

I FOPPE HEIDSTRA 1st Engineer of the M.V. "Hildina" of 27, Marlborough Avenue, Goole, being duly sworn deposes as follows:- namely,

The vessel sailed from Fleetwood and passed the Lune Buoy at about 10 a.m. on the 25th November 1953 after having taken 34½ tons of bunkers at Heysham making a total on board of 58 tons. There was also 18 tons of feed water, 9 tons of domestic water and about 800 gals. of lubricating oil. The vessel proceeded to the West coast of Scotland and was fishing. During this time deponent had to do repairs to the lubricating oil pump on the winch engine due to a joint being blown and broken away. This repair took about five hours. The winch engine generator unit was in use before the repair and again after the repair and in deponent's opinion was in perfect working order.

At 6.30 a.m. on 1st December, 1953 deponent came on watch and took over from the 2nd Engineer who had nothing exceptional to report. At 6.45 a.m. the trawl was shot and at 7.00 a.m. deponent received instructions from the bridge to turn 165 revs. which is the normal trawling speed. At 8.00 a.m. the bosun came and stood in the top of the engine room and shouted that power was required for the winch engine. Deponent started the winch engine and at about 8.08 a.m. the vessel started to list heavily to starboard until at 8.10 a.m. the list was about 60 degrees. This list was taken from a quick glance at an improvised inclinometer which was on the port side near the switch board near the engine controls. At 8.10 a.m. the lubricating oil failure trip gear started to work on the winch engine and put the winch engine into stop position. At approximately 8.13 a.m. the engine room telegraph rang to stop. About 8.15 or 8.16 a.m. the telegraph was rung ½ ahead and the list had increased to 70 degrees. At about 8.17 or 8.18 a.m. telegraph rang to stop and the list at this time was about 80 degrees and the water was gushing through the starboard engine room ventilator, boiler funnel, starboard and centre skylights very heavily. Due to giving attention to the main engines deponent was unable to start the bilge pump and he states that at this time the crankcase doors were almost horizontal so that he had considerable difficulty in reaching the telegraph. At approximately 8.20 a.m. the engine room telegraph was rung to 'full ahead' which meant trawling speed but the engine was developing more speed. At 8.40 a.m. deponent rang the telegraph and the telegraph was answered back to stop. The buzzer in the engine room was sounded with one continuous blast which deponent assumed to be the abandon signal. He and the greaser, Bond, left the engine room through the port skylight and landed on port deckhouse casing. When deponent left the engine room the starboard side which was now virtually the bottom was completely full of water.

Deponent left the ship on the Carley Float with the other members of the crew and was taken from it in an unconscious condition.

Deponent estimates that bunkers and water on board at the time of the casualty is as follows:-

Port Gross Bunker	12 to 14 tons
Centre " "	19 to 21 tons
Starboard " "	9 tons.
Feed Water No. 2 D.B. port	7 tons
" " " starboard	6 tons
Clean lub. oil port tank	520 gallons
Dirty Lub. oil starboard tank	250 gallons
Domestic water starboard	400 gallons
Domestic water port	1600 gallons

The above statements are correct and true to the best of deponent's knowledge and belief, and they have been read over to the deponent before he signed.

The engine room clock was synchronised with the bridge at noon 30th November, 1953, and was gaining about 22 minutes in the 24 hours and the times given are according to the engine room clock.

(Sgd) F. HEIDSTRA.

Sworn before me this 8th day of December, 1953.

(sgd) ? Officer of Customs and Excise.  
Fleetwood.

(Sgd) W. Pritchard.  
N. Surv.

(Sgd) George D. Whitelaw  
Senior Ship Surveyor.

Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the National Archives' terms and conditions and that your use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the 'Terms and Conditions of supply of the National Archives' leaflets.

