

**MCIB**  
Marine Casualty Investigation Board



**REPORT INTO THE  
GROUNDING OF THE  
"PRINCESS VANYA" IN  
THE SHANNON ESTUARY  
ON 1 DECEMBER, 2001.**

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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## SYNOPSIS

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### 1. SYNOPSIS.

1.1 The Cypriot registered bulk carrier MV Princess Vanya was on passage to Aughinish in the Shannon estuary in southwest Ireland from the west African port of Kamsar. The 225 metre long vessel was nearly fully laden with a bulk cargo of bauxite and had a maximum draft of 12.5 metres. The Princess Vanya proceeded to the South and East of the 'The Tail of Beal' west cardinal buoy and the vessel went aground at the Tail of Beal Bar in position  $52^{\circ} 34.28'N$   $009^{\circ} 40.34'W$  at approximately 2035hrs\* on the 1st December, 2001. The vessel was approximately 0.3 of a mile off course at this time. There were no injuries or pollution as a result of this incident.

- All times are local time i.e. GMT expressed in a 24 hour notation.

## 2. FACTUAL INFORMATION

### 2.1 Princess Vanya

Vessel Name:	Princess Vanya
Nationality:	Cyprus
Call Sign:	P3GL8
IMO Number	8801008
Owner:	Lakewell Shipping Co. Ltd.. Limassol, Cyprus
Operator:	Cyprus Maritime Company
Classification Society:	Nippon Kaiji Hyokai (NKK)
Builders:	Sanoyas Hishino Meisho Corporation, Kurashiki, Japan in 1989
Type of ship:	Dry Bulk Carrier
Length Over All:	225.0m
Breadth	32.26m
Depth:	18.30m
Gross Registered Tonnage:	36,549
Summer Deadweight:	70,329
Summer Draft:	13.291m
Main Engine:	Sulzer 6 RTA 621 Set,
Service Speed:	13.5 Knots
Crew:	There was a crew of 26 on board compromising of 24 Filipino Officers and Ratings and 2 Greek Superintendents.

Item	Make/Model
ARPA	JRC 900 Series
Radar	Furuno Model FR-1652X-4A
GPS	JRC, JLR-4110 Mk II
Gyro Compass	Tokyo Keiki Model PR 7000
Echo Sounder	Furuno
Speed and Distance Log	Yokogawa Navitec / EMLOG LT 201
Course Recorder	Tokyo Keiki

## EVENTS PRIOR

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### 3. EVENTS PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT

- 3.1 The River Shannon is the largest river in Ireland. The Shannon Estuary according to the Irish Coast Pilot provides "spacious and relatively secure anchorage for all classes of vessels. It is of easy access and the wide entrance of its estuary between Loop Head and Kerry Head, on both sides of which are prominent marks, is easily identified."
- 3.2 The Princess Vanya was bound for Aughinish to discharge 59,043 metric tonnes of bauxite. The Master of the vessel had many years seagoing experience and had served on the Princess Vanya for the previous eight months. The Master had previously served on the Princess Vanya for sixteen months in addition to the eight months presently on board.
- 3.3 All bridge navigation equipment, steering gear and engines were reported to be in good working order. The course recorder was not in operation.
- 3.4 The Master and the deck officers possess appropriate Filipino Certificates of Competency relative to their rank on board the vessel.
- 3.5 The necessary convention and trading certificates for the vessel were in order.
- 3.6 The approach chart BA 1819 Approaches to the River Shannon was not on board. (It is a SOLAS Regulation that all ships shall carry adequate and up to date charts necessary for the intended voyage) The vessel was using a smaller scale coastal chart for the approach to the pilot station. The required chart (BA 1547) for the approaches to the anchorage and passage from the pilot station past Beal Bar was on board.
- 3.7 Fuel oil on board was stated to be 1305 tonnes of heavy oil and 96 tonnes of diesel oil.
- 3.8 The Master stated that it was his first call to any facility in the Shannon Estuary.
- 3.9 The Master stated that he was on the bridge when the Chief Mate established contact with Shannon Pilot station at approximately 1836. The pilot station informed the vessel that the pilot would board at 2230 and that the vessel could adjust the time of arrival or proceed to the anchorage.
- 3.10 According to the Master the vessel was taken out of autopilot steering and placed in hand steering at approximately 1900.
- 3.11 The Master stated that he decided to proceed to anchor due to the weather outside.
- 3.12 The designated anchorage is south of Corlis Point approximately four miles up river from the charted boarding position of the pilot. (see Appendix 8.1)

