

Report fails to satisfy Clyde sub campaign

By Denny Macgee

THE campaign for a ban on submarine activities in fishing areas is to continue in spite of the publication yesterday of a report into the Antares sinking with more recommendations designed to prevent a similar tragedy.

Four crewmen died when the Carradale-registered Antares was dragged under by the nuclear submarine HMS Trenchant 20 months ago.

The report by the Marine Accident Investigation Branch, which could be the last official inquiry into the incident, contains eight recommendations aimed at reducing the risk of collisions between submerged submarines and fishing vessels.

Among proposals are:
 ● Naval craft should police areas where submarine activity is taking place and fishing could be expected, to

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ensure accurate information is always available.

● Submarines not on exercise but crossing an area of known fishing activity should proceed on the surface.

● The Royal Navy should reassess the need for all existing submarine exercise areas with the aim of reducing the number and extent to a minimum.

The report says HMS Trenchant's attempts to establish the safety of the surface vessels after the collision were inadequate. It says the submarine's initial report to the operations room at Faslane was based on insufficient information and led to an 8½-hour delay to the rescue operation, which may have contributed to loss of life.

A listening watch on the emergency vhf channel 16 was not kept on board two other fishing vessels in the area, which could have contributed to the loss of life. The report recommends that fishermen should be aware of the consequences of failing to do so. The report is the fourth into

the sinking of the Antares on 22 November, 1989 off Arran. It follows a naval board of inquiry, a fatal accident inquiry and a court-martial.

Lt Cmdr Peter McDonnell, who had just successfully completed a "Perisher" command assessment course, and as duty captain was in charge of the submarine when it collided with the Antares's nets, was found guilty of negligence and severely reprimanded.

The Ministry of Defence said yesterday the publication of the MAIB report had no bearing on any future decision on court-martial proceedings.

Many of the facts and recommendations in the MAIB report, such as a 4,000-yard exclusion zone between submarines and fishing vessels, were either known or have been implemented by the Royal Navy since the accident.

The sole cause of the collision, the MAIB report states, was a partial breakdown in the watchkeeping structure and standards on board HMS Trenchant.

The command team had no clear appreciation of the movements of vessels on the surface, it says.

The Labour MP George Foulkes, an honorary president of the Clyde Fishermen's Association, said last night the report did not go far enough.

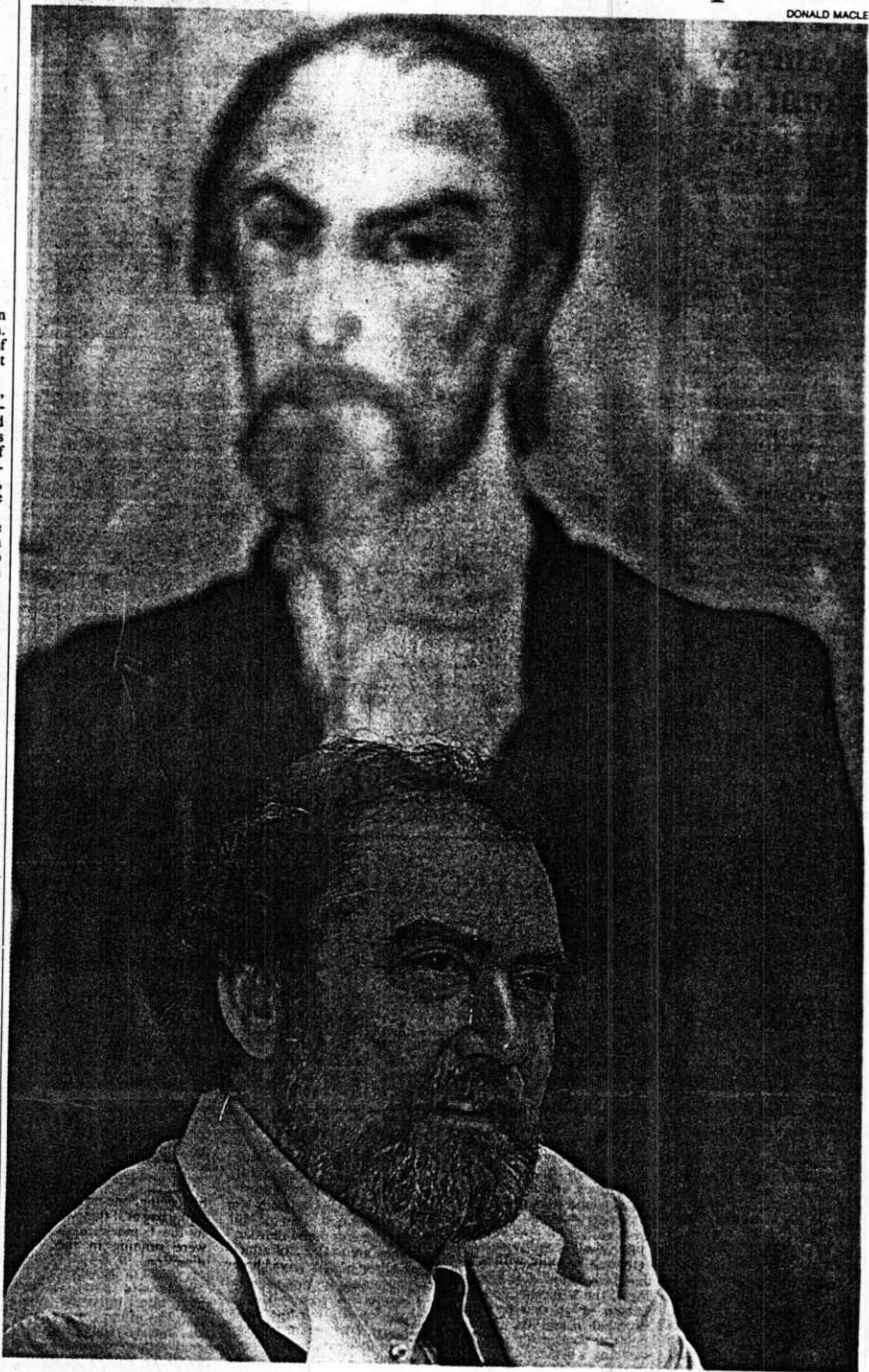
"I am not going to end the campaign to stop all submarine exercises in fishing areas. The report makes some sensible recommendations, but the Antares sinking could happen again unless there is a complete ban on submerged submarine activity in fishing areas."

