

**REPORT OF THE INCIDENT  
INVOLVING "LOCHMOR" ON 22<sup>nd</sup>  
MAY, 2002 AT LISCANNOR,  
CO. CLARE**

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## **1. SYNOPSIS**

- 1.1 The “*Lochmor*” sailed from the port of Galway on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2002 and arrived at the port of Liscannor Co. Clare on the same day. The vessel berthed outside the breakwater at Liscannor.
- 1.2 On the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2002 weather conditions deteriorated and the Master decided to leave port quickly.
- 1.3 Having cast off the vessel experienced engine problems and rudder failure and was fortunate to clear the entrance to the harbour.
- 1.4 On clearing the harbour the Master dropped anchor, as he suspected that the vessel was dragging anchor towards the rocks. He called for tugboat assistance.
- 1.5 The Aran Islands lifeboat and the Irish Coast Guard Boat (from Doolin) arrived on the scene and managed to effect a tow. The “*Lochmor*” was towed to Kilronan in the Aran Islands. The assistance rendered by the lifeboat and the Irish Coast Guard was instrumental in saving the vessel and her crew.
- 1.6 There was no loss of life, injuries or marine pollution.

## **2. FACTUAL INFORMATION**

### **2.1 DETAILS OF VESSEL**

Name: *Lochmor*

Built: Troon, Scotland in 1979

IMO No. 7811240

Construction: Steel

Official Nr. Not assigned

Port of registry: Galway

Tonnage: 175 gt

Registered length: 29.4 metres

Propulsion: Twin Volvo Penta 1204  
Twin shaft, Twin rudders

Power: 387 kW (total)

#### **Navigation Equipment:**

1. Furuno Daylight Radar
2. Sestrel Magnetic Compass (Deviation Card Compiled 23 March 1999)
3. 1 x Kodan GPS
4. Furuno VHF & MF Radio GMDSS Equipment
5. 1 x Jotron EPIRB + 2 Jotron Sarts

#### **Main Life Saving appliances:**

1. 2 x 25 Person Liferafts
2. 2 x 50 Person Liferafts
3. 1 x Rescue Boat

## 2.2 **DETAILS OF CREW**

Mr. Richard Grant, Liscannor, Co. Clare.

Mr. Michael McGinnity, Portmarnock, Co. Dublin.

Mr. Donal McDonagh, Portmarnock, Co. Dublin.

Mr. Adam Roousau, Czechoslovakia.

### **3. EVENTS PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT**

- 3.1 The “*Lochmor*” was purchased by the owners Lasta Mara Teoranta in June of 2001 from a Scottish company.
- 3.2 The vessel was originally owned and operated in the U.K. and was subject to their certification (MCA) until June 2001. It had a Load Line Certificate issued by Lloyd’s Register, which expired on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2001. The vessel was also granted a single voyage Load Line Exemption for the passage from Campbeltown, Scotland to Co. Clare, Ireland – this Exemption expired on the 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2001.
- 3.3 The vessel was in the process of obtaining registration in Ireland and survey for issue of an Irish Passenger Vessel Certificate and an Irish Load Line Certificate. Two visits had been made by Marine Surveyors from the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources to the vessel, one in Cork Dockyard (to complete an initial out of water survey during the week commencing 22 April 2002) and a second in Galway, (for the purpose of finishing off the survey for issue of Passenger Certificate and Load Line Certificate, on 16 May 2002.) During this second visit a number of deficiencies in the vessel’s equipment, hardware and crew training were identified which necessitated suspending the survey (See report at Appendix 7.1).
- 3.4 The “*Lochmor*” sailed from Galway to Liscannor on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2002. According to the Master commercial circumstances obliged him to re-locate to another port.
- 3.5 The Master said that ‘Liscannor’ was his homeport and that he was very familiar with the port. The vessel berthed starboard side alongside on the outer wall on the east breakwater (See photographs in Appendix 7.2).
- 3.6 On the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2002 the Master noted that the weather had deteriorated and that some lines had parted. At this time the Master deployed as many lines as practical (he estimates ten).
- 3.7 The Master said that neither he, nor any other crewmember, stayed on board at night but they regularly checked the vessel. Consequently the vessel was unmanned for periods while alongside the berth at Liscannor.
- 3.8 On the morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2002 the Master observed that a very heavy southwesterly swell was breaking over the south breakwater. He thought that this swell was exceptional for that time of year. Ropes commenced parting and he was concerned for the safety of the vessel and decided at about 1200 hours to depart from the port.

