

REPORT ON THE COLLISION OF CABIN CRUISER **P6T2 WITH RUAUDIERE LATERAL BUOY AND SUBSEQUENT SINKING OF THE VESSEL**

17th November 2017



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GLOSSARY

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GLOSSARY

AIS	Automatic identification system
CPA	Closest position of approach – used when passing clear for collision avoidance
CoC	Certificate of Competence
COLREGS	International Regulations for Prevention of Collisions at Sea 1972
ECDIS	Electronic chart and information display
JCG	Jersey Coastguard
LKE	Local Knowledge Endorsement – a small boat pilotage certificate
MOC	Maritime Operations Centre
MRCC	Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre
RYA	Royal Yachting Association
VHF	Very High Frequency – marine radio
VTMS	Vessel Traffic Management System
VTs	Vessel Traffic Service
VTsO	Vessel Traffic Service Officer

On Friday 17th November at approximately 1730 the 18.8m (62ft) Pershing motor cruiser **P6T2** departed from its berth in Elizabeth Marina bound for Guernsey. There were two persons on board comprising of the owner and his paid skipper. The vessel departed south via the Elizabeth Marina channel and the Small Road of St Helier before turning westwards to navigate the Western Passage outwards. Shortly after turning towards the west the vessel accelerated to in excess of 21 knots and collided with the Ruaudiere Buoy in charted position 49° 09.74'N 002° 08.61'W. The two persons on board evacuated into a life raft. The vessel was taken in tow and sunk in 20m of water 0.5NM SSE of La Moye Point. The buoy sustained a significant indentation in the hull and the top mark and light were destroyed.

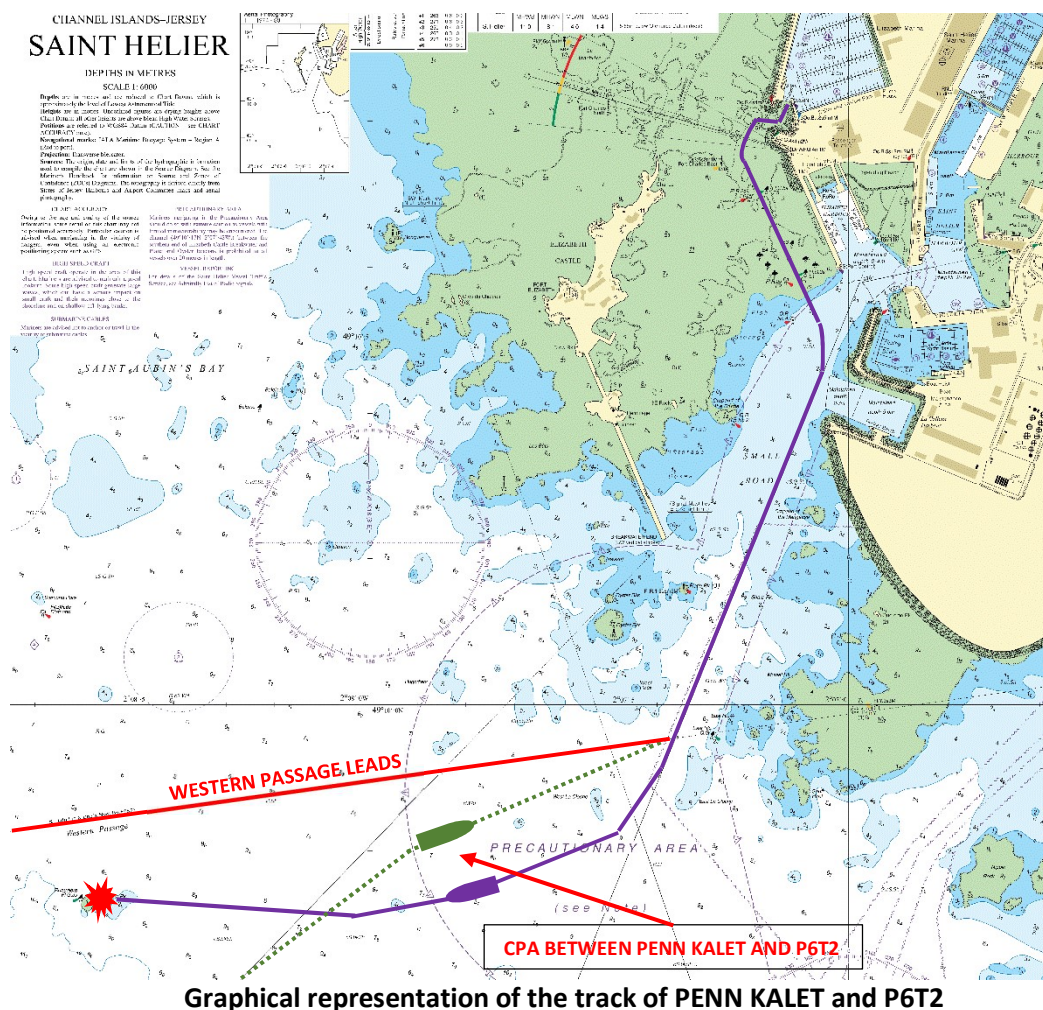
1.1 **P6T2** departed Elizabeth Marina for a voyage to Guernsey with the owner and his professional skipper on board. The vessel was noted to depart from the marina without displaying navigation lights although other deck and cabin lights were visible. The vessel was captured on CCTV camera No. 15 located on the light tower on the south end of Albert Pier. The camera remained in a fixed position, throughout the incident.

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- 1.3 The vessel **P6T2** was recorded proceeding outwards from Elizabeth Marine Channel and south down the Small Road towards the Western Passage. After passing the tanker berth it disappears from view for a few minutes before re-emerging south of the Platte Beacon heading in a westerly direction.
- 1.4 At the same time as the vessel's track was being recorded in CCTV the vessel was being tracked by both radar image and AIS signal on the VTS Frequentis VTMS system. The vessel appears to follow the Red and Green leads outbound but for a while disappears from view. Radar signal is lost at the same due to the proximity to the radar tower, but the AIS target shows the vessel going off track to the east before reappearing south of the Platte Beacon.
- 1.5 Once the vessel reappeared its identity was confirmed by both radar image and AIS. It was noted, at the same time that a French fishing vessel **PENN KALET** is proceeding inwards along the Danger Rock Passage having obtained clearance from VTS to enter. **P6T2** appears to remain on the Red and Green Passage and alters course south of the other vessel passing on a green to green aspect before altering course towards the west and accelerating to over 20 knots.
- 1.6 A few moments later the vessel strikes the Ruaudiere Buoy before coming to a complete stop. CCTV video footage shows the green lateral buoy exhibiting its correct characteristics of flashing green every 3 seconds until the moment of impact. In fact the last exhibited green flash occurs less than one second before impact.
- 1.7 The skipper put out a mayday call on VHF Channel 16 and he and the owner immediately evacuate dry shod into the life raft.
- 1.8 The Mayday call was received by Jersey Coastguard at 1747LT on VHF 16. They responded but were unable to establish further communications. Both Guernsey Coastguard and the adjacent MRCC at CROSS Jobourg also attempted to call the casualty. A short time later the JCG MOC received a phone call on the emergency mobile from the casualties of **P6T2** that the vessel had hit a buoy off Noirmont Point and was sinking fast.
- 1.9 At 1752 the Inshore Rescue Boat **FIRE BRAVO MARINE** was called and was launched at 1759. The vessel was on scene at 1807 and recovered two persons from the life raft. The craft returned to fish quay slipway at La Collette where it was met by the Ports of Jersey Duty Officer. At the skippers request a police officer was called to breathalyse him. He submitted to a breathalyser test, which proved negative. They were subsequently driven to the Coastguard MOC at Maritime House.
- 1.10 At 1759 the Ports of Jersey pilot cutter **RIVAL** was called. It launched at 1810 with 4 persons on board and rendezvoused with **FIRE BRAVO MARINE** at 1818. The two persons from the life raft had by now been evacuated onto the rescue craft. A brief conversation took place between the P6T2's skipper and crew of the pilot cutter about the dimensions of the craft.
- 1.11 The effective draft of the casualty was 17m as the vessel's attitude was vertical with about a 1-1.5m of the bow sticking out of the water. The maximum depth in the area of the collision was 20m on a falling tide. **RIVAL** managed to secure a line to the partially submerged casualty with a view to towing it out of the main shipping channel. Initially it was decided to tow it to shallower water to the north to be beached. However, the significant ebb tide facilitated a tow towards the west. Eventually the vessel became unmanageable and began to sink. The casualty finally sank in the following position 49° 09.94'N 002° 13.36'W approximately 5 cables

