

SYNOPSIS

At about 0530 (UTC) on 25 January 2001, Michael Beedie was thrown overboard from the UK-registered beam trawler *Alma C* by the movement of a towing chain. When he was recovered back on board, he was found to be dead. The Danish Maritime Authority informed the MAIB of the accident at 1557 that day. Captain P Kavanagh carried out the investigation.

At the time of the accident, *Alma C* had finished fishing operations and the crew members were stowing the fishing gear on deck, in preparation for sailing back to port. The vessel was on the Turbot Bank, which is about 55 miles west-by-south of Thyborøn in Denmark, and was stopped in the water. The wind was southerly force 4 to 5, the visibility was more than 3 miles and it was dark.

The beams had been brought inboard and were lying fore and aft just inside the port and starboard bulwarks. The port forward beam shoe was resting on its heaviest part on the deck. However, the aft beam shoe was resting on its trailing edge with its heaviest part uppermost, making it unstable. Michael Beedie was waiting for his colleagues to finish their tasks, and was standing near the after beam shoe. As the vessel rolled, the beam shoe fell towards Michael Beedie, who probably jumped up to avoid the beam, and leant over the aft towing chain. As the vessel moved again the chain became tight and threw him over the side into the sea.

The alert was raised immediately and a lifebuoy, with a smoke marker/light, was thrown to him, but he could not reach it. The vessel drifted away from him and the crew lost sight of him in the dark. After noting the Global Positioning System (GPS) position, the skipper made a Williamson Turn using the smoke marker/light as a reference point. He also called other vessels in the area and the Danish Coastguard. The reflective tape on Michael Beedie's jacket was seen in the light of parachute flares, which had been set off by the crew, and he was eventually recovered back on board. However, he showed no signs of life and, later that day, his body was landed in Thyborøn.

A recommendation has been made to the owner to formalise a number of safety measures into the vessel's risk assessment.