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**REPORT OF THE  
INVESTIGATION INTO  
THE GROUNDING OF  
M.V. "WHITHAVEN"  
ON THE RIVER BARROW  
ON 9TH MARCH, 2002**

**The Marine Casualty Investigation Board was established on the 5<sup>th</sup>, June 2002 under The Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) Act 2000**

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## 1. SYNOPSIS.

- 1.1 The coastal tanker motor vessel "Whithaven" grounded outbound from New Ross, Co. Wexford on the River Barrow close to Ferry Point on Saturday morning 9th March 2002 at approximately 01.33 hours GMT. (See appendix 8.2). The vessel was refloated on the next high water and had suffered bottom hull penetration and damage. There were no apparent injuries to anyone on board and no pollution occurred.

## 2. FACTUAL INFORMATION

- 2.1 Name: "Whithaven"  
 Flag: U.K.  
 Port of Registry: London  
 Call Sign: GPHK  
 Official Number: 358523  
 Year of Build: 1972  
 Classification Society: Lloyds Registry (LR)  
 IMO Number: 7719088  
 Gross Tonnage: 1204  
 Deadweight: 1933  
 Owner/Operator: John H. Whitaker (Tankers) Limited,  
 Crown Dry Dock, Tower Street,  
 Hull, England. HU9 1TY.
- Full Sea Speed: 10 knots (230 rpm)  
 Number of Crew: 6 plus 1 river pilot.  
 Length Over All: 66.20 metres  
 Breadth: 11.51 metres
- Type of Ship: Single Hull Coastal Tanker with capacity for  
 Light and Heavy Fuel Oils to be carried in 5 sets  
 of wing tanks - Nos. 1 to 5 port and starboard.  
 There are no centre tanks.  
 (See appendix 8.8 for photograph of vessel)
- 2.2 The ship was well equipped with operational bridge instrumentation and navigational equipment. Charts and nautical publications were on board and corrected to the Admiralty Notices to Mariners. (See appendices 8.5 and 8.9)
- 2.3 The ship was manned in compliance with the Safe Manning Document (SMD) issued by the UK Maritime Coastguard Agency 4/06/1996.
- The Master Captain Robert Wilcox holds a UK STCW 78/95 certificate of competency No. CoC 0015425 and a tanker endorsement relating to specialized training for oil tankers. This ship has been trading regularly between Ireland and the UK.
- The Chief Mate and second mate were off watch and resting. The navigating watch keeping rating was on standby in the mess room.
- The river Pilot, Mr. John Tyrrell, is employed by New Ross Port Company and was licensed as a Pilot in December 1996. Previously Mr. Tyrrell had been Harbour Master and Pilot at Arklow and relief Pilot at Roadstone Jetty, Arklow. He holds a valid Irish STCW 78/95 certificate of competency.

2.4 All applicable certification was in force and issued by the relevant authority i.e. Ship Construction; International Load Line; International Oil Pollution Prevention certificates issued by LR on behalf of Flag and Safety Equipment; Safety Radio (issued by Marconi Marine); Safe Manning and International Safety Management certificates issued by Flag.

## 2.5 CREW LIST

<i>Name</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Nationality</i>
Robert Wilcox	Master	British
David McEachran	Chief Officer	British
William Jones	2nd Officer	British
Philip Riley	Able Seaman	British
John Faber	Chief Engineer	British
Colin Harper	2nd Engineer	British

### 3. THE EVENTS PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT

- 3.1 The entrance to the River Barrow lies between Kilmokea Point and Drumdowney Point and is approached from the River Suir through the span of Barrow Bridge. The river is navigable by vessels of moderate draft from the Barrow Bridge for a distance of 9 miles upstream to New Ross.
- 3.2 Navigation of the river is intricate and pilotage compulsory. British Admiralty Chart No. 2046 covers the River Barrow. (See appendices 8.3 and 8.10)
- 3.3 The Admiralty List of Lights Volume A lists a number of floodlights on the River Barrow e.g. Ferry Point, Dollar Point, Pilltown, Dempsey, Carrick Cloney, Mead Quay, Pink Rock. They should not be considered as navigational marks. (See appendix 8.7)
- 3.4 On departure the forward draft was 2.8 metres and the aft draft was 4.00 metres.
- 3.5 Pre sailing checks were carried out. The bridge and steering gear was tested and entered in the deck logbook. Pilot Tyrrell boarded at 00.20 hours on Saturday morning 9th and the ship left the Town Quay at 00.36 hours. On the outward river passage the Pilot was on the wheel, which is normal River Barrow pilotage practice. The Master was standing in a position to the right of the Pilot and at the engine controls.
- 3.6 The radar was operating and sited to the port side of the wheelhouse control console and to the left of where the Pilot was standing.
- 3.7 The vessel was in hand-steering mode proceeding downriver at approximately 8 knots (190 rpm). Weather conditions were good with wind South, South Westerly at force 2 and visibility was good. There were no other ships navigating in the river.
- 3.8 At 01.05 hours the ship passed Pink Rock Channel and continued downriver. The Master was watching the vessels track in relation to the buoyage and shore lights ahead in the river channel. As "Whithaven" approached Ferry Point with No. 1 green light buoy on the port side the Master began to reference the fixed white floodlight on Ferry Point.

## 4. THE INCIDENT

- 4.1 The Pilot states that on approaching the corner at Ferry Point the light of the middle red buoy was obscured and the white floodlight on the Fish Trap was mistaken for the white floodlight at Ferry Point. The white floodlight at Ferry Point was mistaken for the white road light at Ballinlaw. Port helm was applied when the actual Fish Trap floodlight (then taken to be the Ferry Point floodlight) was bearing approximately 4 points (45 degrees) on the port bow. In the meantime the Master could see the white shore light on a road (Ballinlaw) almost ahead and the white floodlight at Ferry Point to port. He was then aware of a helm movement beside him and then saw the two white lights move across to the starboard bow. The Master called to the Pilot and said that the ship must come to starboard. As he said this more port wheel was being applied. However the Pilot immediately applied starboard wheel bringing the rudder back from port through 'midships and across to starboard. The bow stopped swinging to port and started to turn to starboard. (See appendix 8.4)
- 4.2 The Pilot stated that on becoming aware that he was not in the channel the helm was immediately put hard to starboard and the vessel travelled a short distance parallel to the shore before grounding port side to the shoreline between the floodlight on the Fish Trap and the floodlight on Ferry Point. The Pilot stated that the engine was immediately stopped. The vessel came to rest approximately 20 to 30 metres from Ferry Point floodlight and parallel to the shore. The grounding was recorded as occurring at 01.33 hours on Saturday morning 9th March 2002.
- 4.3 At the time of grounding the ship's heading was 245 degrees true. High water estimated at 02.04 hours and the tide in the vicinity was said to be slack.

## 5. EVENTS FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT

Immediately after grounding the Master informed his Operations Director Captain Harry Williams in Hull that "Whithaven" had grounded. (See appendix 8.6)

- 02.04 hrs. High Water with a range of falling tide of 2.0 metres.
- 02.10 hrs. The Master having initiated the on board emergency procedure for grounding completed his assessment and condition of the tanks. He had sounded tanks and sounded outside the ship and also established that there was no pollution. The ship was aground on rock, shingle and sand. Ballasted wing tanks Nos.3 and 4, containing dirty ballast water, were intact. Empty wing tanks Nos. 1 and 2 were open to the river.
- 02.45 hrs. New Ross Harbour Master boarded "Whithaven".
- 07.35 hrs. Due to a falling tide the ship developed an excessive list said to be up to 30 degrees to starboard and as a precaution the Master instructed the crew, Pilot, Harbour Master to transfer from "Whithaven" to the pilot boat. The Master followed. Earlier the liferaft was launched and prepared in anticipation of this controlled disembarkation and before the pilot boat arrived on the scene.
- 08.43 hrs. Low Water at Ferry Point.
- 12.05 hrs. Helicopter completes initial pollution inspection of river.
- 12.35 hrs. Crew, Pilot and ship's Master return on board "Whithaven".
- 13.10 hrs. Tugs "Port Lairge II" and "Inglesby Cross" arrived.
- 13.15 hrs. A Marine Surveyor from the Marine Survey Office arrived on the scene and following a brief discussion with the Harbour Master arranged a briefing with interested parties to consider and agree a plan of action.
- 13.50 hrs. Tug "Port Lairge II" in position with towline long stretched out from the stern of "Whithaven".
- 14.00 hrs. The towline on "Port Lairge II" parted and was promptly reconnected at 14.22 hours for the second pull. Second tug "Inglesby Cross" assisting tug "Port Lairge II".
- 14.24 hrs. Tug "Inglesby Cross" transfers and connects up forward to "Whithaven".
- 14.25 hrs. "Whithaven" afloat fore and aft and moving out into the river. No pollution was observed.
- 14.36 hrs. Main engine on "Whithaven" operational and let go tugs to standby. Director General of Maritime Safety Directorate informed.

