

CRUISE TITLE: Benthic Studies

3/6/01-7/6/01

**Personnel:**

M Service      SIC  
M Charlesworth  
N Golding

**Objectives:**

Sample sediments in transect leading to centre of NW Irish Sea "mud patch":  
Acoustic and Video survey of select areas within NW Irish Sea  
Camera Survey N Channel Disposal Site:

**Narrative:**

**Day 1 Sunday 3/6/01**

Scientists boarded at 19:00h and the vessel set sail at 21:00h.

**Day 2 Monday 4/6/01**

During the previous night and the early part of the morning the vessel steamed south running RoxAnn continuously and by 06:00h was on station at the southern end of a transect running Northwards into the "mud-patch". Sediment samples were collected using a Day Grab fitted with stainless steel jaws at stations approximately 10km apart. At two stations video tows were made, however, tides were strong and visibility poor although the presence of tube worms was detected at point adjacent to the Irish Sa front.

After the final grab station the vessel began a RoxAnn survey of a tight grid with 500m line spacing over an area 10km by 5km previously identified earlier broadscale surveys.

**Day 3 Tuesday 4/6/01**

The following day was spent conducting video and side-scan "ground truthing" of selected areas determined from the previous nights RoxAnn survey. Several areas of interest were observed in particular small patches of rocky reef with abundant epifauna and apparently an untrawled area at the peak of an area of elevated seabed.

In the evening the vessel began another detailed RoxAnn transect of an area from the North of the Isle of Man running toward the "mud patch".

**Day 4 Wednesday 5/6/01**

The morning began with the vessel collecting grab samples at selected stations through the area surveyed the previous night. Following this further survey work was conducted using side-scan sonar and video camera. Good agreement was found between habitat types detected using RoxAnn and those found using side-scan.

Following this the vessel steamed to the dredge spoil disposal grounds at the mouth of Belfast Lough where a video sledge tow was completed in the evening. The vessel then returned to port.

**Day 5 Thursday 6/6/01**

Scientific staff disembarked and the vessel was unloaded.

M Service SIC

A Niblock Master