SSE of La Moye Point, and in close proximity to the North West Passage. The wreck was buoyed. **RIVAL** returned to harbour at 2055.



Graphical representation of the track of PENN KALET and P6T2

2.0 SKIPPER'S REPORT

- 2.1 The vessel was operated by a 35 year old paid skipper. He holds an RYA Commercially Endorsed Yachtmaster Offshore Certificate of Competence (CoC) for power driven craft and sailing vessels fitted with auxiliary engines. The certificate was issued on 2nd August 2004 and revalidated at five year intervals. The current CoC is valid until 18th February 2021. He was examined for and issued with a Jersey Boatmaster's Licence, under the Boast and Surf-Riding (Control) (Jersey) Regulations 1969 on 7th August 2009. This latter Licence was replaced and renamed a Local Knowledge Endorsement (LKE) issued under the Harbours (Inshore Safety) (Jersey) Regulations 2012. His current licence was renewed on 4th March 2016 and runs concurrent with his CoC. He also holds a Seafarer Medical Certificate (ENG1) valid until 7th February 2018.
- 2.2 The Skipper has had extensive sailing experience on a variety of different sailing and auxiliary powered vessels in the capacity of deck hand, First Mate and Master. Ship sizes ranged from 30m to 75m LOA.
- 2.3 The Skipper provided a written report as required by Regulation 10 (4) (a) of the Harbours (Inshore Safety) (Jersey) Regulations 2012, in that the ship was lost.

- 2.4 The voyage was planned earlier in the day as the owner wanted to go to Guernsey and remain overnight before catching an early flight to the mainland. The skipper attended the vessel earlier during the afternoon to carry out visual checks on the vessel and run up the main engines and generator.
- 2.5 The vessel departed Elizabeth Marina at 1730 to make passage towards Guernsey. The skipper states that, as he exited the marina he switched on the navigation lights.
- 2.6 The Skipper also stated that the control console screens were dimmed to night mode.
- 2.7 In his statement he identifies a boat approaching the harbour and decided to give it a wide berth and pass starboard to starboard as he considered altering to starboard and pass port to port would have resulted in him passing close to the Oyster Rocks.
- 2.8 Having passed clear of the inbound vessel he found his vessel further to the south side of the Western Passage than expected and altered course to starboard to resume the intended track. He was conscious of the Ruaudiere Bank (rock) which he needed to leave to port. He stated that he was aware of the Ruaudiere Green Lateral Buoy as he had used this channel hundreds of times. He states he did not see the buoy or the light it was exhibiting.
- 2.9 Shortly after making this alteration of course to resume the track the vessel collided with the Ruaudiere Buoy. The skipper states the vessel was proceeding at 12 knots. The vessel began taking on water and flooding rapidly and the skipper and owner evacuated dry shod in to the life raft.
- 2.10 Subsequent to supplying a written report the skipper was asked a number of supplementary questions. The questions and answers were supplied in writing.
- 2.11 When asked when the navigation consoles were dimmed, the skipper responded that they were already in night mode before departure but required further adjustment whilst the vessel was transiting down the Small Road.
- 2.12.1 When asked when the navigation lights were switched on the skipper responded that he switched them on at the same time as the console was further dimmed.
- 2.13 The skipper advised that this was his first full darkness sea passage. He had returned to St Helier on two previous occasions in fading light. He also stated that he had made a number of night time passages but on other vessels.
- 2.14 The manoeuvring characteristics of this vessel are somewhat different to a standard propeller driven planning craft. The vessel is fitted with a ZF surface drive system as illustrated in the image below. To get the vessel on the plane the drives are set half way down and the throttles advanced. In normal sea conditions the speed increases steadily and the bow does rise slightly, until 24-28 knots at which time the vessel is fully planning.



3.0 CCTV IMAGES

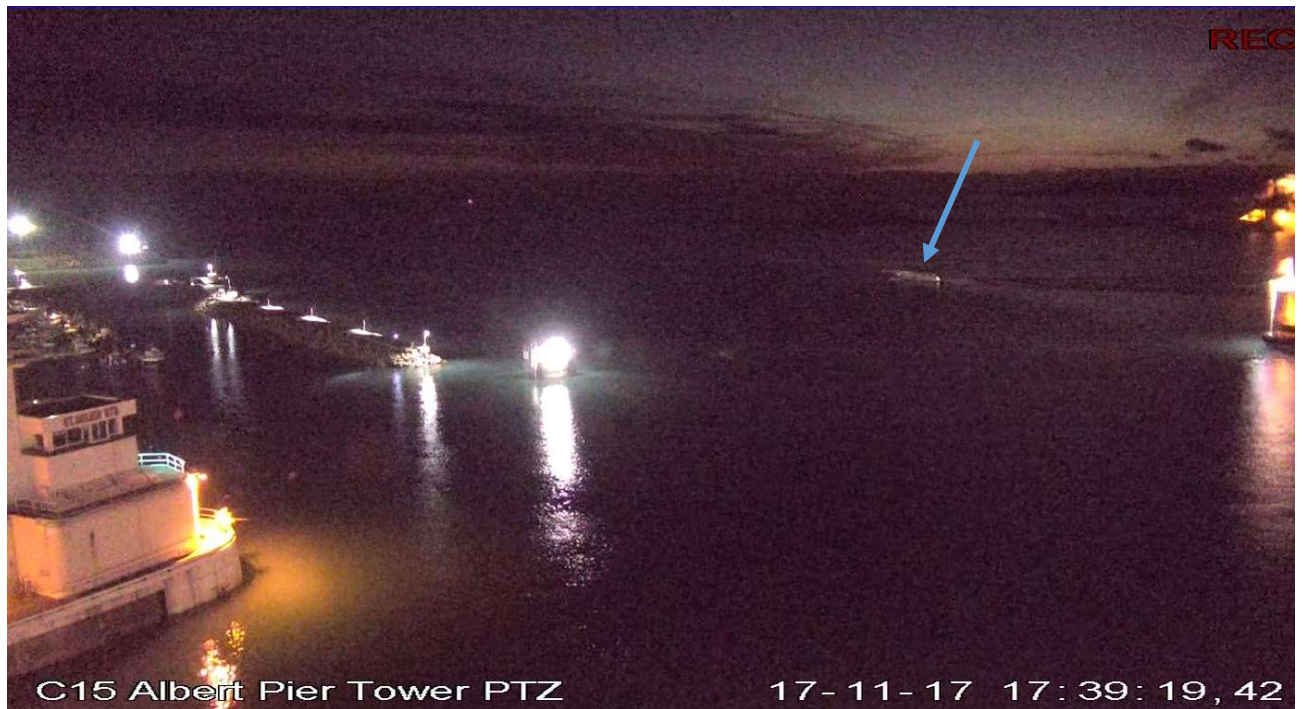


Image 1 shows the vessel P6T2 departing Elizabeth Marina Channel. Only Deck Lights are shown.



