

REPORT OF THE FORMAL INVESTIGATION INTO LOSS OF MFV *TRIDENT* RELEASED

The report by the Sheriff Principal Sir Stephen Young from the Reopened Formal Investigation into why the *Trident* fishing vessel sank with the loss of seven lives in 1974 has been published today 24th February.

The report recommends that the high-quality research undertaken for the investigation should be used by the relevant UK authorities to inform their future approaches to stability in fishing vessels and small craft.

The report by Sheriff Principal formally answers questions regarding the loss of the vessel.

A summary of the findings includes:

- acceptance of the findings and conclusions of the Joint Panel of Experts which found the most likely cause of *Trident's* loss was a "sudden and catastrophic capsized followed by sinking. The cause of this capsized is attributed to specific seakeeping characteristics of the vessel combined with the prevailing sea conditions at that time";
- a finding that the loss was not attributable to any person and that the loss of the *Trident* was unforeseeable;
- the absence of any warning of the capsized and the speed with which that event took place;
- the finding that the loss of *Trident* was not due to any lack of statical stability of the vessel, as determined by the standards of the day – this differs from the conclusion of the Original Formal Investigation;
- a complete rejection that a 1976 NMI report provides the answer to the loss of *Trident*;
- the view that the weather, wind and sea conditions were better represented by two modern hindcast reports than the evidence and reports available to the original investigation;
- the position of the *Trident* when lost was approximately 11.9 nautical miles south-east of the position considered at the original investigation.

The full 53-page report can be found here:

www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/shippingports/shipping/safety/trident/

The Department for Transport has sent copies of the MFV Trident RFI report to the families of those who lost their lives in the tragedy as well as other parties to the investigation.

Trident Timeline

- The *Trident* was lost on 3 October 1974 and a formal investigation was held in Aberdeen the following year. A report produced in September 1975 found that it was “probable that *Trident* took aboard a sea or succession of seas and foundered” but went on say the precise causes of the loss could not be found.
- The Court also considered it probable that deficient stability in her design contributed to her foundering.
- The wreck of the *Trident* was later discovered by divers on 12 June 2001.
- In August 2001, the Marine Accident Investigation Branch carried out a more detailed examination of the wreck to confirm its identity and to see whether there was anything that would either contradict or confirm the original findings.
- The then Secretary of State for Transport ordered the re-opening of the formal investigation into the loss of the Trident on 28th March 2002, as obligated to do given that new and important evidence had come to light.

A full survey of the wreck was undertaken in 2006 and a Joint Panel of Experts, representing each of the parties involved, produced a report on the sinking of the FV Trident in May 2009.

- The Re-opened Formal Investigation began in September 2009 but the hearings did not conclude until a third session had been completed in June 2010.
- In all, the RFI lasted 56 days.