

SYNOPSIS

On 15 November 2002, during an evening river cruise, the river cruiser *Nottingham Princess* collided with repair scaffolding around the centre arch of Trent Bridge, Nottingham.

The river was high and flowing at about 5 to 7 knots. One serious injury and 34 minor injuries were reported among the 130 passengers and 9 crew on board. The vessel suffered mainly superficial damage.

The accident happened when the vessel was cruising upriver in darkness, through the centre arch of Trent Bridge. Her starboard quarter struck scaffolding under the arch, and the strong river current came on to the port bow, pushing her bodily to starboard. She was pinned on the upriver side of the bridge's north buttress, where she received further damage as a result of a scaffolding pole going through one of the windows and side plating on the lower deck.

With the assistance of the emergency services, the passengers evacuated the vessel, initially by climbing the scaffolding and, later, using a hydraulic platform. She was unable to be freed from the bridge until the afternoon of Monday 18 November, after which she underwent repairs and resumed service.

The cause of the accident was loss of control of *Nottingham Princess* while transiting under the Trent Bridge because of the high level of the river, which caused a fast, confused flow through the centre arch, and scaffolding, which reduced the safe navigable width of the arch.

Recommendations have been made to all inland waterways navigation authorities, that all river works should be designed and built to minimise risk to river users, and to promulgate information which may affect the safe navigation of their rivers. Further recommendations have been made to the MCA with respect to the identification, by risk assessment, of the level and type of lifesaving apparatus to be carried on vessels, and the completion of a formal risk assessment on the hazards which may imperil a vessel.