1	2 cms	The National Archives	ins	1	2
Ref: BT 23874					
C598099					

Further to report previously made by FOPPA HEIDSTRA, he now states, after being duly sworn, that the condition of the various compartments in the ship at the time of the accident were as follows:-

Fore peak - dry, Chain locker space - dry, Dry D.B. tank - dry, Fishroom bilge or slush well had been pumped out twice per watch and was reasonably dry, Cofferdam amidships about 6" water, Engine room bilge about 4" water. Thrust recess bilge - dry, Aft peak tank dry and steering gear compartment dry.

Deponent states that he is quite certain that the Bosun entered the Engine room by the forward door in engine room casing and shouted and signalled by his arms that power was required for the winch at about 8.00 a.m.

Deponent also states that he is certain that no main engine movements were given by telegraph or other means until the ship had taken a list of approximately 60° at about 8.10 a.m.

Sworn by me this 6th day of January, 1954

(Sgd) F. HEIDSTRA.

before (Sgd) George D. Whitelaw  
Senior Ship Surveyor.

1	2 cms	The National Archives	ins	1	1	2
Ref: B 2384						
C 398099						

Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the National Archives' terms and conditions and that your use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the 'Terms and Conditions of supply of the National Archives' leaflets

I DAVID ATKINSON deckhand of the M.V. Hildina, of 76, Highbury Avenue, Fleetwood being duly sworn, deposes as follows; namely,

At about 2-30 a.m. on 1st December, 1953 deponent was called to get the gear ready preparatory to shooting the trawl. Shortly afterwards the trawl was shot and deponent after completing various duties turned in until sometime between 6-00 and 7-00 a.m. Then she hauled and deponent went down the fish-hold with the Mate and G.A. Hayes to put the fish away. Whilst down in the fish-hold deponent heard the warp pull out and the Mate ordered deponent and Hayes to go up on deck, which they did and deponent went aft to the mess room after closing the hatch and pulling over the tarpaulin and loosely putting in wedges. Deponent states that he is absolutely certain that the other hatches on deck were securely battened down. He is of the opinion that the hatch under the whaleback had the wood covers in position and a tarpaulin pulled over it. Deponent knew that he would be called again very shortly so thought he would get a quick bite to eat in the meantime. While standing in the mess room and before he started eating the vessel commenced to list to starboard. The list was more than normal so deponent went to the starboard alleyway and looked out through the after port. At this time the deck was full of water with the rail under. Almost immediately deponent went out through the port door, stood on the deck for a minute and then went up on the boat deck as the vessel had listed over considerably. He went first to a lifebuoy and released it. At this time he heard someone shouting "Tell the old man the starboard door's gone" so deponent went forward to tell the Skipper but deckhand Dell was at the wheelhouse door. Dell opened the door and called in to the Skipper deponent neither heard the Skipper reply nor saw anything of him. Deponent then went aft to the boat and with the assistance of several other members of the crew released the boat. This was done by cutting the gripe lanyards, as the boat freed it turned over the seas caught it and caused some damage. At this time the starboard side of the boat deck was under water, the mizzen boom was down and in its crutch. The lifeboat floated away and deponent then decided to dive into the sea as seas were beginning to wash down the funnel. Sometime later he caught hold of a pound-board and looking back to the ship saw that the ship was on her beam ends and head to the sea. Deponent states that he is quite certain that when he went over the side the vessel was approximately broadside on to the sea. Very shortly afterwards the vessel sank stern first the bow coming out of the water. When it came daylight deponent saw the lifeboat fairly close to and swam to it and climbed on and hung on to the keel as the boat was upturned. He could see that the planking had suffered damage which was possibly done in the launching. Whilst on the life deponent saw a red tin of flares floating away from the boat so dived in and recovered them. He opened the tin and took out one of the flares and commenced to light it but the sea broke over and it became wet and useless. He then decided to keep the flares and possibly use them later. Eventually deponent was picked up by the Velia. The above statements are correct and true to the best of deponent's knowledge and belief and they have been read over to the deponent before he signed.

(Sgd.) D. Atkinson.