- 3.13 There is a VTMISS (Vessel Traffic Management Information System) in the River Shannon. The VTMISS has the ability to record the track and speed of vessels entering and leaving the port and record VHF conversations on working channels. There are radar stations for the purposes of the VTMISS located at Loop Head, Kilcredaun Point and at Tarbert. The VTMISS is not manned on a 24-hour basis. The primary purpose of the VTMISS is to review incidents. The VTMISS can be monitored at the pilot station and at the center for port operations in Foynes. On the night of the grounding there was a fault in the telephone line at Kilcredaun and it was not possible for port operations center to monitor traffic.
- 3.14 The sea passage ended at 1942 and the vessel reduced to manoeuvring speed of approximately 12 Knots.
- 3.15 The third officer came to the bridge at approximately 2000. The third officer relieved the chief officer at approximately 2010.
- 3.16 There was a change in quartermasters at approximately 2000.
- 3.17 The Master said that his vessel proceeded to the entrance to the port leaving Ballybunion Racon buoy on his starboard side. The Master stated that on passing the Racon buoy that he altered course to starboard to 075° True. The Master stated that at 2020 he passed a red buoy on his port side. At 2029 the Master said that the vessel passed Kilcredaun 1.22 miles off and he altered course to 047° (T) to put the leading lights (Corlis Point and Querrin Quay) in a line.
- 3.18 The VTMISS recording of the track of the Princess Vanya conflicts with the statement of the Master. It appears that the vessel passed due south of Kilcredaun Point at approximately 2023. At this time the vessel should have altered course to follow the leading lights. It would appear that the Master waited until the vessel was abeam of Kilcredaun before altering course. When the vessel did alter course at approximately 2029 the vessel was already too far to the south and east of the course line.

## THE INCIDENT

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### 4. THE INCIDENT

- 4.1 At 2033 the Master stated that he suddenly noted that the vessel was not on the leading lines and noted that the Tail of Beal Bar buoy about one point on the port bow. He noted that port hand buoy was now three points on his port bow and that his vessel was in a critical situation. The Master said that he ordered the helmsman to go hard to port but at 2035 the vessel touched the bottom and the Master ordered the engines to be stopped.
- 4.2 The vessel went aground doing full manoeuvring speed in approximate position  $52^{\circ} 34.28'N$   $009^{\circ} 40.34'W$ .



**5. EVENTS FOLLOWING INCIDENT**

- 5.1 The Master put the vessels engines full astern for several minutes in an attempt to re float the vessel. When this attempt failed he informed Shannon pilot that the vessel was aground.
- 5.2 After two unsuccessful attempts to re float the vessel with the aid of three tugs the vessel was re floated on the morning of the 3rd December 2001.
- 5.3 The vessel proceeded to anchor off Scatterry Island where an assessment of the damage was made.
- 5.4 On the 7th December 2001 the vessel went alongside at Aughinish to discharge her cargo.
- 5.5 On the 12th December 2001 the Princess Vanya sailed for Varna shipyard in Bulgaria for repairs due damage caused by the grounding.