Christine Russell, the widow of Antares skipper Jamie Russell, welcomed the recommendations in general, although she would like a midweek ban on submarine activity in the Clyde. She said: "What I have wanted all along was to have submarine activity restricted to weekends when the fishing boats are not out in the Clyde."

Robert Hynd, the lawyer who represents the family of Antares victim Dugald John Campbell, said: "The only way to prevent such a tragedy from happening again is to keep submarine exercises out of fishing areas."

Portrait of the artist's development

DONALD MACLE



Glowing colour: the painter, John Bellamy, is regarded as the most significant Scottish artist of his generation, and the Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery, Glasgow, is paying tribute for his 50th birthday by organising an exhibition of more than 70 of his paintings, juxtaposing his work of the early 1970s with that of the past four years. Vibrant hope, Page 19

Lockerbie families reject \$1m 'payment'

By Marcello Mega

A CASH offer to American families of the victims of the Lockerbie bombing was branded obscene and perverse yesterday by Dr Jim Swire, a leading campaigner among the British relatives.

Dr Swire, who lost his daughter Flora in the tragedy in December 1988, was responding to US television reports that a businessman was pressing each family to accept a \$1 million (£530,000) payment to cease demands that the two Libyans indicted for the bombing stand trial in Britain or the US.

The businessman, named by NBC News as Henry Kartshner, was described only

as an American agriculturist. The report claimed he stood to gain millions, if sanctions against Libya were dropped, and he was seeking to persuade its government to hand the two suspects to a country which might be sympathetic to its regime.

Mr Kartshner is now being investigated by the FBI as a result of an NBC videotape which shows two lobbyists acting on his behalf, making the offer to members of the American relatives' group. A US official said: "The FBI is investigating whether they are agents of Libya"

Dr Swire said that none of the British relatives had been approached. "It's a thoroughly objectionable and obscene

idea. If anyone approaches me I will contact the Lord Advocate's office to let it be known that someone is trying to pervert the course of justice."

"It runs counter to all that our group has been trying to achieve. One of our group is in financial trouble, and that person is among the most outraged at the thought that we should be asked to abandon all we have campaigned for in return for money."

Peter Lowenstein, one of the American relatives who lost a son when Pan Am Flight 103 exploded over Lockerbie, killing 270 people, explained that the group had set up the lobbyists by contacting NBC

after they had been approached.

"These two gentlemen, and I use the term loosely, came to one of our regular meetings. One of our group left the room to speak with them and when he returned we were astonished at what had transpired."

"We contacted the FBI and NBC and were encouraged to arrange a meeting that would be filmed secretly."

"When we met Kartshner's people, they told us that if we allow the two Libyans to be handed over to a country other than the US or UK, then Kartshner and the Libyan government would pay out \$1 million to each family, including the Britons."

He added that the lobbyists had been identified as Val Miller, a lawyer, and C McClain Haddow, an official of the administration of the former president, Ronald Reagan.

The NBC report said Kartshner and his associates recently met with Libyan officials in Zurich, but added that Kartshner had denied he was trying to make a deal involving the bombing.

● Jurors involved in the civil trial to establish whether Pan Am was negligent in failing to keep a bomb-laden case off the aircraft ended their first full day of deliberations in New York yesterday without reaching a verdict.

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