Image 2 shows vessel P6T2 departing down Small Road, Navigation lights not exhibited.

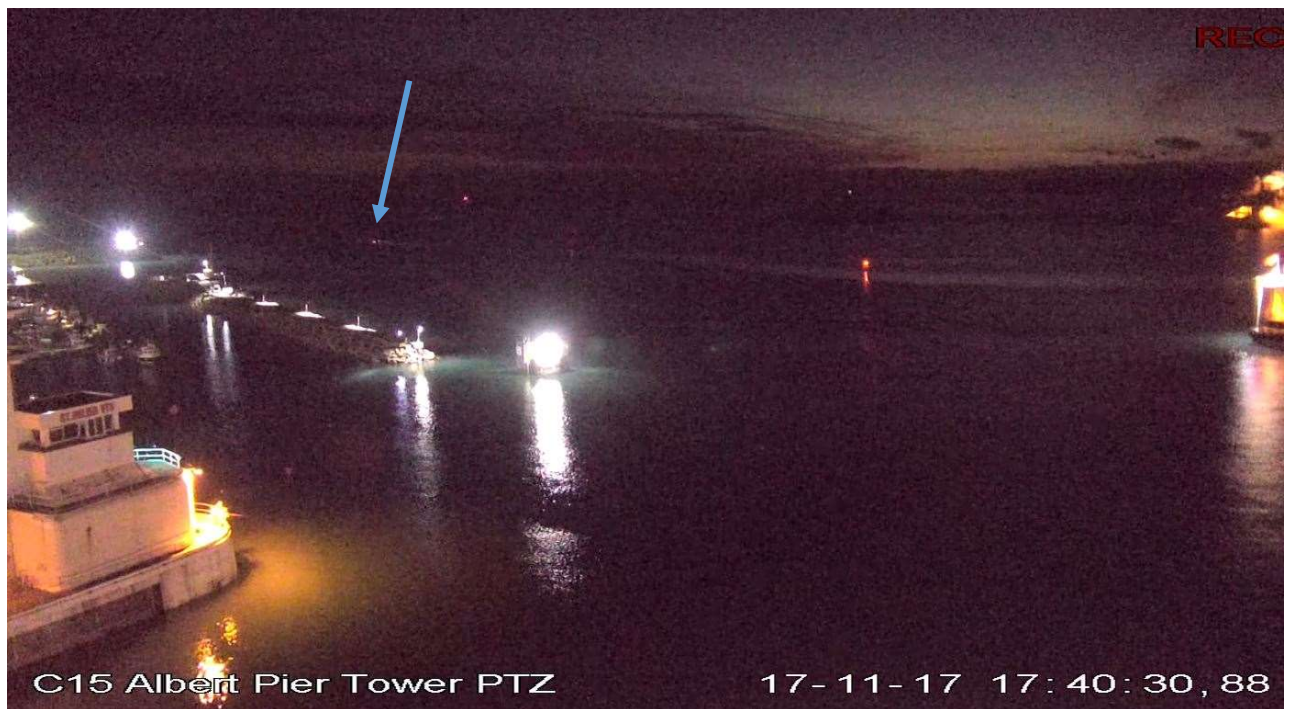


Image 3 shows P6T2 outbound via the Tanker Berth

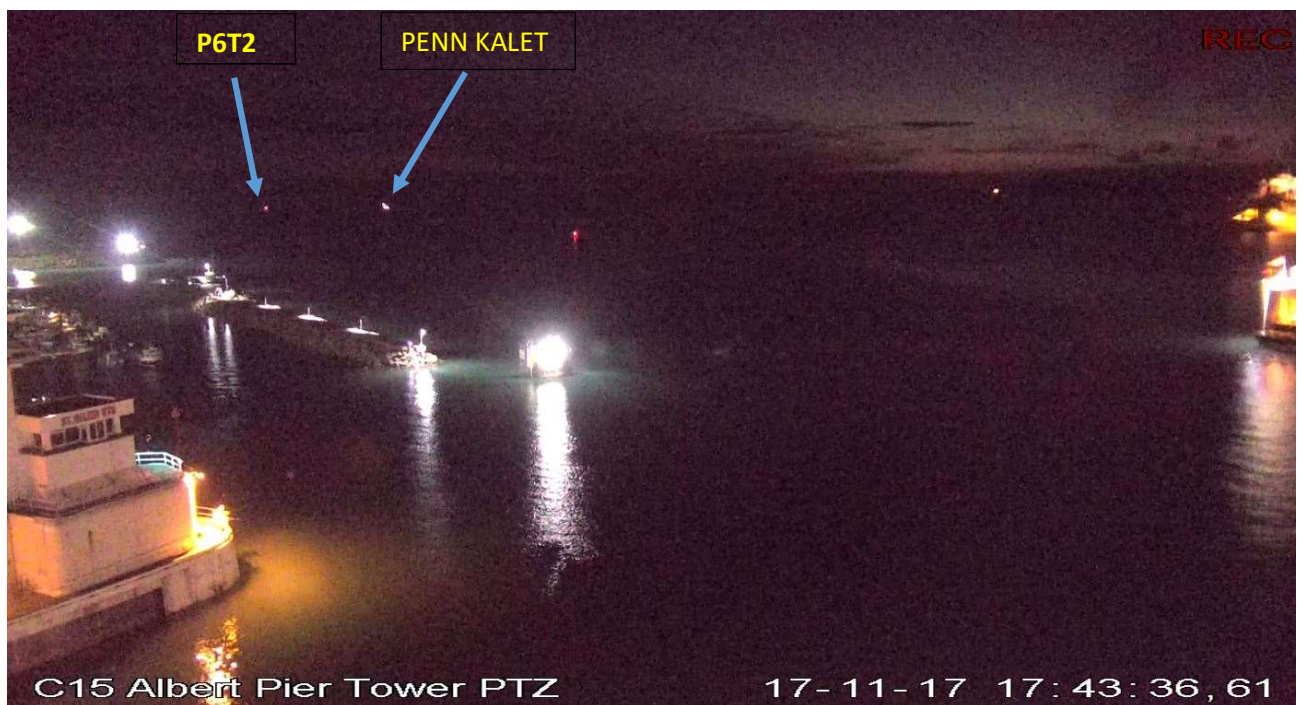


Image 4 shows P6T2 turning west in the precautionary area. The other bright light is PENN KALET inbound on Danger Rock Passage. Navigation lights now showing.