## CONCLUSIONS

### 6. CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS

- 6.1 All navigational equipment, engine and steering gear were reported to be in good working order. Effective bridge procedures and bridge team management were not in place at the time of the grounding of the MV Princess Vanya. It would appear that the vessel went aground due to human error.
- 6.2 Fortunately, there was no pollution or injuries as a result of the grounding. The vessel suffered significant bottom damage. Damage was noted to the Fore Peak Tank, No. 3 Ballast Double Bottom Tanks port and starboard, No.1 Ballast Double Bottom Tank and the Fuel Oil Overflow Tank. Temporary repairs were effected to the Fuel Oil overflow tank. The leading edges of the propeller were damaged.
- 6.3 At 2029 the third officer stated that he took a radar range and bearing of Kilcredaun. The charted position for the Princess Vanya at 2029 is the last charted position prior the vessel going aground. This position is approximately 0.6' West Southwest of the position of the Princess Vanya as indicated by the VTMS. The vessel went aground at approximately 2035. The distance between the position that the vessel went aground and the 2029 position is approximately 1.5 miles. To cover this distance the vessel would have been making good a speed over the ground of 15 Knots. The Master indicated that his vessel was abeam of Kilcredaun at 2029 on a course of 075° (T). However, the charted position is due south of Kilcredaun and not abeam as stated. This may have caused confusion amongst the bridge team.
- 6.4 The Master was unfamiliar with the port. The Master expected the pilot to board at the charted pilot station off Kilcredaun. When the Master decided to proceed past the bar into the anchorage the position of the vessel should have been carefully monitored by the bridge team on the Princess Vanya. The leading lights should have given an adequate indication of the position of the vessel relative to the required track past the Beal Bar.
- 6.5 When the Master of the vessel became unsure of the position of the vessel there was insufficient time to avert the danger of going aground.
- 6.6 The third mate and a quartermaster relieved the Chief Mate and the 1600 to 2000 quartermaster at a critical phase in the navigation of the vessel. It may have been more prudent to retain the Chief Mate on the bridge until the vessel anchored.
- 6.7 Charts and nautical publications indicate that the pilot station for vessels of the draft of the Princess Vanya is located south of Kilcredaun Point. According to Shannon Foynes Harbour Master the majority of vessels are normally asked to proceed past the bar to meet the pilot boat. This practice has continued for many years without incident.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Bridge Procedures and Bridge Team Management should be in accordance with industry standards and should be adhered to at all times. The monitoring and execution aspects of Passage Planning should ensure that information gathered is crosschecked and contingency plans are possible. Positions in critical navigation manoeuvres such as passing through a narrow channel should be checked and crosschecked. Radar ranges and bearings should be crosschecked by visual bearings.
- 7.2 When vessels run aground there may be a temptation reaction to go astern to try and free the vessel. This may have disastrous consequences if the vessel is holed and should only be considered where the nature of the bottom is known to be soft e.g. sand or mud.
- 7.3 It is recommended that Shannon Foynes Port Company review their policy regarding the Pilot Station south of Kilcredaun. The British Admiralty Hydrographic Office should be supplied with the appropriate information so that charts and nautical publications should reflect the actual requirements of the port. Shannon Foynes Port Company has assured MCIB that this recommendation has already been put in place as well as additional technical equipment which will aid the monitoring of approaching vessels from the pilot boat en route to effect a boarding. (See Appendix 8.4)

## APPENDICES

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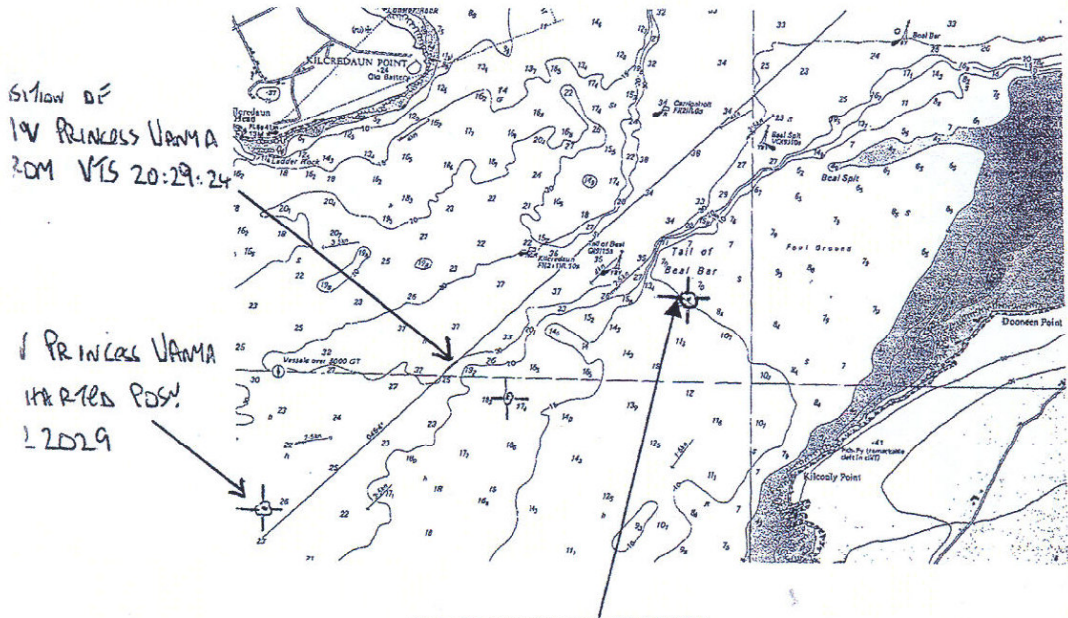
### 8. APPENDICES