Sworn by me this 9th day of December, 1953.

Sworn at Fleetwood,

(Sgd.) H. M. Chamber

Officer of Customs & Excise.

(Sgd.) George D. Whitelaw.

Sen. Ship Surveyor.

(Sgd.) W. Fritchard.

W. Surveyor.

1	2 cms	The National Archives	ins	1	1	2
Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the National Archives' terms and conditions and that your use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the 'Terms and Conditions of supply of the National Archives' leaflets						
Ref.:	BT 95874		03980999			

EMCG

14

COPY

I ERNEST SUMNER, 3rd Hand of the M.V. Hildina holder of Skipper's Certificate No.20553 of 7, Mersey Road, Fleetwood having been duly sworn deposes as follows; namely,

That the vessel sailed from Fleetwood on 25th November, 1953 and passed the Lune Buoy at 9-55 a.m. G.M.T. after having taken bunkers at Heysham and proceeded to Culdaff Bay and lay whilst fixing the gear. The vessel left at about mid-day on the 26th November and proceeded to a position to the N.N.W. of Tory Island, the exact position is not known. About 10-30 p.m. on the 26th November the trawl was shot and about three hauls were made. About this time the machinery below was faulty and it was found that the repairs would take some time so the Skipper decided to proceed north while the repairs were being effected. Deponent understands that the faulty machine effected the working of the winch. During the 28th November two hauls were made the vessel proceeding E.N.E. along the 110 fathom line. On the 29th November two or three hauls were made. On the 30th November the vessel lay and dodged for the whole 24 hours due to bad weather; deponent is now uncertain as to direction of wind but it was of gale force with a rough sea and heavy swell. At 1-30 a.m. on 1st December, 1953 deponent and all hands were called and the trawl was shot at about 3 a.m. After hauling at about 6-30 a.m. the vessel laid and the pennants were changed and the trawl was shot again. After cleaning away the fish deponent went aft along the port side and into the drying room but had barely arrived there when he heard the telegraph ring and the engineroom buzzer go. He therefore put on his oilskins and went on deck via the port door as he knew that something must be wrong. F. Dell, deckhand left the drying room at the same time and deponent is of the opinion that he went out of the starboard door. Deponent went to the winch on the fore deck and ran the winch and put in the clutch of the port drum for the forward warp. At this time the main engines were stopped and to deponent it appeared there was no way on the ship. Deponent heard the Skipper call to the deckhand aft F. Dell to 'Knock out'. Deponent started to heave on the forward warp and the Skipper called to him not to heave too much as the after warp had pulled a lot out. Deponent then shipped the clutch controlling the drum of the after warp. He hove in on both warps until 25 fathoms had been taken in on each. Deponent does not know how the after warp was leading but the forward warp was leading about 40 degrees abaft of beam. Just at this moment a big sea came on board and the vessel heeled over to starboard and the Skipper called out to reverse the winch. Deponent put the wheel to stop and reverse but it failed to function he then called out to the bridge "It will not reverse". The Skipper then called out to unship clutches and let the warps run. The mate appeared at this time and took charge of the winch. The mate attempted to reach the starboard clutchlever but was unable to do so owing to the depth of water on the deck. At this time the vessel had a very heavy list to starboard, the weather rail was under the water which reached up to the hatches on the foredeck. Deponent remarked to the mate that it is about time we chopped and the mate called up twice to the Skipper asking whether the warp should be chopped but received no reply. The mate and the deponent decided to get axes from forward to chop the gear but the vessel had listed over to such an alarming angle that they could not get forward and instead made their way on to the casing to the Carley Float. Deckhand Hayes was taking off the lashings when deponent arrived and then acting under the mate's orders the Carley Float was launched. By this time the seas were washing down into the funnel. Just prior to leaving the ship deponent saw the ship's boat floating to windward bottom up. The mate had mustered members of the crew on the port side and eleven all told clung on to the raft when it was launched. Two other members of the crew were seen on the boatdeck but they were not amongst those at the Carley Float. The float turned over shortly after it was launched and deckhand Dell lost his hold and floated away. Shortly afterwards the Velia arrived and took deponent and other survivors on board.

