



Aquila Recovery Mallaig

Project Name:
Aquila Recovery

Location:
Mallaig

Client Name:
Sunderland Marine Mutual
Insurance Ltd

Date:
September 2009

Project Summary

In July 2009 Scallop trawler Aquila caught its nets on an uncharted obstruction 20 miles SSW off Mallaig.

The snagged nets resulted in a violent capsize of the vessel. Three of the crewmembers perished from injuries sustained by the capsize incident, one crewmember was rescued by a passing yacht. The MCA ETV attended the scene, however, Aquila sank shortly after.

A local salvor was appointed the work, however, after several failed attempts over a protracted period they were discharged from their duties and Briggs Marine Salvage team were mobilised.

Our Work

Briggs Marine Salvage chartered a heavy lift vessel to conduct the recovery operation. BMC environmental team mobilised a tier two-pollution response spread for the remaining oil believed to remain in the hull. The previous salvors failed attempt left the wreck positioned close in-shore, at a remote, exposed location, in a high wave energy site; with limited protection from Atlantic swells. BMC have a long history in working in remote locations where communication and transport links are poor/non-existent. Working in this environment, in marginal conditions, requires planning and a complete understanding of risks associated with the project. A skilled team is essential to the success of this work.

Over a 24-hour period, BMC surveyed the immediate wreck site seabed to allow the heavy lift vessel safe entrance to site. Divers rigged heavy lift attachments to the hull in preparation for the lift. During high tide the barge was manoeuvred into a lift position. The wreck was carefully lifted and submersible pumps employed to empty the vessel in preparation of the final lift. When the wreck was emptied of all oil and water it was lifted to deck for transport and re-sale.

Result

The operation was a huge success with minimum time spent on location, this ensured the project was delivered within the initial project plan and budget. The operation was conducted under the close observation of the MCA counter pollution officer and two Marine Accident Investigation Bureau officers.