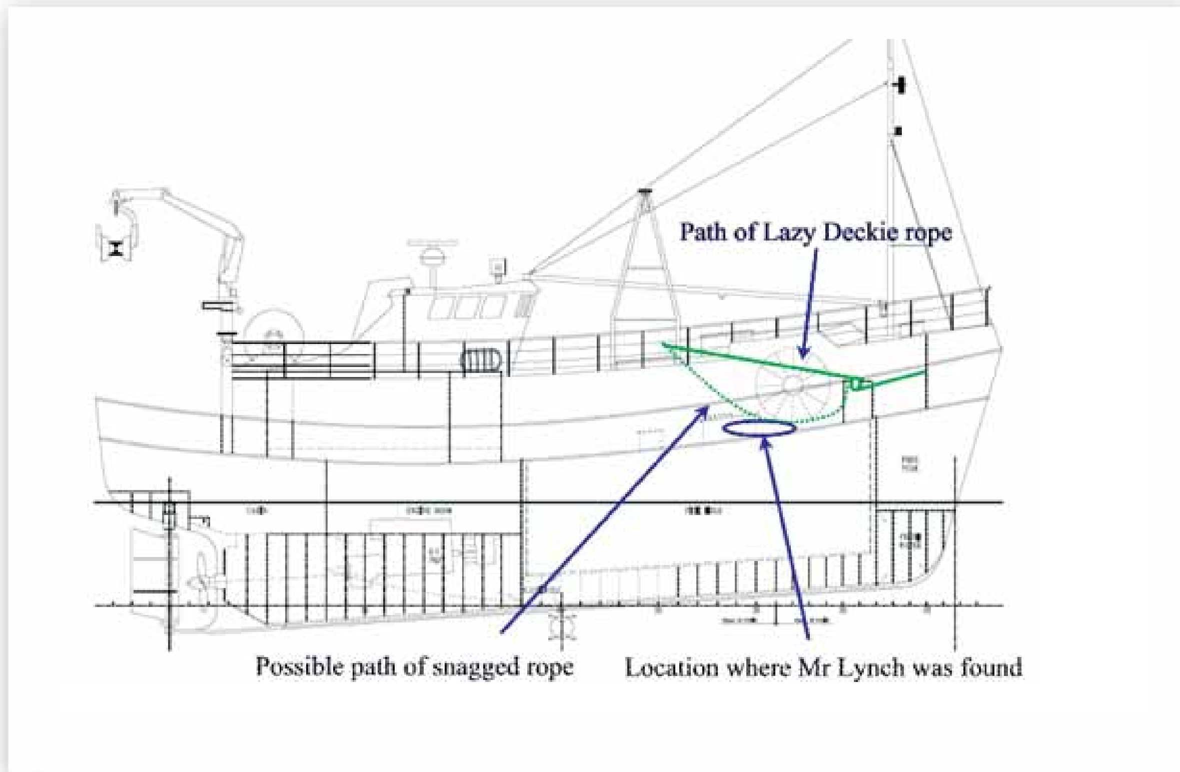
**Appendix 8.2** Location of incident.



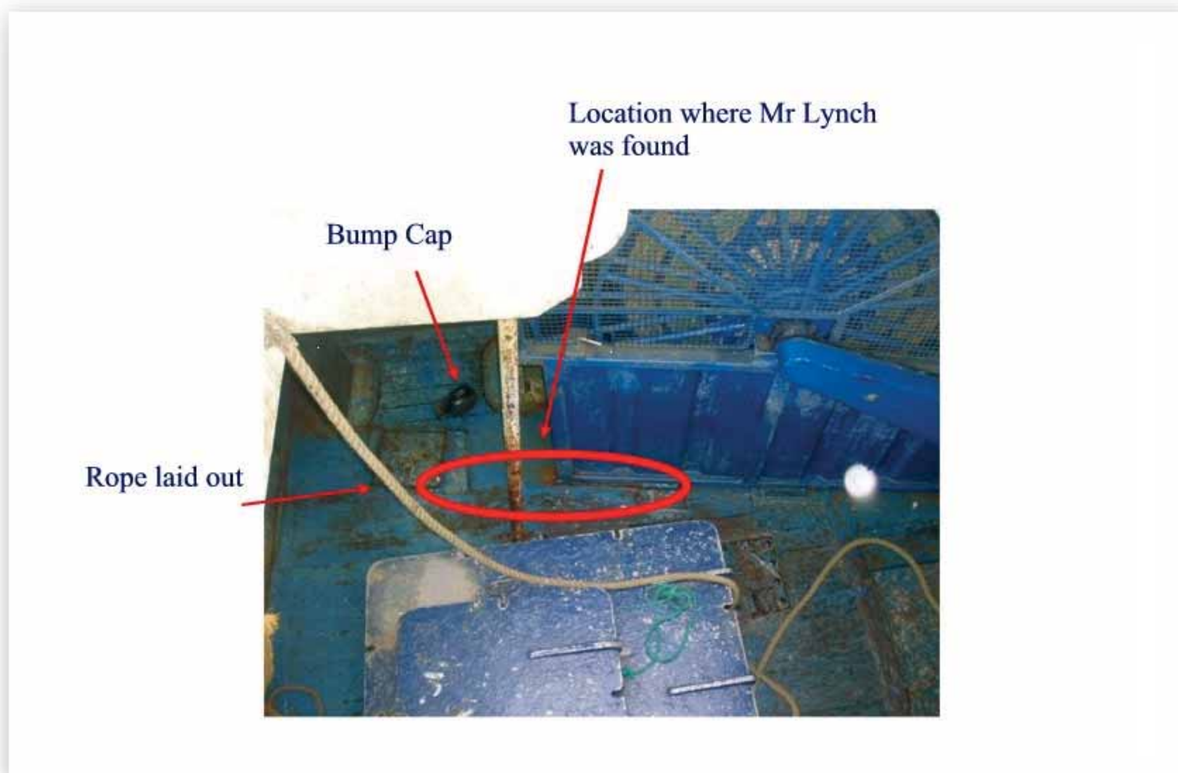
**Appendix 8.3** The path most likely to have been taken by Mr. Lynch.



