

SYNOPSIS



At 0020 BST on 2 April 2002, the Swedish registered ro-ro vessel *Stena Gothica* struck the eastern jetty, during a spring ebb tide, while approaching Immingham lock. A 3-metre gash was sustained in the port side shell plating below the waterline, leading to a large ingress of water into the lower cargo hold.

The vessel was moved into the lock and, shortly after, began to list to starboard, reaching a maximum heel of 14.5° at 0333. Firefighters and a local salvage team attended and, after several hours, the rate of ingress of water was slowed and the water level in the lower hold reduced. The quick and effective action of the firefighters and salvors prevented a capsized.

The vessel was moved to berth No 4 where she was all fast at 1442. An MAIB inspector arrived at the vessel shortly after she berthed to start the investigation.

The cause of the collision with the jetty was the master losing control of his vessel during the approach to the lock entrance. A further 11 contributing factors were identified which included:

- the master's decision to take over the conduct of the navigation just before the approach to the lock entrance;
- the master under-estimating the strength of the tidal current; and
- a missing fender on the eastern approach jetty at the position the vessel impacted, which had not been replaced by temporary fendering.

The investigation also revealed conflicting evidence with regard to the pilot's advice, after the master took over the conduct of the navigation. This could not be resolved because no Voyage Data Recorder was fitted. The design of *Stena Gothica* was also found to be inherently dangerous as she had an open ro-ro deck below the waterline which, if flooded, could have led to a rapid capsized.

Recommendations have been addressed to Stena Line and Associated British Ports (Humber) which, if implemented, will help to prevent a recurrence.