## EVENTS FOLLOWING

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CONTD.

- 14.49 hrs. High Water at Ferry Point.
- 15.25 hrs. Coast Guard helicopter flies over area and reports that no pollution observed.
- 15.35 hrs. "Whithaven" alongside ESB power station berth on Great Island.
- 15.40 hrs. Coastguard arrive on board "Whithaven"

Following temporary repairs and agreement with Coast Guard, LR, owners and MSO the MV "Whithaven" was permitted to sail for Rosslare in order to make additional repairs to permit the ship to continue to an agreed repair yard in Manchester. In consultation with the UK MCA at Beverly an Irish Load Line Exemption was issued on 20th March for a single voyage from Rosslare to Liverpool.

During dry dock in Wales the extent of the damage to the underside of the hull plating was established. Holes were found in deep fore peak ballast tank, empty cargo wing tanks Nos. 1 and 2 port and starboard. There was a hole in the boiler feed tank, which is situated aft of the pump room and forward of the engine room. Some plating mainly along the port side of the hull was set up in places. Approximately 15 tonnes of steel plating was renewed.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS

- 6.1 There was no suitable river passage plan agreed which would include speed adjustment at the acute bends and elsewhere in the river.
- 6.2 The Master and Pilot were not engaged in a continuous monitoring of proposed helm manoeuvres and concurring identification of navigational marks through voice interaction which is a function of good practice particularly during night navigation of the River Barrow.
- 6.3 At the time of the occurrence the Pilot was relying on non-navigation marks and in doing so had mistaken the Fish Trap floodlight for the Ferry Point floodlight and then the white road light at Ballinlaw for Ferry Point floodlight.
- 6.4 The Pilot was not standing in a position to effectively utilise the radar to assist in picking up all navigation buoys and then visually identify those navigation marks.
- 6.5 The quick flashing red light at Garraunbaun Rock (the West shore on the Co.Kilkenny side) was extinguished.
- 6.6 The similarity of the floodlights and Fish Traps at Ferry Point gives rise to confusion between the two and this may have contributed to this incident.
- 6.7 The incidence of backscatter from the shore floodlights increases the difficulty in picking up the lights from the red can buoys.
- 6.8 Although navigational charts are available, a number of river navigational buoys are not numbered or charted. Some buoys have lights extinguished or are of low intensity. Adequate large-scale navigation charts are not available.
- 6.9 The grounding did not occur as a result of machinery, steering or equipment failure on board "Whithaven".
- 6.10 The Marine Casualty Investigation Board is concerned that the Pilot acts as helmsman thereby restricting his movement across the wheelhouse particularly at nighttime and during critical sessions of the river passage.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

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## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS.

- 7.1 River, shore side and swing bridge navigational marks should comply with the requirements and recommendations of the International Association of Lighthouse Authorities (I.A.L.A)/Commissioners of Irish Lights.
- 7.2 Adequate larger scale navigation charts with greater detail are required.
- 7.3 The Port authority should, in the absence of adequate large Admiralty scale charts provide a local passage plan which may include courses and distances, radar distances off and to go to navigational marks and next alter course positions, speed reductions, approved passing places, abort and emergency procedures. There should be a correct and accurate representation of navigation marks.
- 7.4 New Ross river pilots should receive formal bridge management and teamwork training. They should develop and apply this expertise positively so far as is reasonably practicable.
- 7.5 Wexford & Kilkenny County Councils, Iarnrod Eireann and New Ross Port Authority should assess, confer, and consult with the Commissioners of Irish Lights to draw up a plan/ design for the proper installation and maintenance of shore and navigational lights for the limits of New Ross Port and the lifting railway bridge.
- 7.6 A risk assessment should be carried out by the owners / operators of tankers operating in this area to ensure safe passage of such vessels at all times.

**8. APPENDICES**

8.1 Glossary of terms

8.2 Abstracts from BA 2046. (UK Hydrographic Office, Taunton, Somerset).

8.3 Abstract of river survey by Hydrographic Surveys Ltd, The Cobbles, Crosshaven, Co.Cork.

8.4 Sketch of occurrence from Master of "Whithaven".

8.5 Layout and legend to the navigating bridge equipment and instrumentation.

8.6 MRCC SITREP

8.7 Abstract from Volume A, Admiralty List of Lights. (UK Hydrographic Office)  
(see point 5813 - River Barrow)

8.8 Photograph of "Whithaven" taken by Bilberry Shipping Waterford (Tug Company).

8.9 Photograph of bridge components of "Whithaven".

8.10 Working copy of Admiralty Chart abstract indicating the position of navigation marks at the time of the incident. The chart was supplied by one of the Pilots.