#### **4. THE INCIDENT**

- 4.1 The Master started the engines. He noted that the steering gear functioned, when tested, hard to port and hard to starboard but was sluggish.
- 4.2 He felt that due to the deteriorating nature of the weather it was a matter of urgency to clear the berth and he gave instructions that all lines be cast off. It was about 1300 hrs. A local witness said that the crew appeared to be totally lacking in knowledge as to how to let a vessel go.
- 4.3 The Master said that there was a loud noise when he engaged the port engine so he decided to stop. He then put the starboard engine dead slow ahead but observed that the steering gear had locked with the helm about ten degrees to starboard.
- 4.4 The vessel cleared the harbour entrance but may have made some contact with the east harbour beacon.
- 4.5 The Master anchored the vessel using both anchors just outside the harbour entrance. As the Master was very concerned about the possibility of dragging onto nearby rocks he called the Shannon Coast Guard Radio. The Irish Coast Guard Boat came to the scene from Doolin.
- 4.6 Arrangements were put in place for a tug to proceed but due to the depth of water the tug advised that it would be unable to effect a tow.
- 4.7 When the Aran Islands Lifeboat came on the scene at about 1400 hrs the Master of the "*Lochmor*" observed that the vessel was dragging on to the rocks and arrangements were made with the lifeboat to effect a tow. The Irish Coast Guard Boat assisted in making fast the lines from the Aran Islands Lifeboat to the "*Lochmor*". The tow was made fast at approximately 1544 hrs and departed to Kilronan where the "*Lochmor*" made fast at approximately 2030 hrs. (See Photographs in Appendix 7.2)

## **5 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 The “*Lochmor*”, prior to the incident was berthed at the outboard side of the East breakwater at Liscannor. The vessel was lying in a north south direction starboard side alongside. The overall length of the vessel is approximately 30.7 metres. The length of the breakwater is approximately 28.5 metres. Allowing for a clearance from the buttress at the shore end of the breakwater the “*Lochmor*” would have overhung the entrance to the harbour by approximately three metres (see photo in Appendix 7.2).
- 5.2 The weather conditions prior to the incident on the 19 May 2002 and immediately prior to and during the incident were poor. (See Appendix 7.4).
- 5.3 Mr. Richard Grant, holds a Class Two Certificate of Competency issued in August 1969. Mr. Grant applied for an STCW 78/95 Certificate of Competency in April 2002. Mr. Grant holds a Radio Operators Long Range Certificate of Competency in Radiotelephony issued in November 1998.
- 5.4 There were three other crewmembers on board when the vessel left the berth at Liscannor. None of these had any formal training in any aspect of seafaring.
- 5.5 The vessel did not possess a valid Passenger Certificate or Load Line Certificate as it had not completed the necessary surveys.
- 5.6 The steering gear telemotor system was leaking oil since its purchase by the present owner. A plastic drum collected leaking oil in the wheelhouse consol.
- 5.7 Tests of the steering in Kilonan after the incident, in both hand and electro-hydraulic modes revealed serious malfunction due to lack of oil.
- 5.8 Only one generator could be started and used to supply power to services on board. As noted in survey report the power supply frequency was in excess of 55 Hz (normal 50Hz). (See Appendix 7.1).
- 5.9 The port main engine required “jump-starting” with lead from Starboard.
- 5.10 The extent of the damage to hull and propulsion, as seen at drydock in Cork after the incident can be seen in Appendix 7.5.
- 5.11 There was no loss of life, injury to persons or marine pollution.
- 5.12 The attendance of the Aran Islands lifeboat and the inshore lifeboat from Doolin was instrumental in saving the vessel and her crew.



- 5.13 The berth was not suitable for the “*Lochmor*”. Considering the length of the vessel in relation to the available berth space there would appear to be insufficient room to safely moor the vessel at this location. The vessel was berthed outside the breakwater and exposed to the sea and swell. The vessel rested on the bottom at low tide. The Master may have placed undue priority on the convenience of having the vessel berthed at his homeport.
- 5.14 The Master was aware of on-going problems with the engine and steering system. These problems should have been rectified as a matter of priority. Good marine engineering practice was lacking in the maintenance of this vessel. There is no legal requirement for the “*Lochmor*” to carry a certificated engineer but the complexity of the vessels mechanical fittings and equipment strongly suggested a need for on board engineering expertise.
- 5.15 The hiring of three persons with no formal seagoing training to man the vessel is less than satisfactory. To place these three persons in a distress and emergency situation could have had more serious consequences.
- 5.16 There is no current legislation regarding manning for small domestic commercial vessels.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 Local harbour authorities should establish size and draught limits for all vessels intending to use berthing facilities at their harbours and should have statutory powers to enforce these limits. In the absence of a recognised local controlling authority the Minister should have the power to apply such limits.
- 6.2 Legislation should be introduced regarding minimum manning requirements and certification of crew on small cargo vessels (less than 500 gross tonnes), passenger vessels and passenger boats operating within national waters or on non -international trade.