- 8.1 Chart extract (BA 1547) & VTS extracts showing location of grounding.
- 8.2 Weather Report from Met Eireann.
- 8.3 Report on status of Navigation Aids from the Commissioner of Irish Lights.
- 8.4 Letter of Shannon Foynes Port Company dated 13th May 2003

8.1 Chart extract (BA 1547) showing location of grounding.

Section of BA Chart 1547 indicating the position of the vessel at the time of going aground.

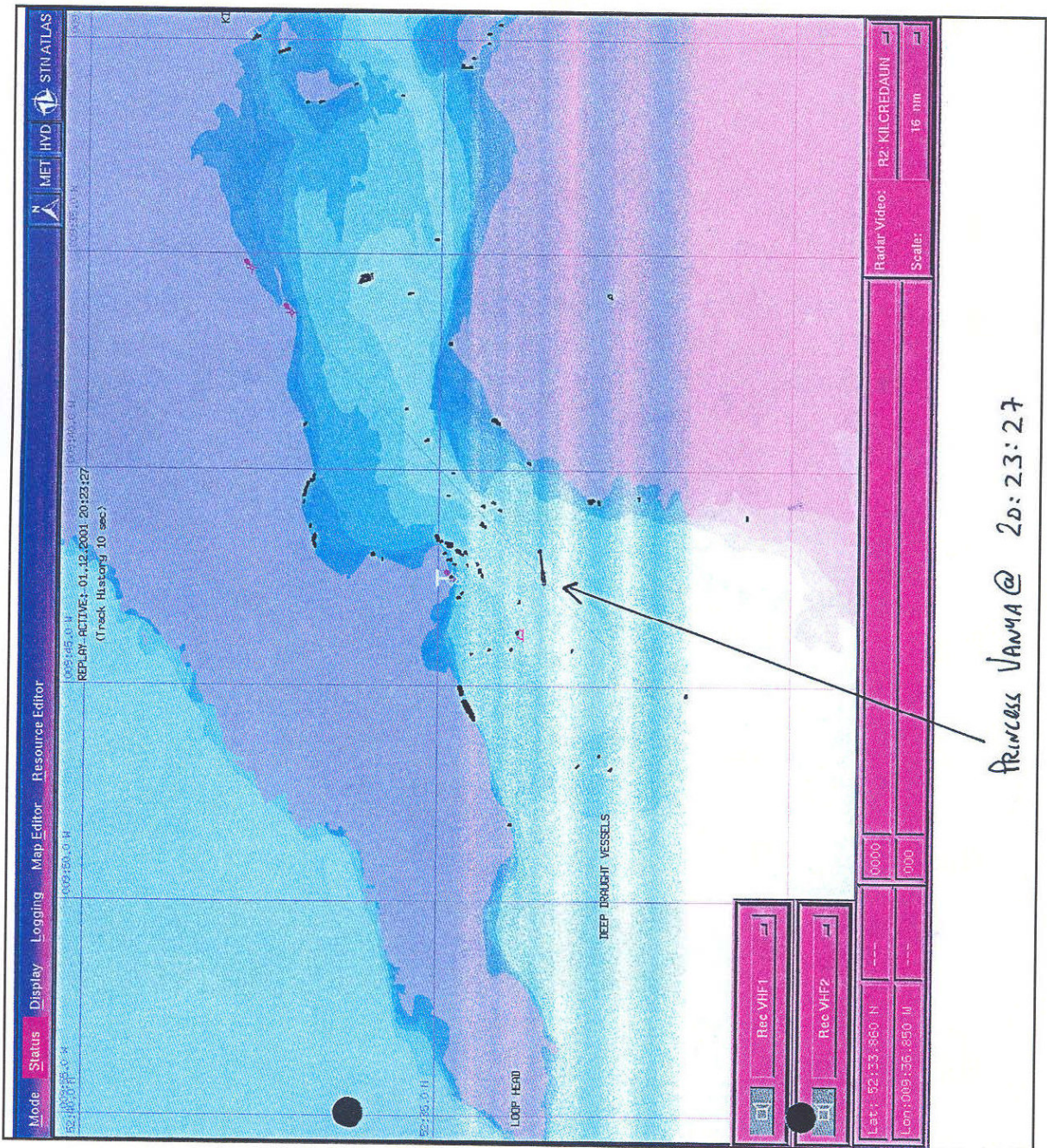
This is not a copy of the chart in use at the time of grounding