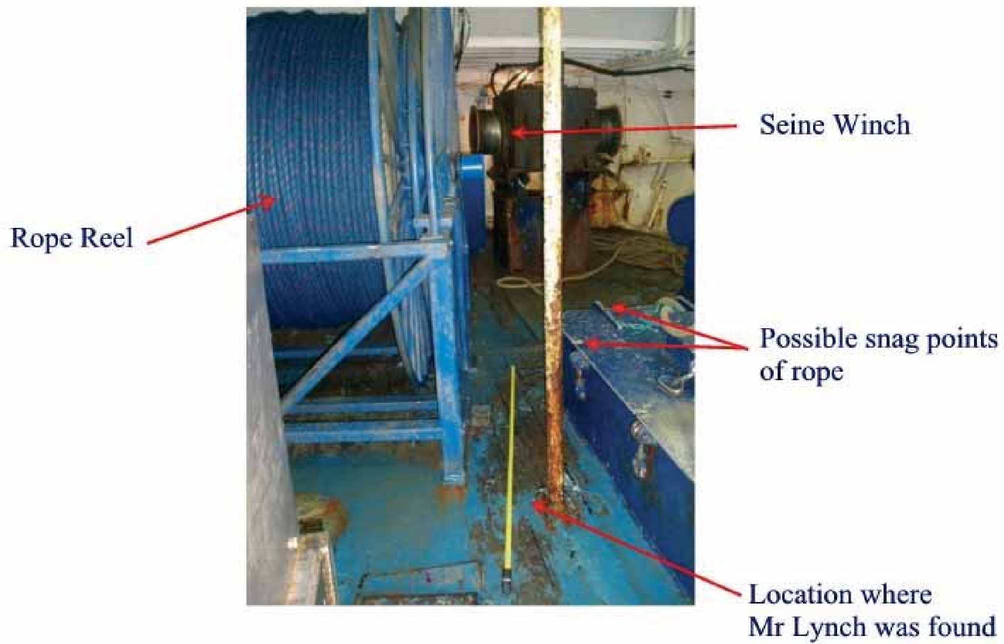
**Appendix 8.4** Shelter Deck Space.



**Appendix 8.5** Location where Mr. Lynch was found.



**Appendix 8.6** Portside looking forward.



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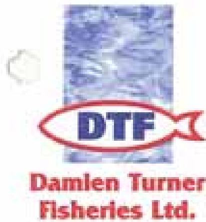


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10th April 2009

Ms Eve Reddin,
Secretariat,
Marine Casualty Investigation Board,
Lesson Lane'
Dublin 2

Your Ref: MCIB/159
Incident onboard MFV "Róise Catríona" on 8th May 2008 resulting in the death of crewman, Mr Sean Lynch.

Dear Eve,

Having received, read and understood the details contained in the Draft Report, with regard to the above mentioned incident, we do not have any observations or comments to make on this matter.

Sincerely,

Damien Turner
Owner/Skipper MFV "Róise Catríona"

Directors: D. Turner, C. Turner, J. Turner

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

KILCATHERINE POINT,
EYERIES,
BEARA,
CO. CORK.
27/03/2009.

DEAR SIR/MADAM,

I AM writing IN REPONSE to a DRAFT Report OF the INVESTIGATION INTO AN INCIDENT ONBOARD THE FV "RÓISE CATRÍONA" OFF THE COAST OF CORK, RESULTING IN THE DEATH OF A CREWMAN, ON THE 8TH MAY 2008.

I HAVE READ THROUGH THE REPORT AND I HAVE NO COMMENTS OR OBSERVATIONS TO OFFER

YOURS SINCERELY

GERARD HARRINGTON
Gerard Harrington

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

## NOTES

# NOTES

# NOTES