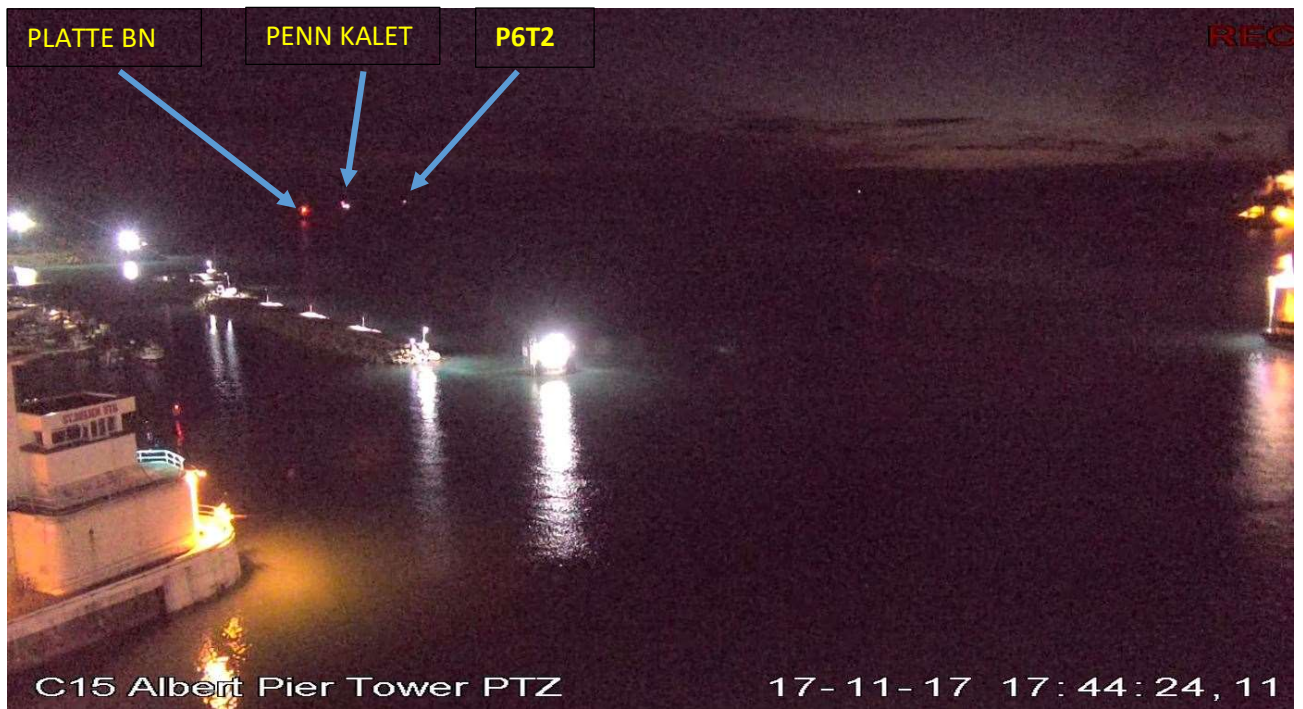


Image 5 shows P6T2 passing south of PENN KALET and heading outbound to the west

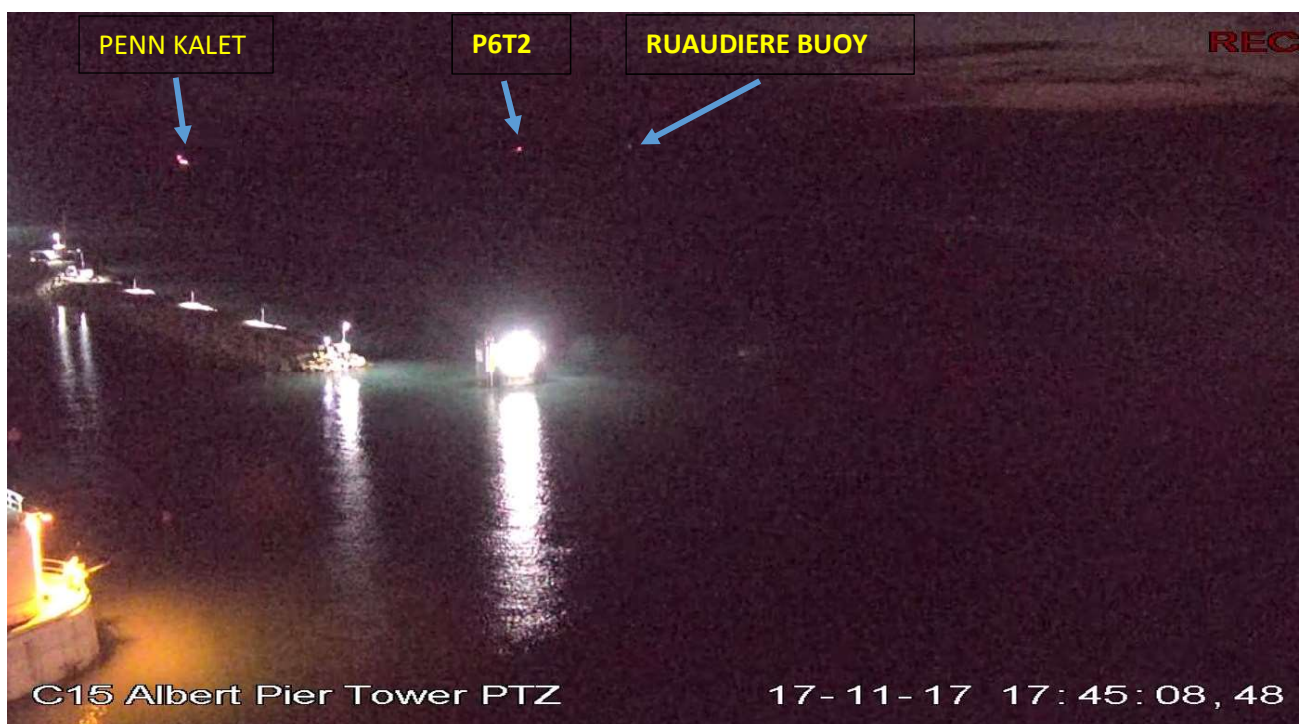


Image 6 shows P6T2 heading outwards towards the west with Ruaudiere Buoy right ahead