Deponent wishes to express his appreciation for the very kind treatment he received from the crew of the Velia and the Shipwrecked Mariners Society at Stornaway. The above statements are correct and true to the best of deponent's knowledge and belief and they have been read over to the deponent before he signed.

Sworn before me this 7th day of December, 1953.

(Sgd.) E. Sumner

Sworn at Fleetwood

(Sgd.) George D. Whitelaw  
Sen. Ship Surveyor

(Sgd.)

Officer of Customs & Excise

(Sgd.) W. Pritchard  
N. Surveyor.

1  
2 cms  
The National Archives  
Ref: BT 238.4  
0398099  
ins  
1  
2

Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the National Archives' terms and conditions and that your use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the 'Terms and Conditions of supply of the National Archives' leaflets



I JOHN MORAN, the mate of M.V. Hildina, holding Skipper's Certificate No. 23128, of 50, Bramley Avenue, Fleetwood, being duly sworn, deposes as follows; namely,

At 2 a.m. on the 25th November, 1953, the vessel sailed from Fleetwood and proceeded to Heysham for bunkers leaving there at about 8 a.m. on the same day. The vessel proceeded to Culdaff Bay where she lay and got the gear ready and left there at 1-30 p.m. G.M.T. on the 26th November, 1953. From Inishtrahull a course was steered of N.W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  W. magnetic, this course was maintained until arriving at the 100 fathom line. Three hauls were made towing to the Northward. During the afternoon of the 27th November, 1953, deponent states that a fault occurred on the winch generator in the engine room and the Skipper decided to steam North. A course was followed along the 100 fathom line and was maintained until about 3 a.m. G.M.T. on 29th November, 1953, when the first haul was made. During the day four hauls were made but on the second haul the gear came fast in the mud. After heaving to it the trawl came clear. On the fourth haul the trawl again became fast and just after commencing to heave the bridle parted and the trawl came clear and was hove up. It was taken on board and made secure as the wind was freshening. From 8 p.m. on the 29th November until 11-30 p.m. on the 30th November the vessel was dodging and laying in the vicinity. At 11-30 p.m. G.M.T. on 30th November, 1953 deponent came on watch and relieved the Bosun, the vessel at this time was dodging and the Wireless Operator reported that a bearing of Sule Skerry was S.E. x S.  $\frac{3}{4}$  S. but no distance was given. The weather at this time was wind W x S force 4 and the sea was moderate to heavy swell from the same direction. According to previous instructions deponent called the Skipper at 11-40 p.m. G.M.T. and was ordered to stop the ship at midnight, lay for one hour and dodge for half an hour providing the weather remained the same. Deponent called the Skipper at about 1 a.m. G.M.T. on 1st December, 1953, who came into the wheelhouse and shortly afterwards gave orders for the crew to be called and pay away, this was done. At about 3 a.m. G.M.T. the trawl was all square. The trawl was leading right astern and leading from the starboard quarter the vessel was heading into the wind and swell. At 6-30 a.m. G.M.T. the Skipper gave instructions to knock out and haul, this was done. The Skipper was not satisfied with the pennants so deponent changed them and the trawl was shot away and deponent and all deck hands were gutting fish in the deck pounds. When this operation was completed deponent and two men went down into the fish room via the middle hatch. About 50 stone of fish was then stowed down below making a total of about 1,000 stone. As soon as this was completed deponent and the two other men came up on deck the three hatch boards were put in position and two tarpaulins pulled over. Deponent left the two men, D. Atkinson and G. A. Hayes, to complete battening down. At this time the ice room hatch and the other two fish room hatches were battened down. The store hatch under the whaleback had only wood covers in position. Deponent then went to the winch and found the Bosun hauling, he spoke to him and went into the lee of the deckhouse for a smoke. Within a minute or two the vessel took a heavy lurch to starboard, deponent estimates this to be about 40 degrees. Deponent went round the fore part of the bridge and saw that the vessel was listed as far to starboard that the sea was level with the hatches and was washing over the hatches and up to the port bulwark. Deponent got to the winch and put the gear in full reverse, but nothing happened. Deponent put the control to stop and tried to reverse again but it still would not do so. Deponent called up to the bridge "Shall I chop" he received no reply. He then tried to reach the starboard clutch lever but was unable to do so as it was under water. He then attempted to go forward to get an axe which was kept under the whaleback but found he was unable to do so because of the seas washing over. Deponent then went aft and climbed up onto the casing and assisted the bosun and deckhand Hayes to get the Carley Float. Looking aft at this time deponent noticed the lifeboat had gone. Some other of the deckhands came along and assisted in getting the Carley Float over the side. About this time the vessel was on her beam ends and the water was pouring into the exhaust in the funnel. The Carley Float was pulled down the port side which was now nearly horizontal and looking aft deponent could see that the stern was starting to sink. The Carley Float was launched from the turn of the bilge and deponent and other members of the crew pushed the float away and paddled clear of the ship. When they were about 20 to 25 yards away deponent looked back to the ship and saw her go down stern first. With deponent there were ten other members of the crew.

