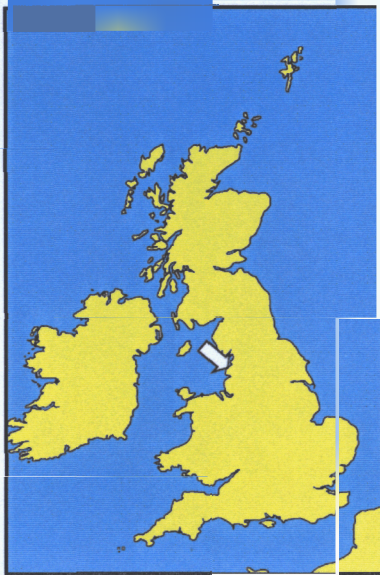


## SYNOPSIS



*European Pioneer*, a ro-ro cargo ferry, ran aground on a sandbank while departing Fleetwood in the early hours of the morning of 1 December 2000. She had 103 units of cargo and 57 passengers on board. She was only superficially damaged and there was no pollution. She remained stranded over one tide and was subsequently able to continue her passage.

*European Pioneer* runs a regular daily service between Fleetwood and Larne, along with two other similar vessels. At the time of the grounding, the master, the chief officer, a seaman lookout and the bosun as helmsman manned her bridge. The master had the con. Both the master and the chief officer each held a Pilotage Exemption Certificate (PEC) for the port. The weather and visibility were good.

The approach to Fleetwood is a very narrow buoyed channel between drying sandbanks, which demands accurate navigation. The bridge team was following a familiar well-tryed passage plan, which involved the master conning the vessel by eye from the bridge-front window. The role of the duty second officer was to monitor the navigation using radar parallel index techniques, and advising the master accordingly. However, on leaving the berth the second officer had duties at a mooring station, and no one monitored the radar in his absence.

A navigational mistake occurred before the second officer had returned to the bridge. A critical buoy was unlit which caused the master to underestimate a turn. By the time the mistake was noticed it was too late to correct it.

P&O Ship Management (Irish Sea) Ltd is recommended to reconsider the bridge resource management on its ships operating in and out of Fleetwood, and to review its procedures for ensuring the Voyage Event Recorders fitted on its vessels are fully operational for every voyage.