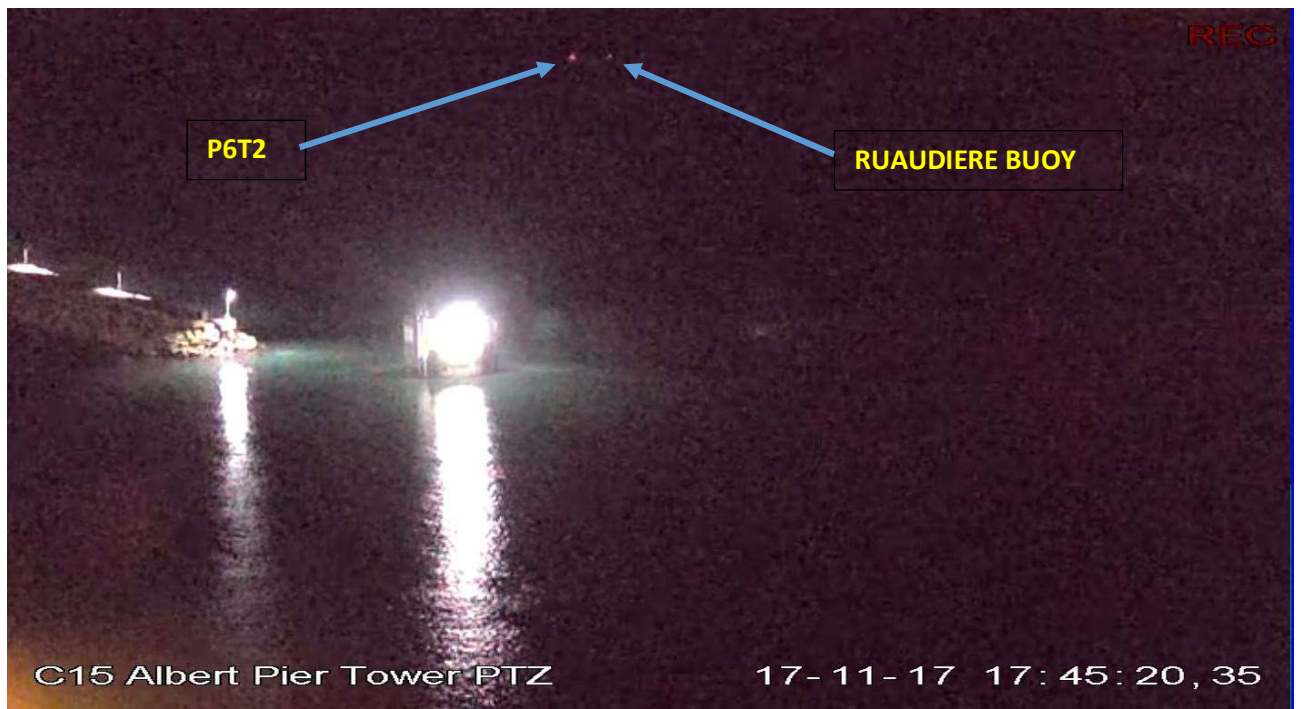


Image 7 shows P6T2 in very close proximity to Ruaudiere approximately 1 second before impact

