

SYNOPSIS

At about 2255 (UTC + 1) on 23 August 2003, the Guernsey registered passenger catamaran *Trident VI* ran aground on Percée Rocks near Herm Island in the Channel Islands. There were 179 passengers on board, together with the skipper, engineer and a crewman. The vessel suffered extensive damage but nobody on board was injured and there was no pollution.

The MAIB was asked by the States of Guernsey Board of Administration to carry out an investigation into the accident, in accordance with the MOU between it and the MAIB.

Earlier in the evening, *Trident VI* had taken a number of passengers from St Peter Port, Guernsey, to Herm, for dinner at the island's hotel and tavern. The wind and sea-state were calm and the visibility was severely reduced because of fog, which persisted throughout the accident. At about 2230, the passengers returned to the waiting vessel and embarked for the return passage.

The skipper was using a GPS/electronic chart plotter, two radars and a magnetic compass.

On leaving the berth, the skipper made a 130° turn around the southern end of a sandbank and then steadied up on 310° for the transit through Percée Passage. From his plotter, and the radar, he found that the vessel was to the left of the narrow channel, and too close to the rocks to port. He altered course to starboard to bring the vessel on to the track-line, but the vessel overshot and grounded on the opposite side of the channel.

St Peter Port Co-ordination Rescue Centre called *Trident VI*'s sister vessel, *Trident V*, and the RNLI lifeboat. Both proceeded from St Peter Port to the stricken vessel. The passengers were evacuated from her to *Trident V* and returned to St Peter Port. Three crew members and a salvage pump from the lifeboat were placed on board *Trident VI* to assist the crew. The vessel floated off the rocks with the rising tide, and made her way back to St Peter Port under escort of the lifeboat. The vessel was beached in the harbour, as the forward three spaces in the port hull had been breached in the grounding.

This accident raised issues regarding blind pilotage, licensing of skippers, safety management and the vessel's manoeuvrability.

Recommendations have been made to the owners with regard to the vessel's manoeuvrability, and to the States of Guernsey Board of Administration regarding the local requirements for safety management systems. The latter has also been recommended to encourage operators to fit the equipment required to stabilise radars and chart plotters.