



SYNOPSIS

At 0855 on 6 February 2010, the UK registered ro-ro passenger ferry *Isle of Arran*, struck the linkspan in Kennacraig, West Loch Tarbert, Kintyre at a speed of over 8kts. The vessel was on passage from Port Askaig to Kennacraig, with 14 passengers and 24 crew on board. There were no injuries but both the vessel and the linkspan were damaged.

The accident occurred after control of the starboard propeller pitch was lost due to a mechanical failure. Consequently, the starboard propeller remained at full ahead as the ferry made her approach to the berth. Although the port propeller was put to full astern, the starboard anchor was let go, and the starboard engine was shut down, this did not prevent *Isle of Arran* from landing heavily on the linkspan.

Factors leading to the mechanical failure included the fitting of a manufacturer's original spare component which was incorrect, a lack of technical information leading to incorrect adjustment, inadequate testing of the pitch control system, and the lack of a robust technical investigation following a previous failure. There was no test of the pitch control system before *Isle of Arran* was committed to the final approach into Kennacraig. As a consequence, the high speed of approach to the berth and the inability of the ship's crew to quickly identify the cause of the loss of pitch control, made the resultant heavy contact with the linkspan inevitable.

This is one of a number of recent accidents in the shipping industry as a whole in which complacency has undermined the effectiveness of ships' crews. Preventing complacency on ferries, which are inevitably engaged on regular and familiar routes, is a challenge for all ferry owners and operators. Therefore, a recommendation has been made to the UK Chamber of Shipping designed to encourage and facilitate the regular sharing of experiences and initiatives by UK ferry owners and operators, with particular emphasis on the prevention of complacency.