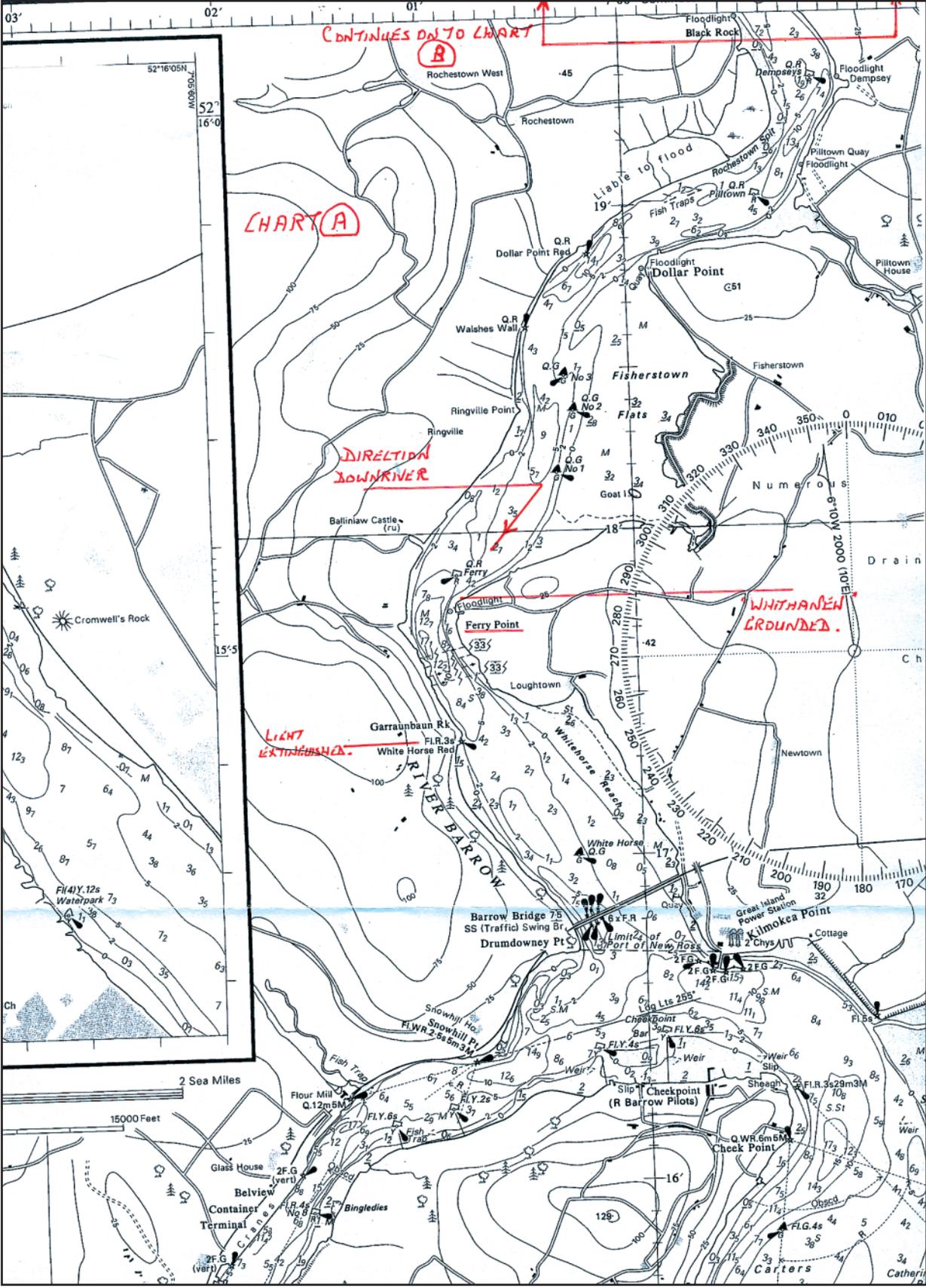
### 8.1 Glossary of terms

Flood Tide:	The movement of water in the river is from slack low water towards high water.
Range:	The difference between high water and low water.
GMT:	Greenwich Mean Time (Local Time)
IMO:	International Maritime Organization
Wheel:	Helm - means of steering the ship
STCW:	Standards of Training and Certification and Watch keeping for Seafarers.
LR:	Lloyds Register Classification Society
Marks:	Means approved IALA system, which may include shapes, topmarks, numbering, retro reflectors and radar reflectors.
Master:	Captain of a vessel, whom decisions concerning the actual navigation and manoeuvring of the vessel remains with.
Pilotage:	A voluntary or compulsory service to provide a master with assistance in manoeuvring his vessel, in communication with ship/shore, based on local knowledge.
Grounding:	Stranding: Any prolonged contact between a ship's hull and sea/river bed.
Passage:	Voyage: A movement of a ship between the harbour of departure and the harbour of destination.

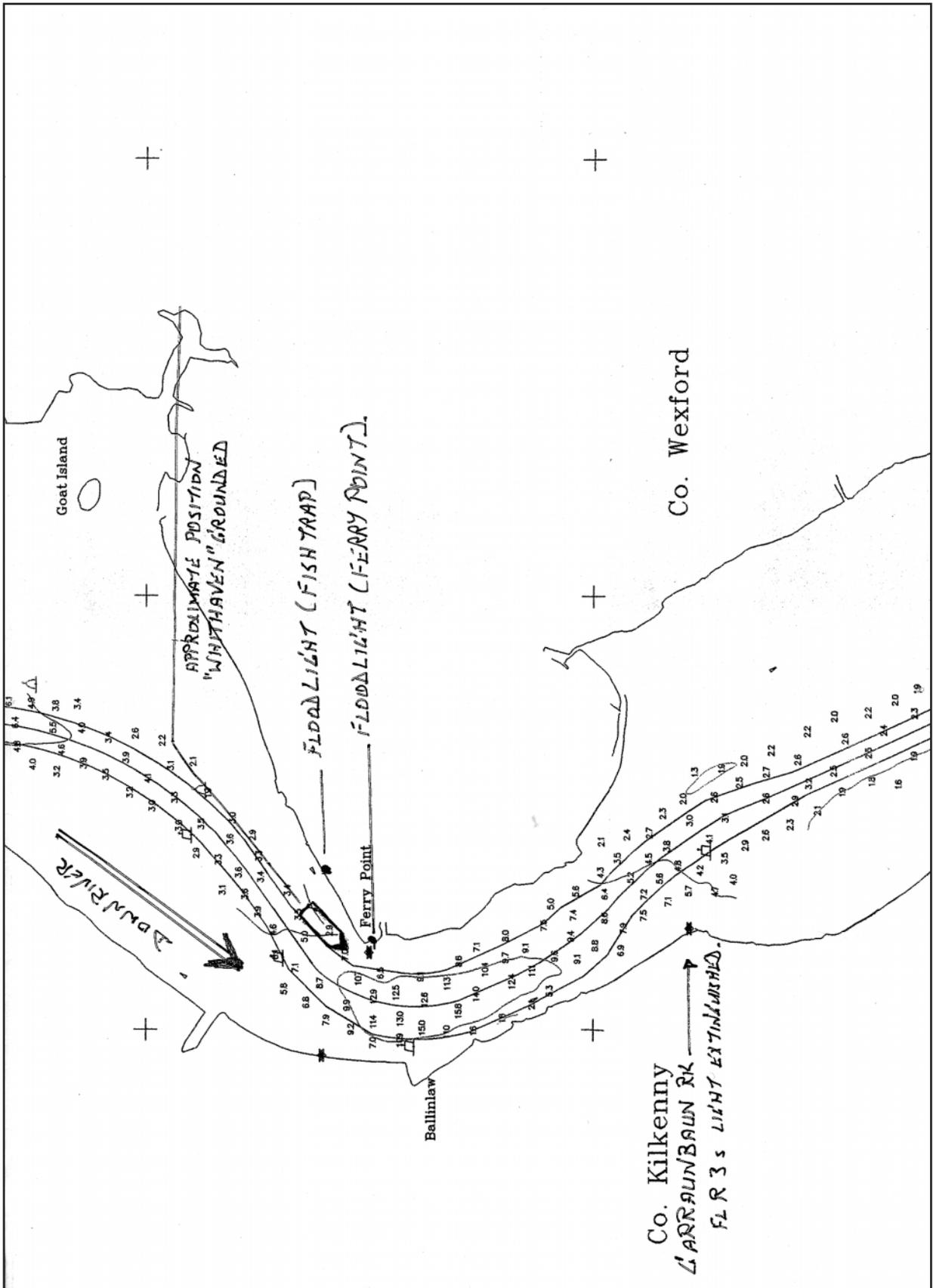


# APPENDIX 8.2

CONTD.

