

Department for  
**Transport**  
**News Release**

News Release 2002/0267:  
25 July 2002

**GAUL SURVEY SHIP COMPLETES ITS TASK (DfT 033)**

The team investigating the wreck of the trawler *Gaul* sixty miles off the North Cape is sailing home with all its objectives achieved.

Relatives of those who were lost when the trawler *Gaul* went down have been informed that human remains were found on the wreck. The remains were discovered using cameras mounted on remotely operated vehicles (ROVs). Forensic samples have been recovered for identification purposes and have been delivered into the care of the Coroner's Officer on board ship.

The survey was able to access nearly all parts of the wreck to look for evidence to help explain why the vessel sank and also to look for human remains and evidence of espionage activity; a section of cable has also been recovered from the seabed for identification.

Other data retrieved by the investigators to help establish the cause of the vessel's loss includes measurements of the propeller setting, evidence to help determine whether or not the vessel was fishing at the time and further information about hatches and other openings.

The *Seisranger* started its return voyage shortly after midnight on Wednesday, 24th July, following a two day extension to its contract, and is expected to dock at Aberdeen Harbour late on Sunday night.

Shipping Minister David Jamieson said:

‘We are very pleased that all the objectives of the survey of the *Gaul* have been met. This has been an extremely thorough and intensive investigation using the most advanced marine technology in difficult and testing conditions.

‘Thanks to the expertise of the investigating teams and the data they have retrieved, we now have a huge amount of evidence that we hope will answer all of the questions that surround the fate of the *Gaul*.’

The survey, led by Mr Keith Dixon of the Marine Accident Investigation Branch, has been carried out on behalf of the Attorney General and funded by the Department.

The forensic samples will remain in the custody of the Hull Coroner for analysis at a forensic science laboratory including DNA profiling techniques in an attempt to establish their identity. These are matters that will be taken forward by the Coroner.

During the coming months the video and other data collected by the survey will be analysed by the parties to the Re-opened Formal Investigation in preparation for the hearings to be held before the Wreck Commissioner, Mr Justice David Steel, next summer. The data will be kept by the Marine Accident Investigation Branch on behalf of the Attorney General and a copy of all the data will be kept by the Department for inspection and analysis by the other parties.

Daily bulletins about the progress of the survey have been posted on the website [www.fv-gaul.org.uk](http://www.fv-gaul.org.uk). The website will remain open as a means of communicating the next stages of the Re-opened Formal Investigation.

**Notes to editors**

1. The agreed specification for the survey was to:

- supplement the photographic evidence explaining the loss of the *Gaul*;
- search for any remains of the crew of the *Gaul* and recover samples for return to a forensic laboratory in order to try to establish their identity using DNA profiling;
- collect evidence, if any, connected with allegations that the *Gaul* was engaged in espionage activities and to examine an unidentified cable on the seabed; and
- develop a means for entering and examining the interior of the wreck.

2. The recovery of samples for DNA testing was conducted under the supervision of the Coroner's Officer on board. The results will only be known when the scientific analysis is completed in the weeks following the expedition's return. There can be no guarantee that any forensic samples obtained will lead to identification of victims.

3. The Department is grateful to the Forensic Science Service and Staffordshire Police for allowing Dr Chris Maguire and Detective Inspector Andy Kirby to join the expedition on behalf of the Hull Coroner, Mr. Saul.

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Published 25 July 2002

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