4.0 VTMS IMAGES

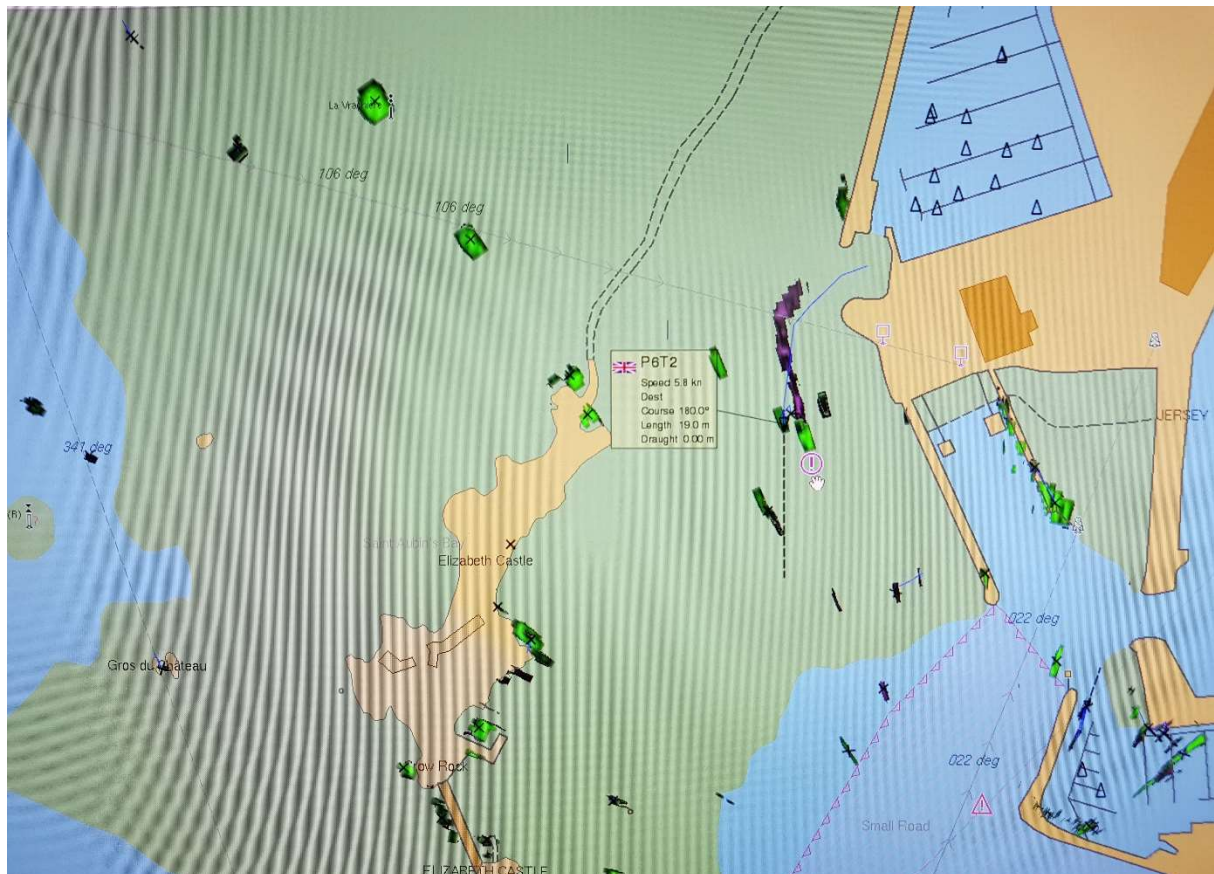


Image 8 shows P6T2 departing Elizabeth Marina

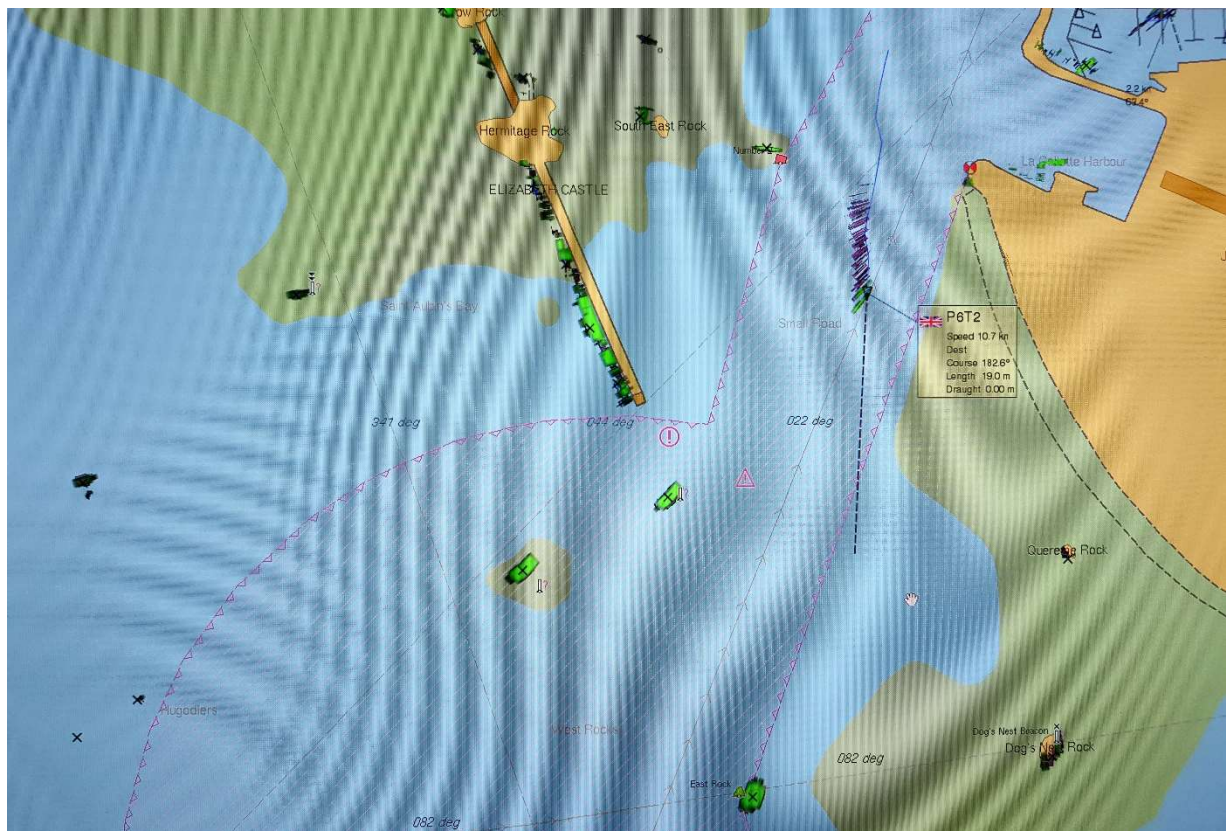


Image 9 shows P6T2 departing down Small Road at 10 knots

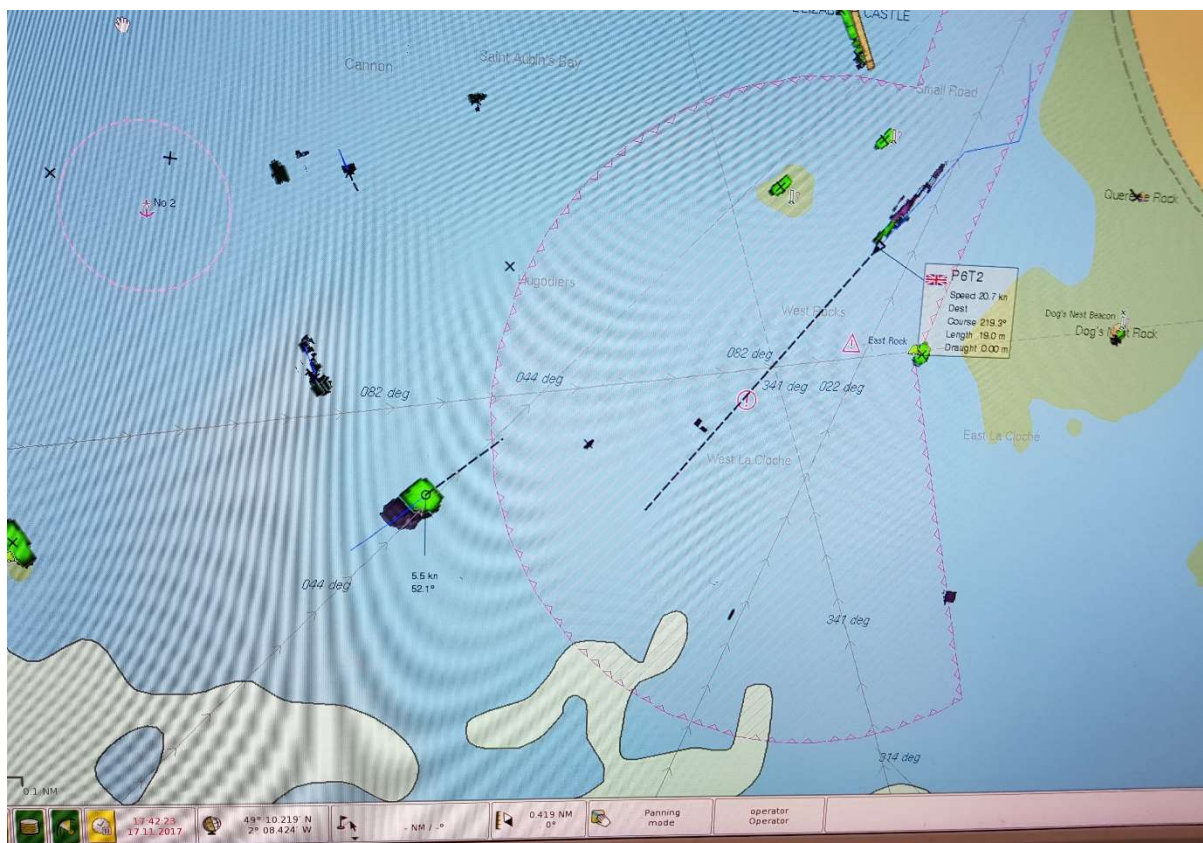


Image 10 shows P6T2 approaching Western Passage at 20 knots with fishing vessel PENN KALET approaching St Helier via Danger Rock Passage.

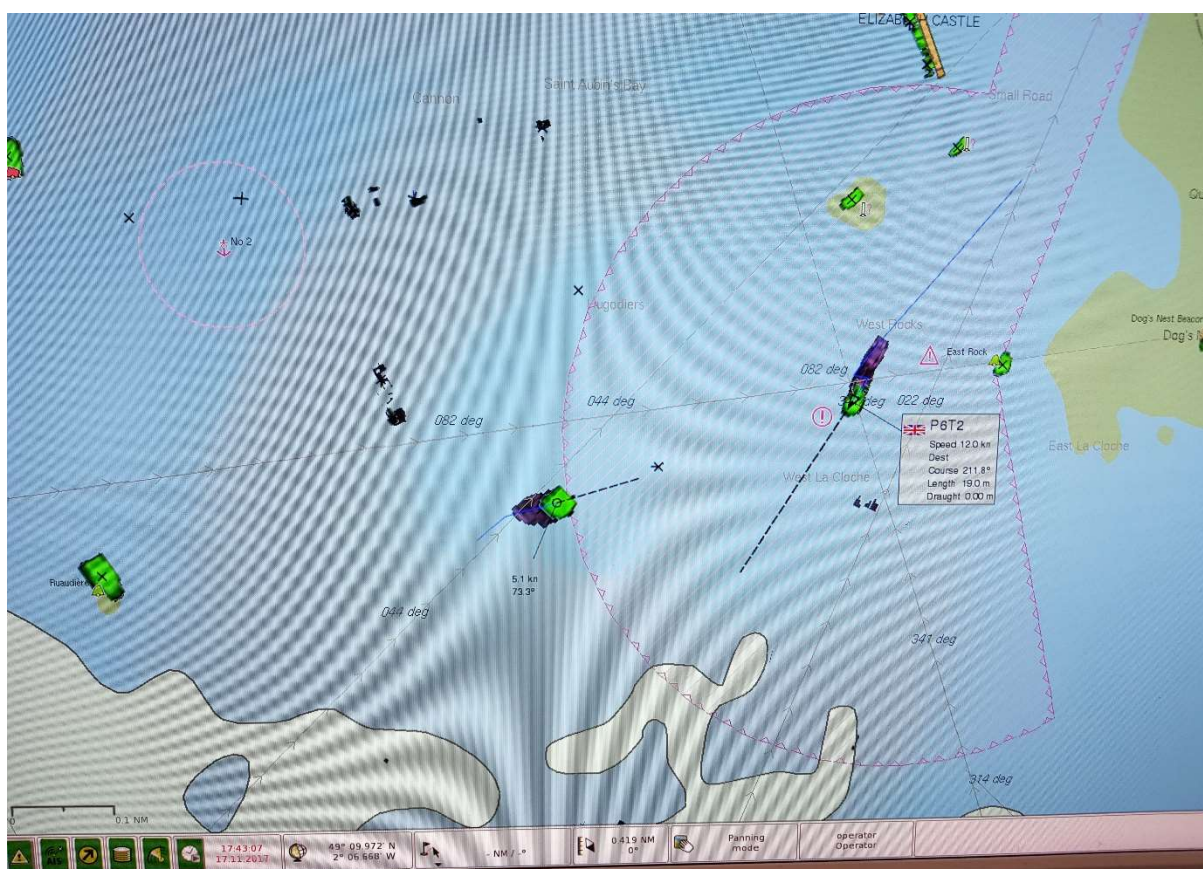


Image 11 shows PENN KALET altering to Starboard, whilst the P6T2 makes a slight alteration to port to cross ahead on the fishing vessel.