(Sgd) J. MORAN.

1	2	1	2
2 cms		ins	
The National Archives			
Ref: BT 238/A			
0398099			

Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the National Archives' terms and conditions and that your use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the Terms and Conditions of supply of the National Archives' letters.

COPY.

The ship's lifeboat was seen about 100 yards to leeward floating upside down with one man on top who waved on several occasions. Efforts were made to paddle down to the boat but these were unsuccessful. Shortly afterwards the Carley Float turned over and about this time deponent saw deckhand Dell floating away, very shortly afterwards the Velia arrived alongside and deponent with eight other members were taken on board.

Deponent would like to express his appreciation of the very kind manner in which they were treated on board the Velia.

The above statements are correct and true to the best of deponent's knowledge and belief and they have been read over to the deponent before he signed.

(Sgd) J. MORAN.

Sworn before me this 7th day of December, 1953.

.....(Sgd) ? .....

.....Officer of Customs and Excise .....

.....Fleetwood .....

(Sgd) George D. Whitelaw  
Sen. Ship Surveyor.

(Sgd) W. Pritchard.  
N. Surv.

1	2	The National Archives	
	cms		
Ref: BT 23874			
Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the National Archives' terms and conditions and that your use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the 'Terms and Conditions of supply of the National Archives' leaflets		ins	
		1	2
		C53980997	



COPY

12

Further to report previously made by JOHN MORAN, he now states, after being duly sworn, that,

When stowing the fish away after hauling at 6-30 a.m. on 1st December, 1953, he came up out of the fish room because he heard the warp pull out and also because someone, probably the bosun, called out that the vessel had become fast. After speaking to the bosun he left him in charge for a few minutes and returned to the bosun at the winch. From this time until deponent went on to the top of the bridge he did not see anybody else on the foredeck neither did he speak to anybody on the foredeck. After leaving the ship deponent did not say that the fishroom hatch had come off and that seas were pouring down nor does he remember anyone else saying words to this effect. The last time deponent saw the fishroom hatch it was closed with tarpaulin over it.

The above statements are correct and true to the best of deponent's knowledge and belief and they have been read over to the deponent before he signed.

(Sgd) J. MORAN.

Sworn this 11th day of December

Sworn at Fleetwood

(Sgd) ?

Officer of Customs and Excise

(Sgd) W. PRITCHARD.  
H. Surv.

