

SYNOPSIS

(all times are UTC)

The accident was notified to the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) by Danbrit Ship Management Ltd at 0921 on 12 February 1999. MAIB Inspector Captain Nick Beer, carried out the investigation immediately.

The 31m long beam trawler, *De Kaper* (GY 269) was trawling about 30 miles off the coast of Denmark, when a fire was detected in the engine room. The crew responded immediately, but the fire quickly spread throughout the after part of the vessel because the engine room door had been left hooked open. They were unable to close the door or, due to their location (adjacent to the door), operate the fixed fire smothering equipment or engine room trips.

After approximately half an hour the crew abandoned the blazing vessel, drifting clear in a liferaft. They were taken on board another fishing vessel within minutes and later transferred to the port of Hanstholm.

Firefighting efforts by other vessels, which had gone to the assistance of *De Kaper*, eventually extinguished the fire. She was subsequently towed into harbour.

Lessons drawn from the investigation into this accident include the importance of keeping the engine room door closed when not in use.