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1970 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT: RV CIROLANA: CRUISE 5

(PROVISIONAL; Not to be quoted without prior reference to the author)

STAFF

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DURATION

Left Grimsby 15.50 hours 26 November

Arrived Hull 21.45 hours 3 December

All times are British Standard Time

LOCALITY

Irish Sea

AIMS

To attempt recovery of the Plessey current meter rig left by RV CLIONE at Station L (Decca Position Red G 9.86, Green A 46.04, Purple A 51.03) on Cruise 12/70.

NARRATIVE

CIROLANA left Grimsby at 15.50 hours on 26 November and anchored in the Grimsby Roads until the following morning because of thick fog. She sailed at 05.20 hours for Holyhead arriving at 08.45 hours 29 November where the scientific staff embarked from the harbour launch. CIROLANA then proceeded to the reported position of the lost current meter rig and anchored on the position at 11.55 hours at approximately high water slack. A search was carried out from CIROLANA, and from the rubber dinghy with the three divers aboard in a slight sea with light winds until 14.00 hours when CIROLANA began a grid search at approximately 200 m intervals over an area $1\frac{1}{2}$ n. miles by 1 n. mile centred on the reported position of the Station in order to account for any possible inaccuracy in the Decca equipment or discrepancy between the Decca equipment of CLIONE and CIROLANA. The search was continued until dusk at 17.30 hours, when CIROLANA anchored for the night on the reported position.

Since it appeared that, if the pellet was still in position, it would not be seen either at high water slack or during the strong tidal streams, a further search was carried out at first light, 08.30 hours, on 30 November about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours after the observed low water slack in a moderate sea with a 20 knot north westerly wind. It was noticed that the periods of slack tide were consistently 1 hour to $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours later than the tide table predictions. No trace of the pellet was found by 09.45 hours when CIROLANA weighed, anchored and again searched a close grid around the reported position before setting a sub-surface line at 20 fathoms between two weightlet pellet lines in a series of attempts to hook the line around the sub-surface float using the tidal streams. At dusk CIROLANA again anchored on the reported position for the night having obtained

permission from the Laboratory to remain in the area for an extra day.

In a freshening wind, during the night at 04.50 hours, CIROLANA dragged her anchor which was then weighed and the ship lay until 08.00 hours 1 December dodging up to the reported position again at first light. A marker pellet was laid and the ship anchored again to provide reference points for the divers to conduct an underwater search around the reported position. However, both the ship and the marker pellet dragged their anchors in the strong tide and Force 6 wind, and with the wind still freshening and an increasing sea the decision was taken jointly by the Captain and NIC to cancel the diving operation in accordance with the NIC's Diving Instructions, at 10.30 hours.

The recovery attempts were continued with the weighted sub-surface pellet line until 16.20 hours without success, when the ship sailed for Holyhead where the scientific staff were put ashore via the harbour launch with the diving equipment at 19.30 hours.

CIROLANA continued to Hull arriving at 21.45 hours on 3 December.

RESULTS

The search for the pellet was hampered to some extent by the fact that both of the low water slacks each day were in darkness. No trace of the pellet was found, but it is possible that it was towed under during the main tidal streams and was below the surface at high water. Attempts to locate the current meter rig using a floating line were unsuccessful.

H W Hill

7 December 1970

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GWA Fishing Skipper

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