1	2	1	2
cms		ins	
The National Archives			
Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the National Archives Terms and conditions and that you use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the Terms and Conditions of supply of the National Archives. Leaflets			
Ref: B 1 238/4		0398099	

COPY

I GEORGE ALBERT HAYES deckhand of the M.V. Hildina of 26, Cambridge Grove, Whitefield, Manchester being duly sworn, deposes as follows: namely,

That on 1st December, 1953 at 6.30 a.m. deponent was called to haul in the trawl and after the fish was taken on board deponent was down in the fish room with the mate and deckhand Atkinson putting away fish. Whilst down there deponent heard the trawl pull out and the mate sent them up on deck, the hatch was covered with hatch boards and tarpaulin and wedges were put in without the battens. Deponent then went aft and on passing the bridge heard someone call to "knock out". He then went along the port side of the deck and into the accommodation. He was standing in the athwart-ship alleyway when Gardner remarked about the heavy seas coming onto the starboard side of the deck. Deponent went over to the starboard alleyway and looked through the port and saw the deck full of water. The ship was listed over to some extent but not alarmingly so. Within two or three minutes the deponent saw the starboard door fly open and the seas poured into the alleyway. He immediately went to the door and tried to shut it at the same time calling out for assistance. Whilst making the attempt the rush of water swept deponent into the galley. He returned to the door making a further attempt to close it but was swept back almost down the accommodation hatch. On the third attempt deponent almost got the door closed but it was torn from his grasp and he was again swept into the galley. During these attempts he repeatedly called for assistance but nobody came. Deponent was apprehensive of being trapped in the galley as the starboard alleyway then had a considerable amount of water in it and the galley was beginning to fill up. Deponent went into the starboard alleyway passed the starboard door but with the intention of making a further attempt to close it but the water flowing in swept him round into the athwartship alleyway. He then saw deckhand Wilson at the port door and deponent called to him to lend a hand in attempting to shut the starboard door. Deponent and Wilson tried to get into the starboard alleyway but there was too much water and they had to give up. The list at this time was very heavy so that it was as easy to walk on the casting side as on the deck when deponent went forward to the verandah. At this time deponent heard someone say that the Carley Float had gone, but deponent scrambled up onto the wheelhouse top and found it there. He began to release it but not finding his own knife called to someone to lend him one but later found his own and began to cut the float adrift. The Mate and bosun now arrived and gave a hand and eventually it was launched on to the port side of the ship which was not almost horizontal. It was about this time that the lights on the ship failed so they pushed the Carley Float into the water and hung onto it. Shortly afterwards deponent saw the vessel sink. He was eventually rescued by the Velia.

Deponent wishes to state that in his opinion a Carley Float should be equipped with a safety net.

At some time after deponent left the ship a member of the crew remarked that the fishroom hatch had gone in.

The above statements are correct and true to the best of deponent's knowledge and belief and they have been read over to deponent before he signed.

Sworn before me this 9th day of December 1953.

(Sgd) G. A. HAYES.

Sworn at Fleetwood.

Sgd) ?

Officer of Customs and Excise.

Sgd) George D. Whitelaw.  
Sen. Ship Surveyor

Sgd) W. Pritchard. N. Surv.

1	2 cms	The National Archives	ins	1	2
Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the National Archives' terms and conditions and that your use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the 'Terms and Conditions of supply of the National Archives' leaflets					
Ref: BT 238/A					
C598099					



copy

1/b

I JAMES ARTHUR GARDNER, deckhand of M.V. Hildina of 41, Addison Road Fleetwood having been duly sworn deposes as follows: namely,

The vessel left Fleetwood and passed Lune Buoy at about 10 a.m. G.M.T. on the 25th November, 1953, sailing for the fishing grounds N.W. of Scotland. After being at sea a couple of days the vessel had been fishing. When the vessel was steaming to another fishing ground deponent heard the Skipper tell the mate that the winch was out of action and could not be used. Altogether the winch was out of action for about four hours. During the next day or two the vessel was fishing and on one or two occasions the trawl was fast on the bottom but was cleared without trouble. On one occasion the fore bridle parted.