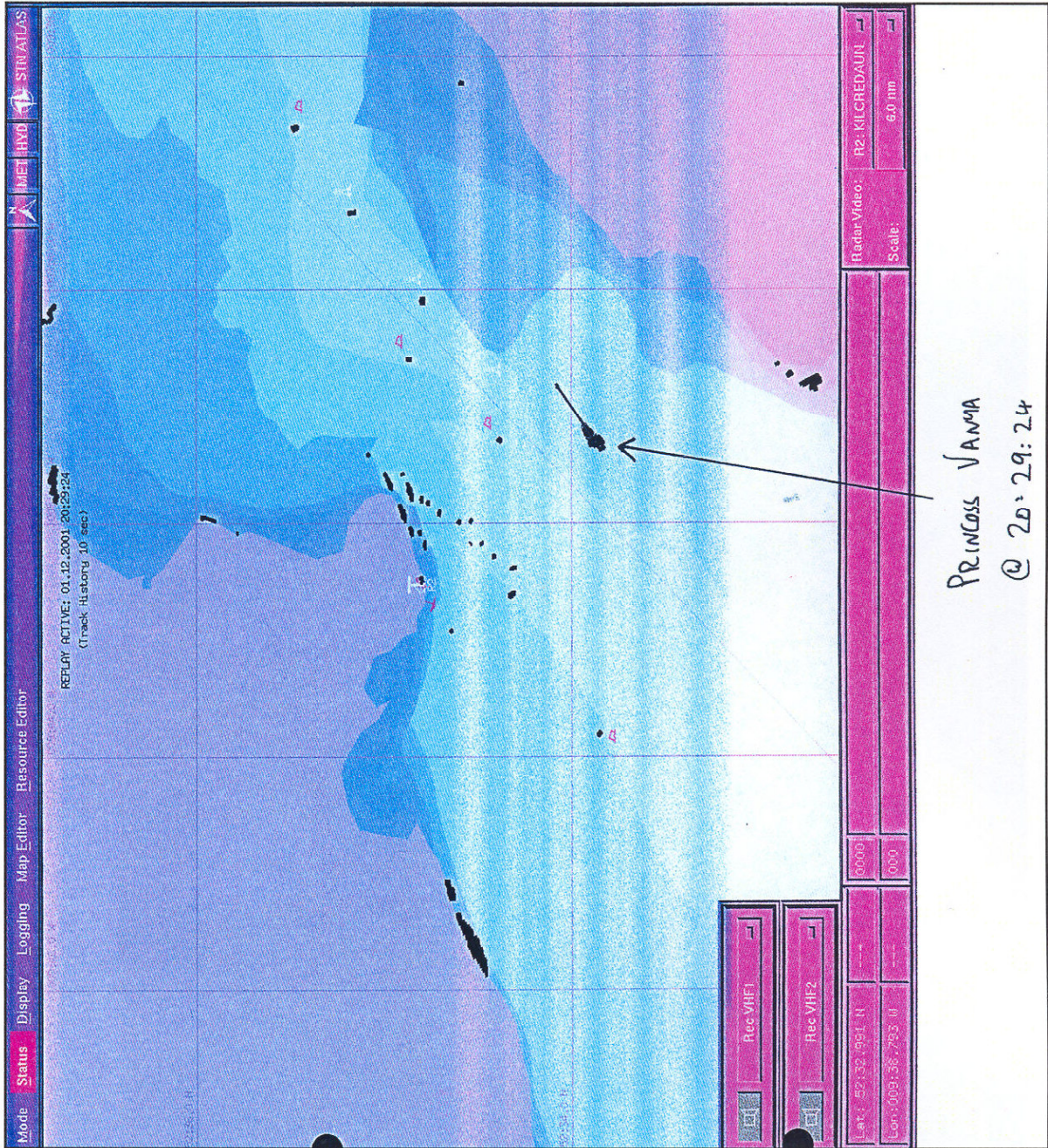
MV Princess Vanya  
aground in position  
52°34.28'N  
009°40.34'W

