

SYNOPSIS



On 11 March 2003, the ro-ro ferry *Claymore*, with twelve passengers embarked, was attempting to berth in St Margaret's Hope, Orkney, when the vessel's movement could not be controlled in the gale force winds. The ship was blown away from her intended berth and her starboard propeller became entangled in the moorings of smaller vessels, causing her starboard engine to shut down automatically. The Longhope lifeboat evacuated the passengers before assisting a workboat to tow *Claymore* alongside. There were no injuries.

MSRC Shetland informed the MAIB of the accident later that evening, and an investigation began the following day.

Claymore had only returned to service on 7 March, following a 4-month lay up. A number of factors contributed to the accident, which included:

- No operational limits or contingency plans were in force in the event of adverse weather in St Margaret's Hope.
- The master was inexperienced in handling *Claymore*, which had a large "sail area" forward, and might have felt pressured into trying to berth the vessel.
- Unavailability of the bow thruster following seawater saturation via a defective exhaust vent flap. Some of the ship's crew were aware of the defect to the exhaust flap but no remedial action had been taken.
- The starboard anchor would not release because it was seized in its hawse pipe. It had not been used for several months, and had not been walked back clear of the hawse in preparation for letting go.
- Ineffective bridge management and a breakdown in communication with the forward mooring team resulted in a mooring line, which had been passed and secured to the jetty, being lost from the inboard end.
- Insufficient time and resources had been allocated to prepare *Claymore* for returning into service.
- Neither international nor domestic safety management regulations were applicable.

Recommendations have been addressed to the MCA relating to the application and requirements of safety management systems. Recommendations have also been made to Pentland Ferries, the owner of *Claymore*, which, if implemented, should help improve the safety of its operation.