On the 1st December, 1953 about 7.30 a.m. the deponent was washing fish in the deck pounds, shortly afterward completed the job and went aft to the mess deck as he was the watch below. At two or three minutes to eight deponent was in the mess-room listening to the weather report when he felt the vessel check due to the trawl becoming fast on the bottom. At this time he heard the telegraph ring and the engines stop. He then went to the drying room to put on his oilskins and whilst doing so heard the deckhand "knocking out" aft. Deponent then went and stood in the after end of the starboard alleyway and looked through the port. He noticed at this time that the starboard door and the engineroom entrance door were shut. Deponent remarked to deckhand Hayes that the deck outside was full of water. Whilst standing in the alleyway deponent noticed the after warp coming in. He then left and went out on the port side, at this time the vessel was listed but not to any appreciable extent. He went forward to the winch and at this time was under the impression that the main engines were going ahead. On coming there he spoke to the mate about reversing the winch but the mate replied that it was in full reverse and the brakes were wide open and he could not get the clutches out and the winch was broken. Deponent returned aft along the port side and by now the vessel had listed considerably. On arriving at the port door he heard deckhand Hayes call out "Give me a hand with this door". The port door was latched open and Hayes was referring to the starboard door. Just as deponent was about to step inside Hayes came out and water was swilling up and down the alleyway. Deckhand Hayes made remarks to the effect that the starboard door could not be closed and she was full up aft. Deckhand Dell then went up on to the casing and along to the wheelhouse opened the port door and called in that she had bursted the door in and she was full up aft. Deponent managed to make his way forward to the winch but with great difficulty as the vessel had a very heavy list to starboard. On arriving there he heard the bosun shout "Have we to chop skipper" but did not hear any reply. The mate told deponent to obtain the axe from his berth deponent replied that it was impossible as she was full up aft. Someone remarked that there was an axe on deck and deckhand Dell said that it was under the starboard rigging. At this time the starboard rail was under water and the seas were washing round the hatches.

Someone made a remark about the lifeboat and deponent who was hanging on to the port rail looked aft, and saw three or four members of the crew near it. A minute or so later someone remarked that she was going and remarked about the Carley Float. So deponent with others went on to the verandah. As deponent was taking off his oilskins he heard somebody say that the Carley Float had gone, he therefore determined to dive into the sea but heard deckhand Hayes say that the Carley Float was there so he returned and gave a hand in launching it. The ship by now was on her beam ends and the mate told them to push off, deponent looked round and could see the water going down the funnel and the stern was beginning to dip below the water. He dived into the sea and swam away but later returned to the Carley Float and hung on with the others. Whilst he was in the water he saw the lifeboat and they all made efforts to paddle towards it. At some time the float turned over and later he saw Dell floating face downwards in the water some distance away. Very shortly afterwards the Vella arrived alongside and took survivors on board.

(Sgd) J.A.Gardner.

1	2	1	1	2
The National Archives		ins		
Ref: BT 238/A		C398099		

Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the National Archives' terms and conditions and that your use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the 'Terms and Conditions of supply of the National Archives' leaflets.

Deponent states that at some time after leaving the ship, either when he was in the water or on board the Velia, the mate remarked that the centre fish room hatch boards had come off and water had poured into the fishroom. Regarding the other hatches deponent is quite certain that the three other hatches were battened down and the one under the whaleback had the hatch boards on and the cover over it.

Deponent would like to express his appreciation of the very kind treatment on board the Velia.

Deponent would like to state that in his opinion the Carley Float should be equipped with paddles as on this occasion they might have reached the small boat if they had had them.

The above statements are correct and true to the best of deponent's knowledge and belief and they have been read over to deponent before he signed.

Sworn by me this 8th day of December, 1953.

(Sgd) J.A.GARDNER.

Sworn at Fleetwood.

(Sgd)

Officer of Customs and Excise.