# APPENDIX 8.1

VTS extracts showing location of Princess Vanya at 20.23.27hrs



VTS extracts showing location of Princess Vanya at 20.29.24hrs

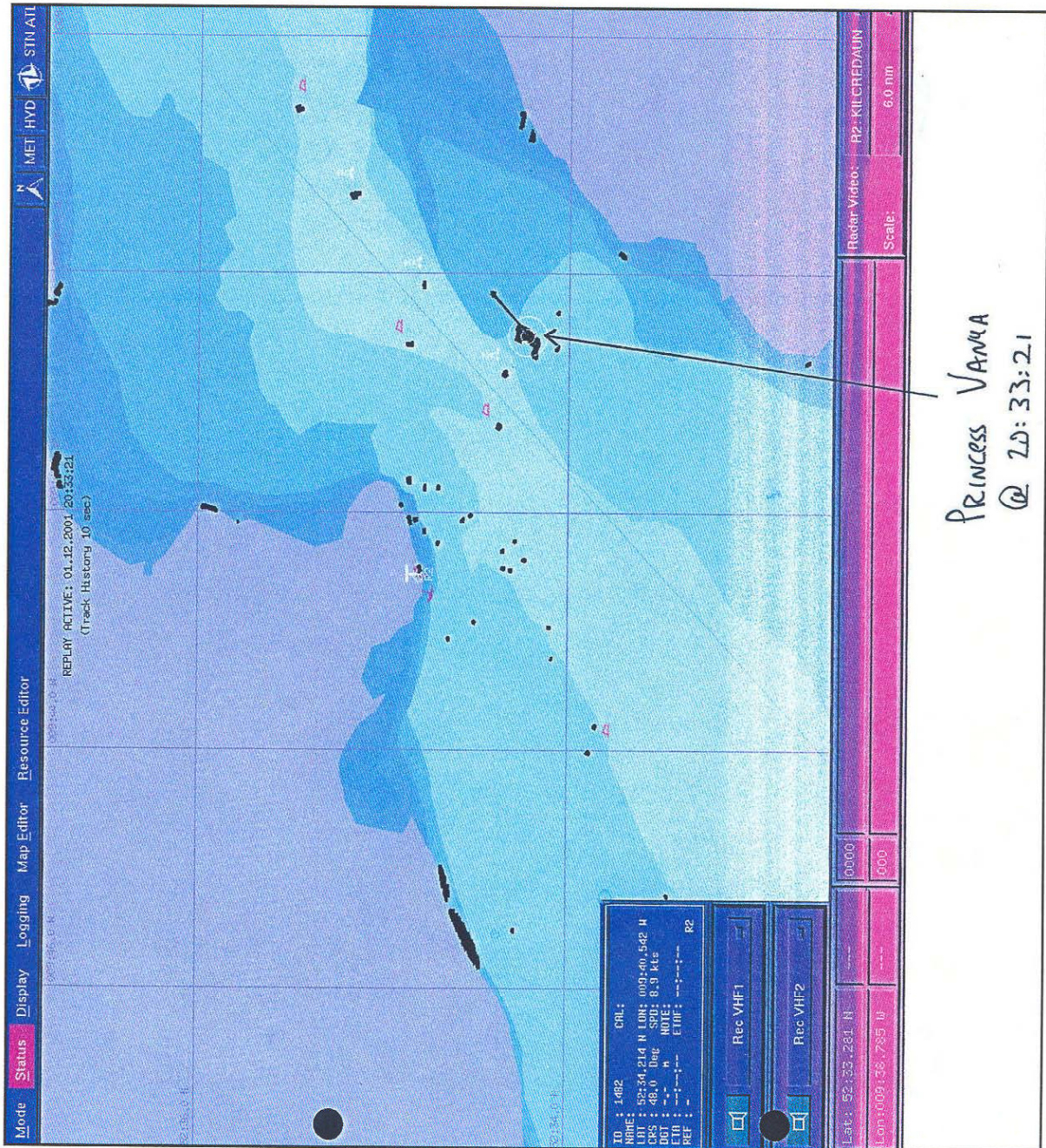


PRINCESS VANYA  
@ 20:29:24

# APPENDIX 8.1

CONTD.

