



SYNOPSIS

On 31 January 2008, the Roll on Roll off Passenger ferry, *Pride of Canterbury* (**Figure 1**), grounded on a charted wreck while sheltering from heavy weather in an area known as 'The Downs' off Deal, Kent. The vessel suffered severe damage to her port propeller system but was able to proceed unaided to Dover, where she berthed with the assistance of two tugs.

The vessel was on a scheduled crossing from Calais to Dover in severe weather when she learned that Dover Port was to be temporarily closed due to the weather and sea conditions. She proceeded to The Downs to wait for the reopening of the port.

The master instructed the bridge team to slow steam in the area and he gave verbal instructions on the geographic limits to be imposed. No formal passage plan was formulated and nothing was marked on the paper or electronic chart.

The vessel had been in the area for over 4 hours when, while approaching a turn at the northern extremity, the bridge team became distracted by a fire alarm and a number of telephone calls for information of a non-navigational nature. The vessel overshot the northern limit of the safe area before the turn was started. The officer of the watch (OOW) became aware that the vessel was passing close to a charted shoal, but he was unaware that there was a charted wreck on the shoal. The officer was navigating by eye and with reference to an electronic chart system which was sited prominently at the front of the bridge, but he was untrained in the use and limitations of the system. The wreck would not have been displayed on the electronic chart due to the user settings in use at the time. A paper chart was available, but positions had only been plotted on it sporadically and it was not referred to at the crucial time.

The vessel's owner has reviewed its training programme and implemented a number of measures to prevent a re-occurrence of the accident.

The MAIB has published a Safety Flyer, for circulation to ferry and other ship operators, which details the lessons learned from the accident and advises operators:

- To review their training requirements/provision with respect to the use of electronic chart systems, especially where a system that is not approved as the primary means of navigation is provided and sited prominently on the bridge.
- Where navigating bridges are the focus for frequent requests for non-navigation related information, to ensure that systems are in place to prevent watchkeepers from becoming distracted at critical times.
- To ensure that plans are in place to identify likely contingency areas in advance of the intended voyage, and that any dangers or hazards within these areas are clearly identified.
- Of the need to ensure that the principles of effective bridge team management are understood and practised by bridge teams at all times.