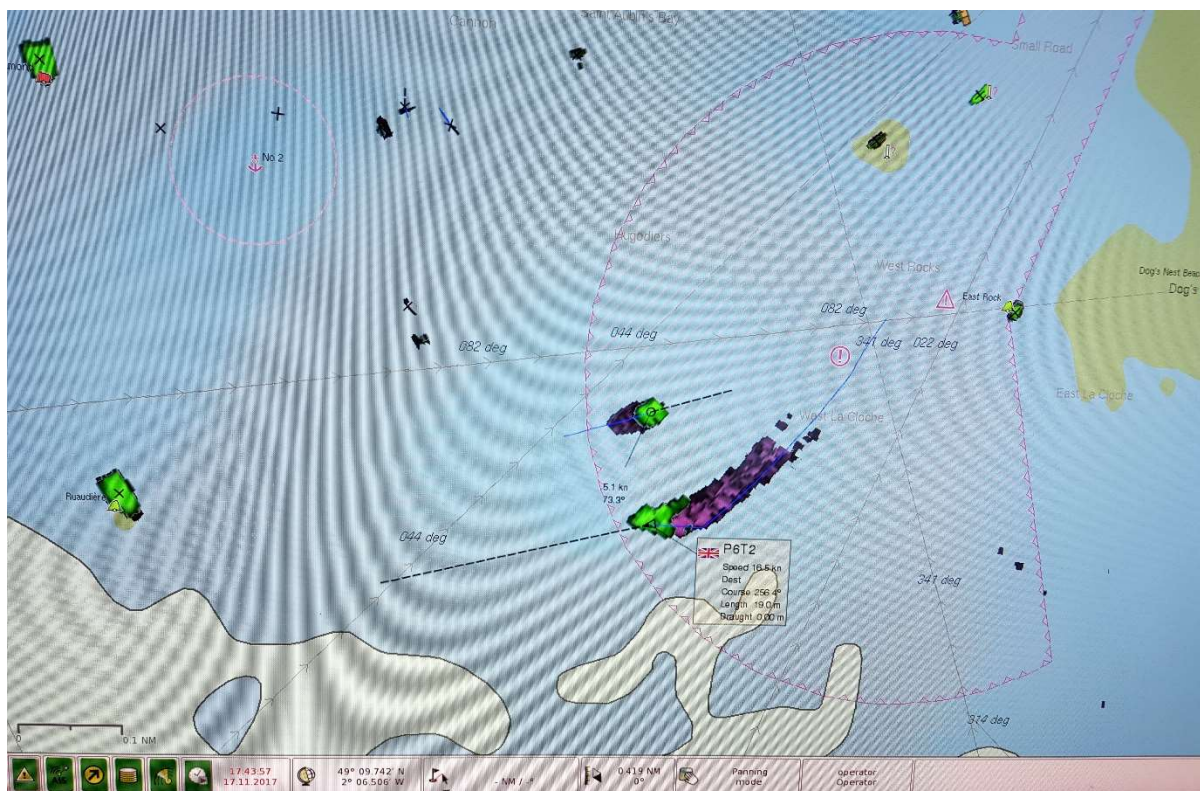


Image 12 shows P6T2 passing south of PENN KALET and turning to starboard to regain the Western Passage leads