VTS extracts showing location of Princess Vanya at 20.33.21hrs



PRINCESS VANYA  
@ 20:33:21



8.2 Weather Report from Met Eireann.

	WeatherDial Fax Product Code 0021	
	General Forecast Division	
	Fax : 1570 131 838	
	Sea Area Forecast	

Sea Area Forecast until : 1200 hours Sunday 02/12/2001  
 Issued at 1200 hours Saturday, 01-Dec-01

1. Gale warning: NIL

2. Meteorological Situation at 1100 : A cold unstable Northwest to West airflow covers Ireland. A weak ridge of high pressure will move Eastwards across the country tonight, and a freshening Southerly airflow will follow.

3. Forecast for coasts from : Mizen Head to Slyne Head to Fair Head

Wind : West force 4 to 6 – with local stronger gusts at first in showers – backing Southwest to South this evening and early tonight, gradually increasing overnight to become Southerly force 6 to gale force 8 tomorrow morning.

Forecast for coasts from : Fair Head to Carnsore Point to Mizen Head and for the Irish Sea

Wind : Northwest to West force 4 to 6, decreasing West to Southwest force 3 or 4 this evening and tonight, increasing Southerly force 4 to 6 late tonight or tomorrow morning. Winds throughout slackest on the Southeast coast.

Weather for all sea areas : Scattered blustery showers, mainly in the Southwest, West and Northwest. Fair in many areas.

Visibility for all sea areas : Mostly good.

4. Outlook for a further 24-hours until 1200 hours Monday 03/12/2001: Fresh or strong South to Southwest winds, moderating for a time tomorrow night – but increasing again later, with gales or strong gales in places on Monday morning. Rain at times.

# APPENDIX 8.2

CONTD.

Warning of heavy Atlantic swell : NIL

Text of Gale warning  
NIL

Coastal Reports	at midday
Malin Head	West 25 Knots, Adjacent Shower , 15 Miles, 1010, Rising
Rosslare	West Northwest 07 Knots, Fair , 37 Miles, 1015, Rising Rapidly
Roches Pt. Automatic	West Northwest 18 Knots, Gust 29 Knots, More than 10 Miles, 1017, Rising Rapidly
Valentia	West 20 Knots, Recent Rain Shower , 25 Miles, 1017, Rising
Belmullet	West 17 Knots, Gust 29 Knots, Recent Hail Shower , 25 Miles, 1013, Rising
Dublin Airport	West 12 Knots, Fine , 25 Miles, 1013, Rising Rapidly
Buoy M1 53.1N 11.2 W	West Southwest 20 Knots, 1015, Rising
Buoy M2 53.5N 5.4 W	West (no wind-speed reported), 1012, Rising Rapidly.

Sea Crossings	State of sea for the next 48 hours
Dublin - Holyhead	Moderate, decreasing slight for a time.
Rosslare - South Wales	Moderate, decreasing slight for a time, increasing rough later.
Cork - South Wales	Moderate, increasing rough later.
Rosslare - France	Moderate or rough.
Cork - France	Moderate or rough.

Next update before 1900 hours

A detailed forecast may be obtained by dialling *Weatherdial* on 1550 123 855.  
Calls cost 58p per minute (Incl. VAT).

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**MET ÉIREANN**  
*The Irish Meteorological Service*

Glasnevin Hill,  
Dublin 9, Ireland.

Cnoc Chlas Naíon,  
Baile Átha Cliath 9, Éire.

Tel: +353-1-806 4200  
Fax: +353-1-806 4247

**Weather Report for the sea area near Loop Head  
On the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2001  
between 19 and 23 hours**

General Situation

A Light to Moderate south-westerly airflow covered the area.

Details

Winds: south-westerly Force 3 to 5

Weather: a few heavy showers close-by

Visibility: good except in showers

Seastate: Rough seas off-shore, see buoy reports below.

