# SYNOPSIS

At about 1345 on 29 May 1999 an unnamed dory was swamped by a large wave while underway on Loch Awe. The MAIB received the first telex on the incident from MRSC Oban at 1538 on 29 May 1999; further telexes were received as the situation developed. The MAIB does not normally investigate accidents to small unregistered boats, and hence no action was taken immediately after the notification from MRSC Oban.

Oban Police are investigating the accident for the Procurator Fiscal. The Police asked the MAIB to inspect the dory, as they believed the experience of the Branch would help their enquiry. The MAIB agreed to the request and the dory was inspected on 23 June 1999. The case was handled by Richard Barwick (Inspector).

The dory was built at least 15 years ago. The main hull was a GRP moulding; another GRP moulding was laid inside the main hull to form the deck. The two mouldings were joined around their edges, and then these edges were covered with a rubbing strip. The space between the two mouldings was a void. The void could be drained through a plug hole at the transom. In a new (or undamaged) dory very little water would accumulate in the void, but the keel on this dory had been damaged at some stage, probably by contacting underwater rocks. This damage allowed water to enter the void, which reduced the buoyancy and freeboard.

Prior to the accident the dory had been on the loch for a few hours; also it had been raining during the day. This resulted in a substantial amount of water entering the void. The crew might not have been aware of this, because the void is completely enclosed. This accident has highlighted the danger of this type of construction.

The situation was made worse because the dory was overloaded; it was designed to seat four, but six were on board.

The weather at the time of the accident was severe.

The low freeboard of the dory was caused by flooding and overloading. This made it prone to swamping in heavy weather. When swamping occurred there was insufficient integral buoyancy to keep the dory on the surface.