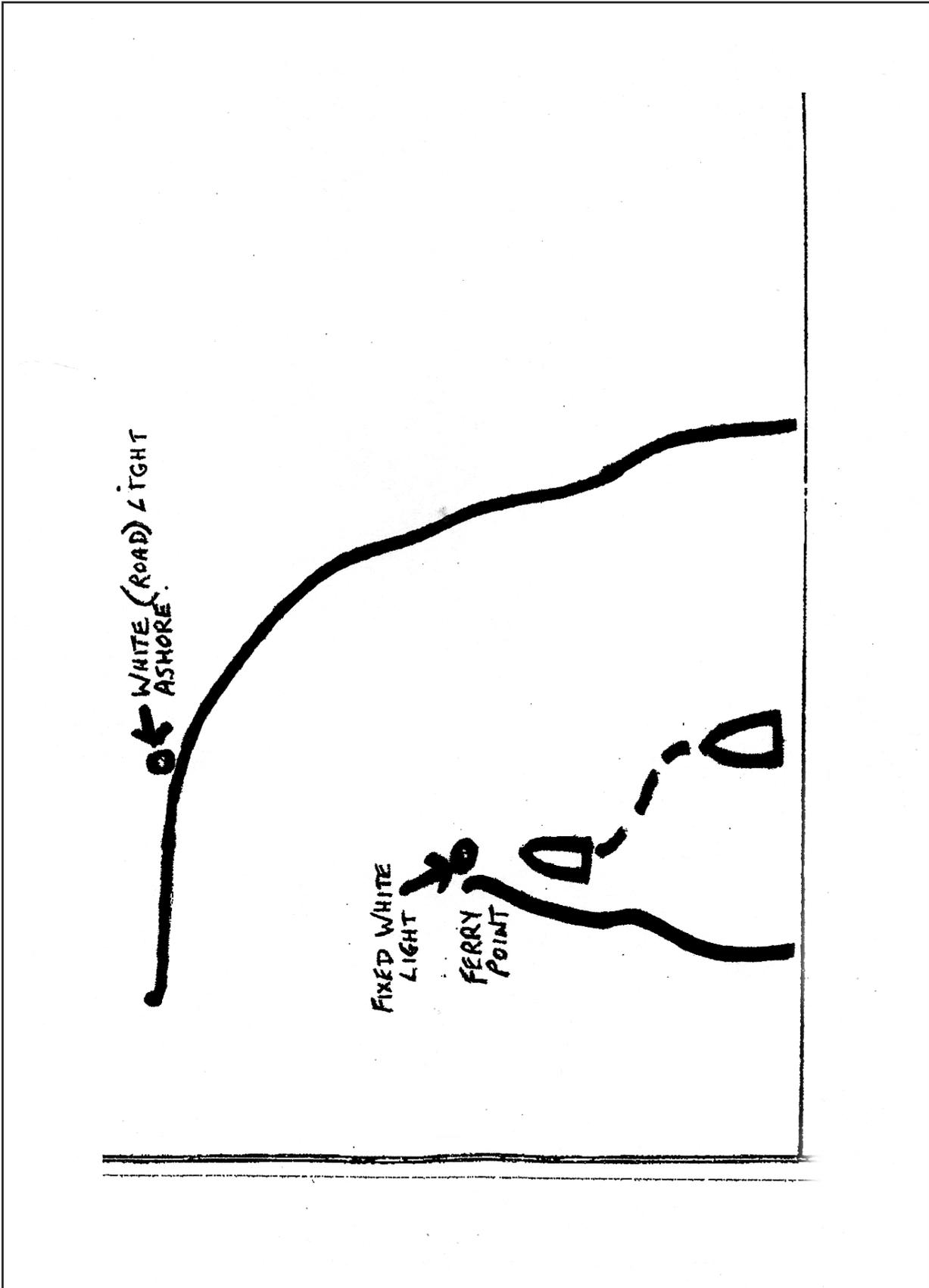


8.3 Abstract of river survey by Hydrographic Surveys Ltd, The Cobbles, Crosshaven, Co.Cork.



# APPENDIX 8.4

8.4 Sketch of occurrence from Master of "Whithaven".





# APPENDIX 8.6

## 8.6 MRCC SITREP

25/09 '03 THU 09:46 FAX 353 1 6620795		353 1 6620795	MRCC Dublin	001
		SITREP		
TRANSMISSION PRIORITY	ROUTINE			09/03/2002
DTG	090800Z MAR 02			
INCIDENT NAME	TANKER AGROUND			
FROM	DUBLIN MRCC			
TO	IRISH COAST GUARD EJK/EJM/ MSO			
SITREP NUMBER	ONE			
A.	M/V WHITHAVEN			
B.	5217N 00700.9W ( RIVER BARROW )			
C.	VESSEL AGROUND BOTTOM MUD/STONES			
D.	6			
E.	MONITOR SITUATION			
F.	DUBLIN MRCC			
G.	760 TON TANKER LENGTH 66MTRS BREADTH 11MTRS IN BALLAST, 25 TONS DIESEL BUNKERS IN WING TANKS			
H.	FLAT CALM VIS GOOD			
I.	MONITORED SITUATION, INFORMED ON CALL D/C.			
J.				
K.				
L.				
M.	0236 HARBOUR MASTER NEW ROSS ADVISES VESSEL AGROUND RIVER BARROW IN NO IMMEDIATE DANGER OWNERS ARRANGING TUGS FROM WATERFORD TO ASSIST NEXT TIDE 1459 TODAY. VESSELS TO PROCEED WATERFORD FOR DIVERS INSPECTION.			

09/03 '02 SAT 15:00 FAX 353 1 6620795

MRCC DUBLIN

→→→ MARINE SURVEYORS 002

+-----+  
|SITUATION REPORT FROM MRCC DUBLIN - SITREP |  
+-----+

MISSION PRIORITY: ROUTINE Ref No: 13106 09/03/2002  
090800 INCIDENT NAME: TANKER AGROUND  
DUBLIN MRCC  
IRISH COAST GUARD EJK/EJM/ MSO

SITREP NUMBER: ONE

Identity of Casualty: M/V WHITHAVEN

Position: 5217N 00700.9W ( RIVER BARROW )

Situation: VESSEL AGROUND BOTTOM MUD/STONES

Number of Persons at Risk: 6

Assistance Required: MONITOR SITUATION

Co-ordinating RCC: DUBLIN MRCC

Description of Casualty: 760 TON TANKER LENGTH 66MTRS BREATH 11MTRS  
IN BALLAST, 25 TONS DIESEL BUNKERS IN WING TANKS

Weather: FLAT CALM VIS GOOD

Initial Action Taken: MONITORED SITUATION, INFORMED ON CALL D/C.

Search Area:

Co-ordinating Instructions:

Future Plans:

Additional Information: 0236 HARBOUR MASTER NEW ROSS ADVISES VESSEL  
AGROUND RIVER BARROW IN NO IMMEDIATE DANGER  
OWNERS ARRANGING TUGS FROM WATERFORD TO ASSIST  
NEXT TIDE 1459 TODAY. VESSELS TO PROCEED  
WATERFORD FOR DIVERS INSPECTION.

# APPENDIX 8.7

## 8.7 Abstract from Volume A, Admiralty List of Lights. (UK Hydrographic Office) (see point 5813 - River Barrow)

Ireland — South Coast						
	N/W		metres miles			
<b>NEW ROSS</b>						
5812-48	- Barrow Railway Bridge	52 16-8 7 00-3	2 F R(hor)	.. ..	Centre Pier	Traffic Signals. On upstream and downstream dolphins. F R mark upstream and downstream ends of and W Piers
5813	- RIVER BARROW. No 2. White Horse Red (Garraunbaun Rock)	52 17-4 7 00-9	Fl R 3s	4	2 Concrete case 1	River Barrow - floodlights exist at Ferry Point, Dollar Point, Pilltown, Dempsey, Blackrock, Carrick Clontarf, Mead Quay, Pink Rock, Pink Point, Groyne, Lucy, Annaghs and Camilin Reach. They should not be considered as navigational marks
5813-14	-- Walshes Wall. No 8	52 18-6 7 00-5	Q R	3	2 Concrete case 3	
5813-17	-- Dollar Point Red	52 18-9 7 00-2	Q R	3	2 Concrete case 3	
5813-34	-- Keurney Bay	52 19-8 6 59-7	Q R	2	2	
5813-78	-- Raheen Jetty (South Wharf)	52 23-0 6 57-7	Fl R 2s	2	2	
5813-8	-- Marsh Meadows. Oil Jetty. S	52 23-0 6 57-5	2 F G(vert)	4	2 Dolphin 2	1m apart
5813-82	---- N. Corner	52 23-0 6 57-5	2 F G(vert)	4	2 2	1m apart
<b>WATERFORD HARBOUR</b>						
5814	- Ldg Lts 255°. Front. Snowhill Point (W)	52 16-4 7 00-9	Fl WR 2-5s	5	3 White mast 6	fl 0-3. W222°-020°(158°), R020°-057°(37°), W057°-107°(50°)
5814-1	-- Rear. 750m from front. Flour Mill (W)	52 16-3 7 01-5	Q W	12	5 White framework tower 11	
5816	- Belview Container Terminal. NE end	52 15-7 7 02-2	2 F G(vert)			
5816-2	-- SW end	52 15-7 7 02-2	2 F G(vert)			
5818	- QUEEN'S CHANNEL. Guide Bank. Ldg Lts 098°. Front (W)	52 15-3 7 02-3	Oc R 6s	8	5 Black tower, white band 7	
5820	---- Faithleg Demesne. Rear. 550m from front (W)	52 15-3 7 01-8	Q W	15	5 White mast 6	
5822	-- Beacon Quay (W)	52 15-4 7 04-2	Fl W 3s	9	.. ..	fl 0-3. Vis 255°-086°(191°)
5826	- Cove (W)	52 15-0 7 05-1	Fl WRG 6s	6	2 White tower 7	fl 0-3. R111°-161°(50°), G161°-234°(73°), W234°-111°(237°). When entering, the light changes from G to R when abreast of it
5828	- Smelting House Point (W)	52 15-1 7 05-2	Q W	8	3 White mast 9	
5830	- Ballycar (W)	52 15-0 7 05-4	Fl RG 3s	5	.. ..	fl 0-3. G127°-212°(85°), R212°-284°(72°)
5831	- Waterford City Marina. Parade Quay	52 15-6 7 06-2	2 F R(vert)	3	1 Pontoon	Mark SE and NW ends
5831-1	-- The Quay	52 15-7 7 06-4	2 F R(vert)	3	1 Pontoon	Mark SE and NW ends. Traffic Signal lights on Rice Mill Bridge 0-4M upstream

