

SYNOPSIS

The accident was reported to the Marine Accident Investigation Branch in the late afternoon of 27 July 1998. The investigation began the following day and an Inspector attended the scene. The completion of this investigation was regrettably delayed because of the number of Inspector's Inquiries and the associated heavy workload undertaken in the second half of 1998 and the first quarter of 1999.

Sally Jane, a twin beam trawler of 11m registered length, capsized at about 1300 on 27 July 1998 while alongside in the Aldrington Basin of Shoreham harbour. At the time the crew were repairing both sets of fishing gear which had been hauled up to the derrick heads. The crew of three abandoned the vessel when they saw it was going to capsize. Weather conditions were good and were not a factor in the accident. No one was injured.

The vessel capsized because it had inadequate transverse stability for the operation in hand. There was insufficient data on the condition of the vessel before she capsized, to determine why the stability was deficient.

The stability of the vessel had never been assessed for the operation being carried out, and despite similar operations having been undertaken without mishap for the previous eight years, the margin of safety was an unknown which was finally and unwittingly exceeded.

The vessel was salvaged and completely refurbished. The owner appointed a naval architect to assess the stability of the vessel. A trim and stability book was produced which showed compliance with the recommendations of the MCA for transverse stability. While the owner is commended for taking these precautions, the trim and stability book does not show the condition for the vessel in port repairing gear, which is the condition relevant to this accident.

Two recommendations have been made. One is addressed to the owner, to include in the trim and stability book the condition with the trawl gear aloft for repair. The second is to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) on the stability of twin beam trawlers.