Buoy M1 readings at Latitude 53.1°N and 11.2°W

20 hours GMT/UTC Winds: south-south-west 17knots, Waves: 3.2 metre significant wave height.

21 hours UTC Winds: south-south-west 19 knots, Waves: 3.5 metre significant wave height.

22 hours UTC Winds: south-west 18 knots, Waves: 3 metres significant wave height.

## APPENDIX 8.3

### 8.3 Report on status of Navigation Aids from the Commissioner of Irish Lights.



## COMMISSIONERS OF IRISH LIGHTS

16 Lower Pembroke Street • Dublin 2

Telephone +353 - 1 - 662 4525 • Fax +353 - 1 - 661 8094  
Telex 93311 CIL EI • Website: <http://www.cil.ie>  
e-mail: Marine Department - [marine@cil.ie](mailto:marine@cil.ie)

*Your Ref:*

*Our Ref:* IMS/116/66


*Date:* 04 December 2001

**RE: MARINE INCIDENT 1 DECEMBER 2001  
SHANNON ESTUARY**

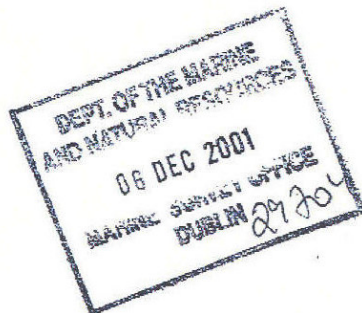
Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the above.

I confirm that all CIL Aids to Navigation were functioning correctly at the relevant times.

Yours sincerely,



CAPT. ROBERT MCCABE  
For INSPECTOR OF LIGHTS & MARINE SUPERINTENDENT



8.4 Letter of Shannon Foynes Port Company dated 13th May 2003



**Shannon Foynes**  
PORT COMPANY

Marine Operations Department  
Foynes Tel: +353 (0)69 73103  
County Limerick Fax: +353 (0)69 65552  
Ireland Email: marineops@sfpco.ie

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

13 May, 2003



Re: Your Ref MCIB 38

Dear Mr. Heron

Thank you for your draft report together with your invitation to comment.

Having studied the report I would comment as follows, to correct some facts as apparent to me.

**Page 3 - Synopsis**

The Princess Vanja came from the West African port of Kamsar.

**Page 5 - Events Prior to the Incident**

Section 8

Should read "- any facility in the Shannon Estuary". This is important, as the entire Estuary is now a single port since the amalgamation of Port Authorities in 2000 and at the time of the incident.

**Page 6**

Section 13

- Any reference to VTS (Vessel Traffic System) should be changed to VTMS (Vessel Traffic Management Information System).
- It is more truthful to state "The VTMS is not manned on a 24hr basis etc..."
- We believe that the last sentence in this paragraph is not material as the fact stands that the system is not manned 24hrs in any event.

Section 18

We believe that this section properly lies in the section headed Conclusions / Findings.

- Change VTS to VTMS

NC

1 of 4

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Directors: Kieran MacSweeney (Chairman), Suzanne Buglet, John Dundon, Cllr. John Griffin, Cllr. Pat Keane, Morgan Leahy, Cllr. Kieran O'Hanlon, Cllr. Ned O'Sullivan, Ger Reidy, Cllr. Kevin Sheehan, Joe Troacy, Brian Byrne (Chief Executive)

Incorporated in Ireland No. 332411



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## Page 9 - Conclusions / Findings

### Section 1

- We believe the last sentence should read - "It would appear that the vessel went aground due to on board human error".

### Section 2

- We believe that the opening sentence should not include the word "fortunately".

### Section 3

- Change VTS to VTMS

### Section 4

It is not clear exactly whom you conclude / find should have monitored carefully, the ships position.

## Page 10 - Recommendations

### Section 3

- I am able to report that these recommendations have already been put in place as well as additional technical equipment which will aid the monitoring of approaching vessels from the pilot boat en route to effect a boarding.

### General

The report is fair and well balanced in both its approach layout and findings.

I offer all these comments in confidence for your consideration prior to publishing your final report.

Yours sincerely  
for Shannon Foynes Port Company

  
Capt. Alan Coghlan  
Harbour Master