## **7. LIST OF APPENDICES**

- 7.1 Survey Report – Galway 15/05/02
- 7.2 Photographs of Liscannor
- 7.3 Photographs of “*Lochmor*” at Kilronan
- 7.4 Met Eireann Weather Report
- 7.5 Report from Drydock Inspection following incident

## **APPENDIX 7.1**

### **Survey report from visit to vessel in Galway 15/05/2002 prior to incident**

#### **Lochmor IMO Nr. 7811240**

Following my visit for completion of Passenger Certificate and Load line surveys on the above vessel, the following comments should be taken into account in working up to final survey: -

Load line:

1. A number of vent closure devices are in poor or seized condition
2. Threads on outer stairs detached – tripping hazard
3. Exhaust pipe for emergency fire pump to be replaced from deck level
4. Bracketing of small vent pipes starb. aft required
5. All hand rails are to be securely attached to deck and access gates are to be free and have correct securing pins/clips

Passenger certificate:

In general vessel was not ready for final survey – the following list does not represent a full list of defects or deficiencies as the survey had to be suspended due to doubts about the power supply.

1. Power supply did not indicate at correct frequency
2. Fixed fire fighting system for engineroom – crew unable to demonstrate working test
3. Emergency steering – unable to demonstrate working
4. Rescue boat – training for crew required in handling of boat and marshalling of survival craft
5. Fire detection system not working
6. Emergency lighting and power supply – unable to demonstrate

In order to aid progress towards issue of both certificates, I would suggest the following: -

1. Commence training of crew in life saving appliances and fire fighting equipment
2. Appoint and train one or more “engineers” in the operation and maintenance of all the vessel’s systems (to have input from one of original ship’s engineers in this would obviously be very helpful)
3. Conduct trials of all systems and rectify any faults as they are identified.
4. Have electrical systems checked out by competent person and ensure all enclosures, protective devices and insulations are in good condition
5. Ensure all equipment is functioning correctly and all safety equipment is “in date”

## **APPENDIX 7.5**

### **Report from drydock inspection following incident**

The following is a summary of the damage noted when the vessel was inspected at Cork dockyard: -

1. A general inspection of the hull bottom plating showed no damage consistent with recent contact or grounding.
2. An inspection of the port belting showed damage in way of the forward end of the aft deck centre freeing port located approximately 6.4 m from aft. The damage was consistent with contact.
3. The starboard upper forward belting showed damage in way of the aft two freeing port on the foredeck approximately 11.5 m from forward. This was consistent with contact.
4. It is not possible to say with any degree of accuracy if the contact was recent or otherwise. Both areas of damage were rusted.
5. The port rudderstock is bent forward at the rudder bearing sleeve. (photo). The clearance at this point is nil.
6. The port rudder leading edge is in contact with the port propeller boss.
7. The port rudder is of hollow fabricated construction and shows damage to the lower end of the trailing edge. The damage extends from the bottom of the rudder upwards for 50 mm and is consistent with having been 'hammered' in contact with a hard surface.
8. The port propeller boss nut is heavily scored from being in contact with the rudder leading edge.
9. The port propeller is fixed pitch 4 blade and is damaged in way of each blade trailing edge from having been in contact with the rudder leading edge.
10. The starboard rudderstock is bent forward and to the vessels centreline at the rudder bearing sleeve. (photo). This would be consistent with force from the starboard side. The clearance at this point is nil.
11. The starboard rudder leading edge is in contact with the port propeller blades.
12. The starboard rudder is of hollow fabricated construction and shows damage to the lower end of the trailing edge. The damage extends from the bottom of

the rudder upwards for 50 mm and is consistent with having been 'hammered' in contact with a hard surface.

13. The starboard propeller is fixed pitch 4 blade and is damaged in way of each blade trailing edge from having been in contact with the rudder leading edge.

Checking was carried out to other shaft line components but no further damage was noted.

**8. LIST OF CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED**

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**MCIB RESPONSE TO LETTER FROM MR. RICHARD J. GRANT DATED  
25<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER, 2003**

The MCIB points out that the first part of Mr. Grant's submission (pages 1 – 5) has no relevance to the incident and the MCIB has and can have no comment to make in this regard. Item 3 of this letter contains specific points to which we respond as follows:

- 5.1 The MCIB Report is a statement of fact.
- 5.2 The reference to May 19<sup>th</sup> is a typographic error and has been corrected to May 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- 5.3 Noted.
- 5.6 The MCIB notes this but the malfunction of the steering was due to a lack of oil (See paragraph 5.7 of the Report).
- 5.12 The report makes it clear that the "Lochmor" should not have been berthed in that location in the first place.
- 5.13 See Recommendation 6.1.
- 5.14 The survey Report of 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2002 (Appendix 7.1) is explanatory. Furthermore Mr. Grant has that there was a problem with the steering gear (see above).
- 5.15 The MCIB reiterates the point made in 5.15, "The Weather". Mr. Grant in his submission admits that he has seen these conditions before. The MCIB considers that it would have been prudent to remove "Lochmor" from Liscannor as the conditions giving rise to the swell was present.