(Sgd) George D. Whitelaw  
Sen. Ship Surveyor.

(sgd) W. Pritchard  
N. Surv.

1	2	cms	The National Archives	ins	1	2
Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the National Archives' terms and conditions and that your use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the 'Terms and Conditions of supply of the National Archives' leaflets						
Ref: BT 238/A C398099						



8.

The Surveyors appointed to carry out the Preliminary Inquiry have made a very thorough investigation into this case covering all the essential points in an able manner. I feel I cannot add much to their report.

In my opinion a Formal Investigation is necessary to clear up certain aspects of the case; one in particular being the total absence of any attempt to ascertain what happened to the skipper after the trawl had fouled.

I am in complete agreement with the proposal put forward by the Surveyors that Wireless Operator R. M. Robertson's name should come forward for posthumous recognition as there can be no doubt that but for his devotion to duty and self-sacrifice the death toll might have been increased.

(Sgd.) J. C. Taylor.  
20th April, 1954.

Mr. Steel

9.

I agree completely with the foregoing and would support E.S.C. if he thought certain of the engine room staff below deserved commendation.

On page 2 of Doc. 7 in Envelope 2 the Surveyor properly remarks that "as an intact trawler the stability is satisfactory and compares favourably with other trawlers of a similar size and type". This is true enough but, if when that stability is most required, a watertight door in the deckhouse, which affects stability, cannot be closed, trawl warps will not pay out and the winch cannot be reversed, it may be that the Court would consider that better stability should be aimed at in future designs.

We should like to see the file again at an early date to examine stability, freeboard and deck and house openings, etc. more closely.

(Sgd.) H. E. STEEL.  
29th April, 1954.

E.S.C.

10.

On the question of the holding of a Formal Inquiry it is thought that a useful purpose would be served by the publicity which would be given to the danger of a trawler being capsized by a "fast" trawl when the various means for releasing the pull on the warps fail to operate. The merits claimed in some quarters for the steam winch as compared with the electric winch and the need for sound and robust design in the latter would no doubt be covered by such an enquiry although at this stage no obvious defect has been found to explain the jamming of the winch.

With regard to Mr. Steel's opening remark in minute 9 which I appreciate and endorse it has happened in a recent major tragedy that the engineers were all lost through remaining at their posts in a snip on the point of capsizing and as far as I am aware received no mention whatever. I therefore suggest that Chief Engineer Foppe Heidsma and posthumously, greaser Pond be commended for similar action in this case.

(Sgd.) F. J. Welch for E.S.C.  
10th May, 1954.

Mr. Fagan.

1	2	1	1	2
2 cms		The National Archives		
Ref: BT 238/4				
03980997				
ins 1 1 2				

Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the National Archives' terms and conditions and that your use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the 'Terms and Conditions of supply of the National Archives' leaflets



COPY

I, Charles Pennington Master of M.V. VELLA of Fleetwood GN 185136 hereby make the following voluntary statement.

On Tuesday December 1st at 8.12 a.m. I was towing in an easterly direction with a following sea 50 miles N by W  $\frac{1}{2}$  W from Suleskerry when I received a wireless message as follows. "We fast-turning over". I subsequently identified the vessel as the Hildina (although no call sign had been given) and chopped away my gear and proceeded eight miles back to the westward where I found the Carley float and small boat of the Hildina. I picked up ten survivors from these of whom some died whilst I was returning to Stornoway.

At the time of the casualty there was a heavy swell running to the Eastward, visibility was about 3-4 miles with intermittent showers and the wind was blowing from the W.S.W. at about force 5 to 6 and gradually freshened.

Given under my hand at Stornoway on December 3rd.

(Sgd.) C. Pennington.

Witness W. C. Pearce Receiver of Wreck.

1	2	The National Archives		ins	1	2
Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the National Archives' terms and conditions and that your use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the 'Terms and Conditions of supply of the National Archives' leaflets						
Ref: BT 238/4						
C598099						