8.8 Photographs of "Whithaven"  
taken by Bilberry Shipping Waterford (Tug Company).



8.9 Photograph of bridge components of "Whithaven".







## 9. INDEX OF CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Correspondent

- 9.1 Commissioners of Irish Lights - letter dated 07th April, 2003
- 9.2 John H. Whitaker (tankers) Ltd. - letter dated 26th March, 2003
- 9.3 Mr. John Tyrell - letter dated 10 April, 2003
- 9.4 New Ross Port Company - letter dated 04 April, 2003  
(enclosing report from T.C. Nash and Associates 20/03/02)

**THE MCIB RESPONSE TO EACH OF THE ABOVE IS SET OUT IMMEDIATELY AFTER ALL CORRESPONDENCE**

9.1 Commissioners of Irish Lights - letter dated 07th April, 2003



**COMMISSIONERS OF IRISH LIGHTS**  
16 Lower Pembroke Street Dublin 2

Marine Department

**T** + 353-1-632 1900

**F** + 353-1-632 1946

**E** marine@cil.ie

**W** www.cil.ie

Mr Dick Heron,  
Secretary,  
Marine Casualty Investigation Board  
29 - 31 Adelaide Road,  
Dublin 2.



Your Ref:

Our Ref: IMS/75/73

Date: 07 April 2003

**RESPONSE TO DRAFT REPORT OF THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE GROUNDING OF  
'WHITHAVEN' ON THE RIVER BARROW ON 9TH MARCH 2002.**

Dear Sir,

Your letter dated 11th March 2003 is acknowledged.

I should like to offer the following observations on the draft report:

- It is the responsibility of a Harbour Authority to ensure the provision of adequate aids to navigation within its jurisdiction and to ensure the promulgation of their characteristics and location through charts and nautical publications.
- The Harbour Authority has authority over the establishment and existence of all navigational marks within its jurisdiction irrespective of their ownership. Provision exists within the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) guidelines for the marking of such structures as fish cages without prejudicing the integrity of channel navigation.
- The use of fixed navigation lights, i.e.: without a flash character, is discouraged by the IALA guidelines.
- The Admiralty Chart and List of Lights note the existence of floodlights on the River course. The latter includes a remark of caution saying that "They should not be considered as navigation marks".
- Floodlights may be validly used and to good effect in very close quarter ship manoeuvring to illuminate the banks of a river or canal sides. In my own experience of Barrow passages Pink Point floodlighting is a good example of such use.
- Neither the List of Lights nor the chart indicates a floodlight at Ballinlaw or on the fish cages at Ferry Point.
- The hand drawn chart attached to the draft report indicates three Can buoys:
  - Between No. 1 Green and Red Ferry Buoys
  - Off Ferry Point
  - Off Garraunbawn.

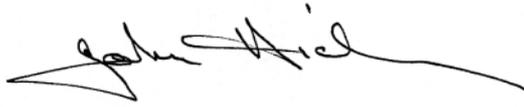
There appears to be no record in this office of an application for or granting of Statutory Sanction by the Commissioners of Irish Lights for these aids to navigation. Neither does the report refer to these buoys.

2

- 4.1 of the report quotes the Pilot as saying that on the approach to Ferry Point the light on the 'Middle Red buoy was obscured'. This point requires further examination.
- The relevance of the report that the light at Garraunbawn Rock was extinguished is unclear.
- In my experience lighting backscatter has not presented a problem for Barrow navigation. Neither have we received any comments or reports of such problems. This matter will be given specific attention in the course of the next inspection of aids to navigation in this area.
- CIL recognise the considerable commitment and investment over the last two years by the Harbour Authority in new aids to navigation on the Barrow. Regrettably some of these were established without consultation and without the Statutory Sanction of the Commissioners of Irish Lights who have, on a number of occasions, requested the Port to regularise these aids to navigation. Their submission is still awaited.
- CIL fully supports all the recommendations and particularly 7.1, 7.2, and 7.5 as contained in the draft report.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance to your investigation.

Yours sincerely,



**CAPT. J. J. HICKEY,**  
**INSPECTOR OF LIGHTS & MARINE SUPERINTENDENT.**

9.2 John H. Whitaker (tankers) Ltd. - letter dated 26th March, 2003

<p>TELEPHONES:                  HEAD OFFICE: 01482 595300                  TELEX: 597632 BARGIT G                  FAX: 01482 214850/226270</p> <p>RUNCORN OFFICE: 01928 575001                  FAX: 01928 561124</p> <p>SOUTHAMPTON: 02380 339989                  FAX: 02380 339925                  OCEAN ROAD, EASTERN DOCKS,                  SOUTHAMPTON SO14 3AH</p> <p>COASTAL VESSELS                  PORT LIGHTERAGE AND                  INLAND WATERWAY CARRIERS                  OF BULK LIQUIDS</p> <p>Reg. in England 219451                  V.A.T. Reg. No. 167 9046 33</p> <p>24 HR EMERGENCY NO. 0870 2385204</p>		
<p><b>JOHN H. WHITAKER (TANKERS) LTD.</b></p>		
<p>CROWN DRY DOCK,                  TOWER STREET, HULL HU9 1TY</p>		
<p>Mr. Dick Heron ,                  Secretary ,                  Marine Casualty Investigation Board ,                  29 – 31 Adelaide Road ,                  Dublin 2                  Republic of Ireland.</p>	<p>26<sup>th</sup> of March 2003.</p>	
<p>Dear sir ,</p>		
<p>Ref : Draft report of the investigation into the grounding of “ Whithaven” on the River Barrow on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2002.</p>		
<p>I am writing to acknowledge receipt of the draft report for the above incident and to forward my comments on the content.</p>		
<p>Comments:-</p>		
<p>(1) On page 9 of the report you that “ a single voyage from Rosslare to Wales “. This should read “ a single voyage from Rosslare to Liverpool “.</p> <p>(2) On page 9 once again “ dry dock in Wales “ should read “ dry dock at Manchester “</p>		
<p>With the exception of these small clerical errors I can confirm that we concur with the findings of your report as they are all points raised in our own investigations. Our own investigations have highlighted a number of other learning points not specifically dealt with in your report and these issues have been circulated throughout our fleet via our safety memo system. Furthermore , we have also provided all of our vessels with the new OCIMF / ICS / INTERTANKO publication , International Best Practices for Maritime Pilotage.</p>		
<p>In closing , thank you for the courteous and Professional manner which this unfortunate incident was managed by your staff and the Department of the Marine.</p>		
<p>Yours sincerely,                    Captain Harry Williams.                  Operations Director.</p>	<p>John H. Whitaker (Tankers) Ltd                  Crown Dry Dock                  Tower Street                  Hull                  HU9 1TY</p>	
<p><small>Unless otherwise agreed in writing, all goods carried and towage undertaken at owner's risk and subject to the Hull Rivercraft and Lighter Owners Lighterage and Towage conditions (revised 1984) which are available on request.                  Part of the Whitaker Group of Companies</small></p>		

9.3 Mr. John Tyrell - letter dated 10 April, 2003



The Corner House,  
Rathnure,  
Enniscorthy,  
Co. Wexford.  
10<sup>th</sup> April 2003.

Mr. Dick Heron,  
Secretary,  
The Marine Casualty Investigation Board,  
29/31 Adelaide Road,  
Dublin 2.

**Re. Report of the investigation into the grounding of**  
**"Whithaven" on River Barrow,**  
**on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2002**

Dear Mr. Heron,

I refer to your letter of the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2003 and the following are my comments and observations on the draft Report.

My comments and observations correspond with the numbered paragraphs of the draft Report.

2.3. I was licensed as a Pilot by New Ross Port Company in December 1996 rather than in "December 1997" as stated in the Report.

4.1. When I became aware of the vessel's actual position, the helm was already hard a port. I immediately applied starboard helm and concurrently with my actions in applying starboard helm the Master called to me. I disagree with the Master's contention that more port helm was being applied when he called to me.

4.2. From my own observations I became aware that I was not in the channel. The Master's comments to me were made concurrently with my actions to bring the ship to starboard.

5. At 13.10 hours the tugs "Port Lairge II" and "Ingolsby Cross" arrived and only attached tow lines. The "Whithaven" was not re-floated until 14.25 hours.

14.25 hrs. See above.

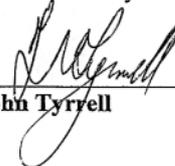
6.1. There was/is no river passage plan agreed or available suitable or otherwise.

- 6.2 I was continually engaged in monitoring the manoeuvring of the vessel and identification of the navigational lights and other lights though not consulting with the Master, as the Master were and are very familiar with the navigational lights.
- 6.3 At the time of the incident there were no I.A.L.A. navigational lights on the port side.  
See accompanying charts for lights on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2002 and accompanying chart for lights at March 2003.
- 6.4 I disagree with this conclusion. I was standing in a position from which I could have utilised the radar. However, I did not look at the radar screen, as its brightness would have adversely affected by night vision.
- 6.6 Not alone does the similarity of the flood lights at the Fish Traps and at Ferry Point on the Wexford side, and at Ballinlaw on the Waterford / Kilkenny side of the River Barrow cause confusion but this further compounded by another floodlight at a private dwellinghouse at Ballinlaw.
- 6.8 Where navigational charts are available they are not up to date.
- 6.10 See 6.6 above.
- 7.2 Up to date navigational charts of greater detail are required.
- 7.3 See above, there is no local passage plan in place and when a passage plan is put into place it should be reviewed with any changes in the river.

I enclose herewith the charts referred to at 6.3 above.

Please note also that prior to the incident, Pilotage Incidents were reported verbally to the Harbour Master and there were few, if any, written Pilotage Incident Report Forms submitted. Since the incident there have been at least 11 such written report forms and at least one report from the Master of the Whithaven reporting No. 6 red bouy being obscured.

Yours faithfully

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John Tyrrell

CONTD.

- 9.4 New Ross Port Company - letter dated 04 April, 2003  
(enclosing report from T.C. Nash and Associates 20/03/02)

Our ref: TM/RK  
Your Ref: MCIB 58



4<sup>th</sup> April 2002

Harbour Office, The Quay  
New Ross, Co Wexford, Ireland  
Tel: +353 51 421303  
Fax: +353 51 421294

Mr. Dick Heron,  
Secretary,  
Marine Casualty Investigation Board,  
29-31 Adelaide Road,  
Dublin 4.



**Re: Draft Report of the Investigation into the grounding of the 'Whithaven' in the River Barrow on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2002.**

Dear Mr. Heron,

Your Chairman's letter of 11<sup>th</sup> March 2003 refers.

On behalf of New Ross Port Company I am pleased to avail of the opportunity to respond to the draft report. This incident was also investigated on behalf of the Company by Capt. T. Nash of T.C. Nash and Associates. A copy of this report was given to Capt. D. Linehan of the Marine Surveyor's Office on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2002 and a further copy is enclosed with this letter.

We believe that the draft report's conclusions are flawed and our detailed comments are set out below. In particular, the fact that the New Ross Harbour Master was not formally interviewed during the investigation is a cause of serious concern.

### **Section 6 - Conclusions**

- 6.1 The Master of the vessel is responsible for the preparation of a passage plan.

New Ross Port Company  
Registered in Ireland No. 262363  
Directors: ~~T. Clavin~~, J. Curtis, D. Doyle,  
P. Doyle, M. Minihan (Chairman),  
T. Meehan (C.E.O.), J. Murphy, M. Murphy,  
P. Nolan, F. Ryan, A. Wall, E. Whelan.

- 6.2 This incident might not have occurred had the Master and Pilot adopted best practice in regard to agreeing the identification of navigational marks and indicating helm movements in advance. However, both were very familiar with the outward passage and the weather and visibility were good.
- 6.3 In his report Capt. Nash also concluded that the Pilot was relying on the non-navigation marks and was not referencing the port hand buoys and therefore failed to appreciate the vessel's exact position when he altered course to round Ferry Point.
- 6.4 The attached photographs clearly show that the Furono radar is located so that it is visible from the steering position where the pilot was standing. In an interview with the writer on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2002 Pilot Tyrrell confirmed that this is the case and that he recalled asking the Master to switch this radar to head-up mode about the time of the incident.
- 6.5 The red flashing shore light at Garraunbaun was extinguished over 18 months prior to the incident as a new port hand buoy was established close by. The new buoy marks the edge of the channel which had been re-aligned in the course of a capital dredging scheme carried out in 1999/2000. The shore light marked the port hand of the earlier channel and to have left it in place would have undoubtedly been confusing.

The new buoy in this location was established in the context of a general review of buoyage in the Barrow conducted in 2000 in consultation with the Pilots including Pilot Tyrrell after the completion of the River Barrow Improvement Scheme.

As a result of the grounding of the Whithaven a new white flashing light was established at Garraunbaun on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2002 in order to minimise the potential of a similar incident occurring in the future.

- 6.6 The similarity of the floodlights at the Fish Trap, Ferry Point and Balinlaw may have caused confusion and thereby contributed to the incident. However, the Master, in his report, stated that he could see the light and other features at Ballinlaw ahead and the light at Ferry Point to port. He evidently had no difficulty in correctly identifying the lights.

It should also be pointed out that these 3 floodlights have been in place for many years. The Company never received any indication from users of the River that they constituted a potential cause of confusion. Nor did this emerge during the review of aids to navigation in the River Barrow conducted with the assistance of Clyde Consultants in 2000.

In order to eliminate any potential confusion a new starboard hand buoy was laid at Ferry Point in May 2002.

- 6.7 Captain Nash states in his report that during his passage downriver he found all the new solar powered buoys to be brightly lit. In the reach where the incident occurred, the west side of the River is low-lying farmland with only 1 floodlight at Ballinlaw. It is not credible that this light would in any way make it more difficult to see the lights from the 3 port hand buoys located there.
- 6.8 A number of navigational buoys are not numbered however, all buoys are charted. Details of the position and characteristics of all buoys have been made available to the Hydrographic Office in Taunton. On the night of the incident all buoys in the area were functioning correctly. In addition all the buoys in this reach were solar powered with bright lights.

All lighted buoys in the River Barrow are now fitted with solar powered lights ensuring that the lights are consistently bright. These lights do not go dim as was the case with the older battery powered lights when the battery neared the end of its life.

From time to time problems with shore lights or buoys are experienced. An incident reporting procedure is in place since May 2001 which ensures that any such problems are quickly notified to management. Corrective action is taken as a matter of the highest priority.

- 6.9 We concur with this conclusion.
- 6.10 My comments in relation to conclusions 6.6 and 6.7 refer.

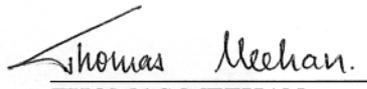
**Section 7 - Recommendations**

- 7.1 The Commissioners of Irish Lights have inspected the aids to navigation in the River Barrow which are under the control of New Ross Port Company on 2 occasions since 2000. No adverse comment was received as a result of these inspections.

The Barrow Railway Bridge is under the control of Iarnrod Eireann. New Ross Port Company has used every means at its disposal in attempting to convince that body to upgrade the marks and lights on the Bridge. Unfortunately these efforts have met with little success to date. This matter has also been raised with Iarnrod Eireann by Irish Lights and the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.

- 7.2 We concur with this recommendation.
- 7.3 We will take action on this recommendation as soon as possible.
- 7.4 We agree and are currently researching suitable courses.
- 7.5 We believe that the installation and maintenance of navigational lights within the River Barrow is primarily a matter for New Ross Port Company. This matter is the subject of on-going discussion between the Harbour Master and the Commissioners of Irish Lights.

Yours sincerely,

  
THOMAS MEEHAN  
Lt. Cdr.  
Chief Executive.

## J.C. NASH & ASSOCIATES

Oakhurst,  
Valley Road,  
Cobh,  
Co.Cork.  
Ireland

Tel: 021-811677 Fax: 021-811677

*New Ross Port Company,  
New Ross,  
County Wexford.*



Marine Consultancy;  
Independent Cargo Inspection;  
Superintendency; Pilotage;  
Marine Expert Witness;  
Vessel & Terminal Safety Inspection;  
Drydocking Specifications &  
Supervision;  
Recruitment; Procedures Manuals.

20.3.2002



### **REPORT.**

Investigation into Grounding, M.V. Whithaven.

#### Introduction

*At the request of Messrs. New Ross Port Company I carried out an investigation into the grounding of the M.V. Whithaven for the purpose of establishing what happened and why and to view operations within the port so as to prevent recurrence.*

#### Details.

*The M.V. Whithaven had discharged a cargo of Heavy Fuel Oil at New Ross and at 0030 was ready to depart for a passage to Milford Haven. The Master Captain R Wilcox was in command in the wheelhouse at all times from departure at 0036 and the Pilot John Tyrrell took the role of helmsman.*

*Down river, at 0133, near Ferry Point the vessel grounded and received serious bottom hull damage.*

*To investigate the incident, and to formulate this report I interviewed Capt. Wilcox on board the vessel on the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2002 as she lay alongside Great Island oil jetty. Later on the same day I interviewed the Pilot, John Tyrrell and I have received his report.*

*Furthermore I made a passage down river at night to see at first hand the situation in the river and it gave me the opportunity to get the views of others involved.*

#### The Incident.

*The incident occurred at 0133 9.03.02, which was 41 minutes before high water (0214 GMT, ie local time). There was some flood making but not more than 0.5 knot. The vessels speed over the ground was stated by the Master to be +/- 8 knots and there was plenty underwater clearance in the channel. The visibility was good.*

*The Master seems to have been aware of the vessels position approaching Ferry Point. He stated that as he passed the red No.6 buoy he saw the white fixed light at Ferry point about a point to port and the fixed white light on the far bank, (this is marked Ballinlaw flood light on the chart) dead ahead. The vessel at that stage was on course and this course should have been maintained for a further 1.5 cables before turning to port.*

*Instead of this the Master noticed the vessels head turn quickly to port and he immediately alerted the Pilot who he says continued to put more port helm on. The Pilot, realising the mistake tried to correct by going hard to starboard but before it could be effective the vessel grounded parallel to the shore.*

*The Pilot John Tyrrell stated that the light on the red No.6 buoy was obscured to him and that the fixed white light at the fish trap was mistaken for the fixed white light positioned at Ferry point. He therefore altered course on the first fixed white light instead of the second fixed white light. He thought the vessel was further ahead than she was.*

*That Gentlemen was how the accident happened.*

Cause.

*The cause of the accident was the failure of the Pilot to appreciate the vessel's exact position before applying port helm to round Ferry Point as he believed he was doing. This was due I feel, to a lapse in concentration and thereby wrongly identifying the fixed shore lights on his port side.*

Factors Contributing.

*There are however factors which contributed to this accident and these are as follows,*

- 1) *There are three port hand buoys in the approach to and at the bend at Ferry Point. All were brightly lit but these appear not to have been taken into consideration in determining the vessel's position or in guiding the vessel around the bend. Reference to the vessels position centred on the Ferry Point side only.*
- 2) *The quick flashing red light at Garraunbaun Rock was unlit. Had it been lit the Pilot informed me that he would have maintained his course until it opened over Ferry Point at which time it would have been safe to alter to port around Ferry Point. He stated that when it was lit he used it in this manner.*
- 3) *Shore lights, The fixed shore lights all have the same characteristic, that is a fixed white light, with no distinction between one and another. I found the light at Ferry Point to be far less in intensity than that at the fish trap. This was such that it appeared to be one of the lights on the west bank..*
- 4) *Speed of approach, I consider the speed of +/- 8 knots in the approach to a narrow gut with a 90 degree alteration, to be excessive. It did not allow for the error that took place. The width of the channel at that point is less than 1 cable (about 50 metres)*
- 5) *Pilot acting as helmsman, Acting as helmsman, the Pilot is confined to one spot and this, depending on the configuration of the wheelhouse, could restrict his vision. It is possible that because of this the pilot missed passing the first of the red buoys before the bend. In an old vessel such as the Whithaven the bridge layout does not allow him to observe the radar.*

## The Vessel

*Machinery and Equipment, The Master reported that at 0020, in the presence of the Pilot he engaged the second steering motor and tested the steering gear. He then tested the engine by giving a kick ahead and a kick astern. Both men were satisfied that all functioned properly. On passage down the river there was no malfunction*

## The Master

*Captain Wilcox stated that he had for many years traded to New Ross, both in his present company and with Bowker and King (presently Crescent Shipping). He has a good relationship with the Pilots, he is happy and agrees with the modus operandi whereby the Pilot acts as helmsman. He voiced his concern with the arrangements approaching the bridge, particularly inbound, communications being his main concern.*

## The Pilot

*John Tyrrell has been piloting on the river since 1998 and is an experienced seaman. He has been Harbour Master in Arklow prior to this job. He stated that prior to coming on duty he had slept for some 4 hours and was alert when taking up his duties.*

## River Passage

*The vessel on which I travelled was the M.V. Jorc. She is a modern mini bulker of 3050 DWT with state of the art machinery, navigation equipment and controls. Steering is by joystick control at a central panel which offers a clear all round view. The engine control, speed over the ground indicator, and radar are all visible to the person coming the vessel.*

*The passage was made in darkness with a clear atmosphere and a calm sea. The trip therefore was made in ideal conditions.*

*These rather ideal conditions are not to be found in older vessels using the river and therefore passages in such vessels may not run so smoothly.*

*The Pilot was John Foley.*

## Found

*On passage down river I found all the new buoys to be brightly lit and showing well. There are a number of old type of buoys with lights that are hardly visible and there are some which are presently unlit. There are buoys in the river that do not appear to serve much purpose and consideration should be given to removing them.*

*I found that when rounding certain points the vessel is in very close proximity to the shore. The pilot relies very much on good shore lights. Floodlights are widely used and in some cases to good effect (Pink Point). In most other places I found that they can be confused and wrongly identified*

*and this is particularly true approaching Ferry Point and southward as far as Garraumbaun Rock more so in reduced visibility and where background lights are growing up with new building houses.*

*At Dimpsey Point and Rochestown Spit where the shallows reach out into the channel there is need of a buoy.*

*The B.A. Chart on the chart table of the M.V. Jorc was new. The last small correction was 2002, yet it contained none of the recent changes in the channel or to the buoyage system.*

*The speed over the ground was 9.3 knots.*

*Contrary to my previous view I can agree that the role of the Pilot acting as helmsman is an appropriate one. In this river where so many close quarters situations exist requiring almost continuous course changes, it is the most efficient means.*

*This is especially true on modern vessels such as the M.V. Jorc. Where older vessels are concerned, if the Pilot is on the wheel he needs to engage the Master very much in plotting the vessels progress so that each is aware of the vessels exact position at all times.*

Recommendations

*1) As a matter of urgency, Ferry Point at least should be fitted with a distinguishing light of such characteristic that it cannot be mistaken from those around it.*

*2) The red light at Garraumbaun Rock should be relit as soon as possible.*

*3) Speed. Masters and Pilots should be instructed to approach all sharp bends in the river at a slower speed, say 4 to 5 knots until the course alteration is to be made, at which time full power can be applied if necessary. This applies equally to the approach to Barrow Bridge.*

*4) Review of navigation system. Management should, as a matter of urgency convene a review group consisting of the Harbour Master and the Pilots. The purpose is to evaluate each and every navigational aid on the river, to identify and agree safe operating parameters, communications, and to prepare emergency procedures.*

*Operating parameters refer among others to, vessel size, draft, beam, limits of visibility, passing points and vessel speed.*

*This review may entail the removal or relocation of some buoys and the upgrading of poorly lit buoys. It will also entail formulating proper bridge management procedures such as planned passages etc. as required by IMO convention. This is a requirement to ensure that should anything untoward happen to the Pilot, the Master is in a position take control and prevent an accident.*

*It certainly entails better identification lights at strategic points to distinguish these points from others around.*

*5) Admiralty Chart. As soon as any further changes are made, the Hydrographic Office should be informed of the changes and it should be requested that they display the Barrow on chart 2046 as an insert, on a larger scale than heretofore. The existing chart is very much out of date. It needs to be enlarged to facilitate passage planning.*

*6) Maintenance of lights and buoys. The reporting system ie "Incident Reports" appears to be an adequate method of reporting. Prompt action to remedy defects is imperative and where faults cannot be easily remedied this should be made known to senior management and to Pilots, Boatmen any any interested users of the river.*

*Good communication in both directions is essential for a smooth efficient operation.*

Comment.

*The Barrow is a very narrow river with very many hazards which entails very quarter situations and shifting channels and banks. Navigating a vessel requires full alertness at all times and the co-operation of all involved. I don't believe that navigating in critical areas should not have to rely on aids provided by an outside body. The port authority, the body which is ultimately responsible should be in control.*

*With regard communications with Barrow Bridge, I suggest that the matter would best be taken up with the Department of the Marine and Natural Resources once again to use their good offices in bringing the matter to a satisfactory conclusion. The same applies to the fenders or buffers at the lead in to the bridge.*

Conclusion.

*During this exercise no problem has been revealed, so great that cannot be remedied within your existing organisation. With proper consultation a safe and efficient operation can be achieved.*

*This concludes my report.*

*T.C. Nash*  
T.C.Nash.(Captain)

*Attached, Report of Pilot.*

## NEW ROSS PORT COMPANY

## Pilotage Incident Report From

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> March 2002

H.W 0214 3.5 metres

Name of Vessel: MT Whithaven

Pilot: John Tyrrell

Weather: Cloudless and Clear Good Visibility

Nature of Incident: Grounding at Ferry Point

0020 Pilot boards vessel at Harbour Office berth

0036 Let go fore and aft

On approaching corner at Ferry Point the light of the middle red bouy was obscured and the white light on the Fish Trap was taken for the white light at Ferry Point. The white light at Ferry Point was taken for the white light at Ballinlaw.

Port helm was applied when the actual Fish Trap light (then taken to be the Ferry Point light) was bearing approximately 4 points on the port bow. On becoming aware that the vessel was not in the Channel the helm was immediately put hard to starboard and the vessel travelled for a short distance parallel to the shore before grounding between the actual light on the Fish Trap and the one at Ferry Point. The engine was immediately stopped. The vessel came to rest approximately 20-30 metres from the Ferry Point light and parallel to the shore.

  
JOHN TYRRELL  
NEW ROSS PILOT  
11<sup>th</sup> March 2002

## **THE MCIB RESPONSE TO THE COMMISSIONER OF IRISH LIGHTS LETTER OF 07 APRIL 2003.**

The MCIB notes the contents of this letter and refers in particular to Recommendation 7.5 of this report.

It should be noted that the Master informed the Investigator that the Pilot reported during the inbound passage that the top marks of the red can bouys were in his (the Pilots) opinion too close to the light and that this sometimes affected the visibility of the flashing red lights.

The quick flashing light at Gurraunbaun Rock was extinguished. The Pilot maintains that this light, had it been operating, would have indicated to him when it opened over Ferry Point that it was then safe to alter course around Ferry Point.

This light had been extinguished eighteen months before this incident as a new port hand buoy was established close by.

As a result of the grounding of the "Whithaven" a new flashing light was established at Gurraunbaun on the 30th May 2002.

## **THE MCIB RESPONSE TO JOHN H. WHITAKER (TANKERS) LTD. LETTER OF 26 MARCH 2003.**

Corrections have been made in the draft report in accordance with this letter.

## **THE MCIB RESPONSE TO MR. JOHN TYRELL LETTER OF 10 APRIL 2003**

Corrections have been made in the draft report in accordance with this letter.

The MCIB stands over the conclusion at paragraph 6.4.

**THE MCIB RESPONSE TO NEW ROSS PORT COMPANYS LETTER OF 04 APRIL 2003.**

The MCIB rejects the contention that its conclusions are flawed.

The MCIB Investigator spoke to the Harbour Master at the scene. The Harbour Master was unable to furnish any relevant evidence as he was not present at the time of the incident. He did cooperate fully in furnishing all documentation requested of him by the Investigator.

6.1 The MCIB is aware that no passage plan existed. However it should be noted that no suitable scale charts are available to prepare such a plan. New Ross Port Company should ensure that charts of a suitable scale for the preparation of passage plans be made available.

6.4 The MCIB disagrees. The Pilot who was helming was not in a position to efficiently or effectively use the radar as its location makes it difficult to use from the helmsman's position. See photographs of the bridge layout supplied by New Ross Port Company in appendix 8.9. These clearly show that the radar screen is at an obtuse angle to the helmsman's position.

The MCIB does not accept that it is best or acceptable practice for the helmsman to helm in confined and difficult navigational waters in darkness whilst having to monitor the radar at the same time.

6.5 The MCIB fails to see what point is being made in this paragraph. The red light at Gurraunbaun Rock was extinguished. The fact that New Ross Port Company established a new white flashing light at Gurraunbaun as a result of the "Whithaven" incident clearly shows that a danger did exist.

6.6 See 4.1 and 6.1 of this report and T.C. Nashs report paragrapgh 2 page 2 and "Factors Contributing". It is evident that some confusion existed which resulted in the "Whithaven" grounding. This is confirmed in the report from the Pilot Mr. John Tyrell dated the 11th March 2002 which is attached to T.C. Nash's report.

6.7 The fact that a new starboard hand buoy was subsequently laid at Ferry Point in may 2002 shows that a problem did exist.

6.8 The MCIB disagrees. There is no evidence to show that all the buoys were charted at the time of the incident as no up to date navigational chart had been produced by either the Hydrographic Office or New Ross Port Company. The absence of such a chart makes it extremely difficult to formulate a passage plan.

The MCIB welcomes the fact that the lighted buoys on the River Barrow are now solar powered.

7.1 The MCIB notes the response from the Commissioners of Irish Lights which deals with this point. The comment in relation to the bridge is not relevant as the bridge did not contribute to the incident in any way. However the MCIB recognises New Ross Port Company's concerns in this regard. See recommendation 7.5 .

7.2 The MCIB awaits a report on what action is being taken by New Ross Port Company in this regard.