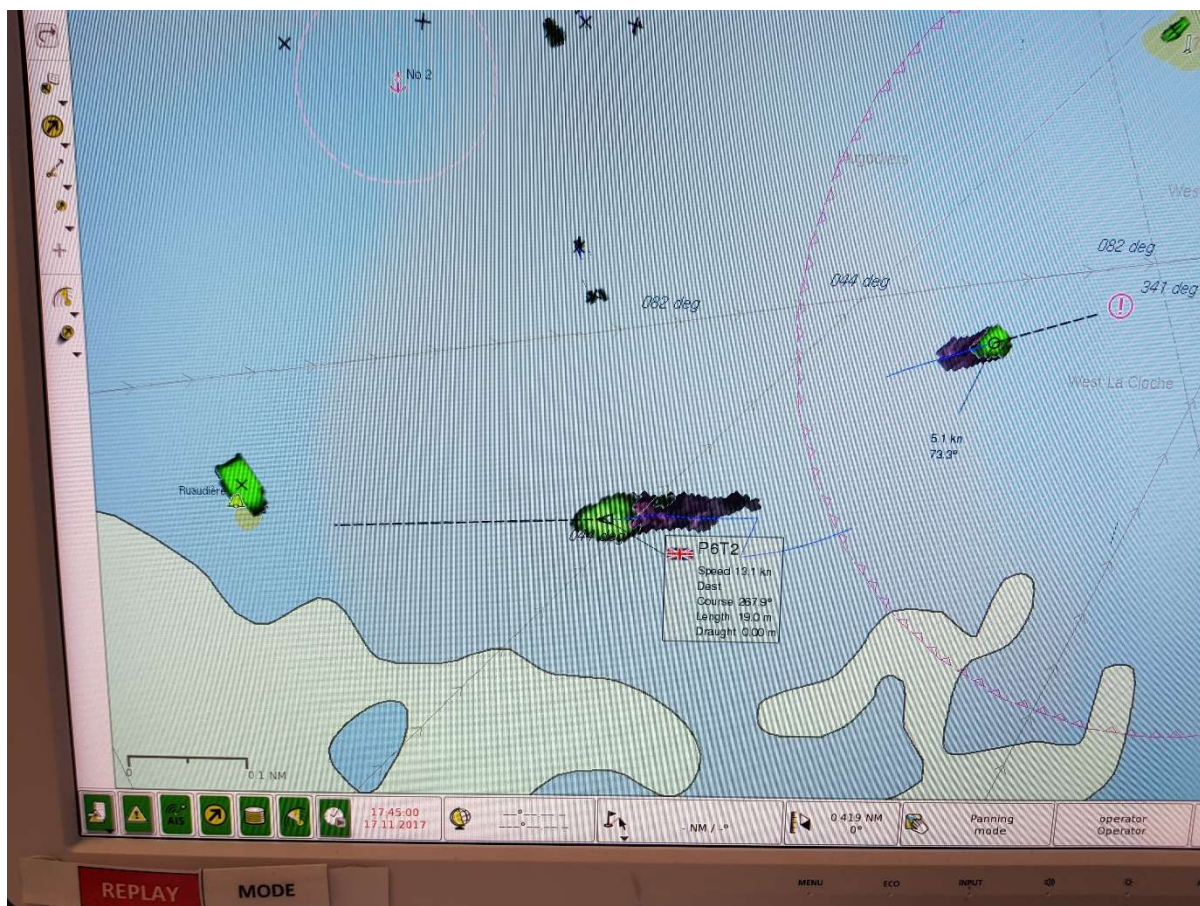


Image 13 shows P6T2 at 13 knots heading towards the Rauaudiere Buoy

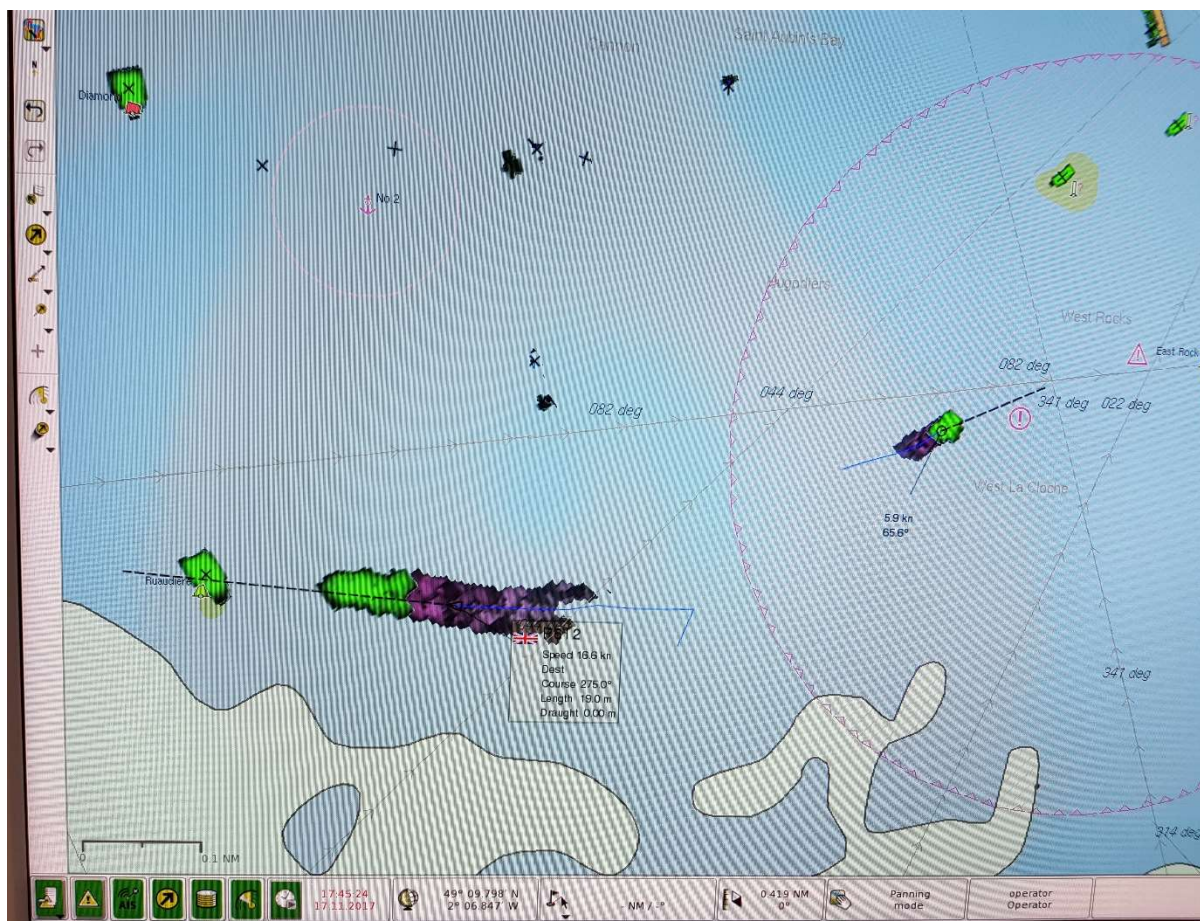


Image 14 shows P6T2 speeding up to 16 knots and heading straight towards Ruaudiere Buoy

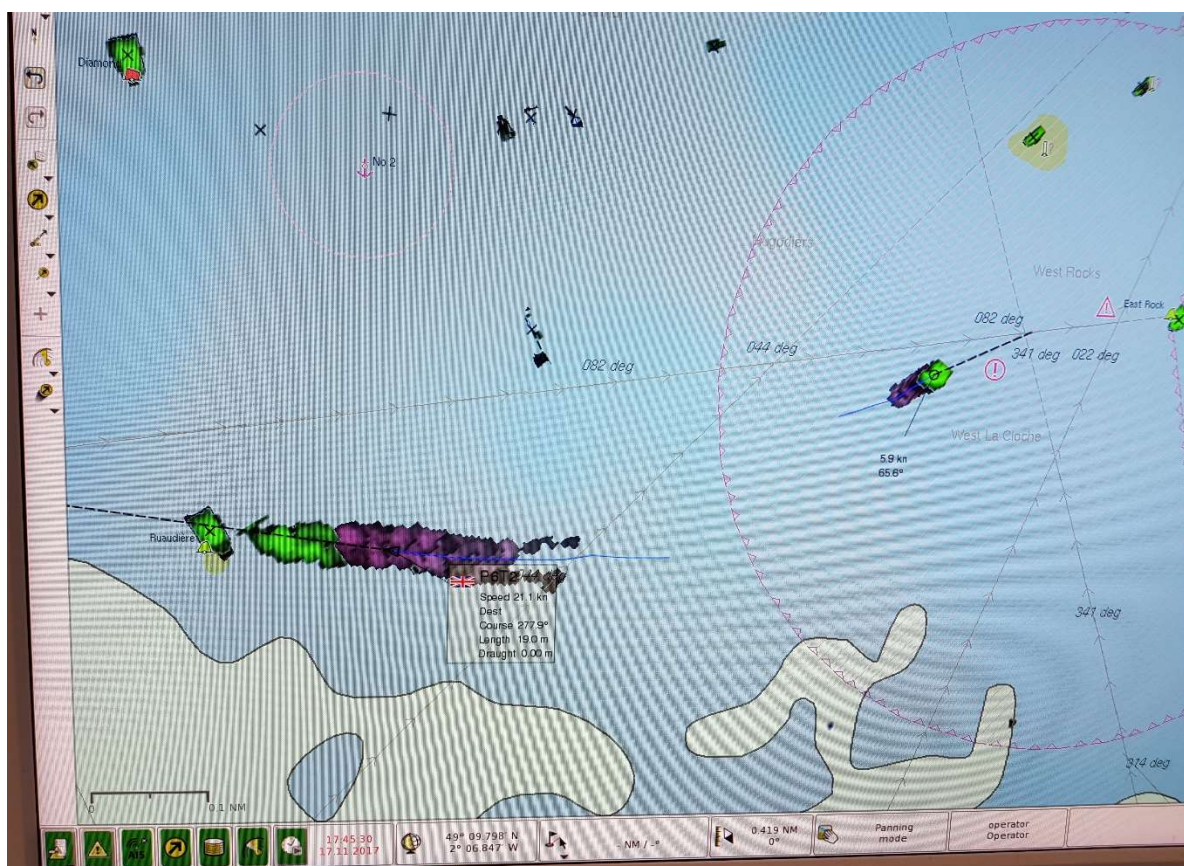


Image 15 shows P6T2 immediately prior to impact with Ruaudiere Buoy



Image 16 – Bow of *P6T2* under tow by pilot cutter *Rival*



Image 17 shows SHETLAND TRADER departing on Western Passage at 1715

5.0 POST INCIDENT

- 5.1 Once the Harbour Master was present in the Silver Command Room and the casualties had been recovered to **FIRE BRAVO MARINE**, the Duty Officer elected to attend La Collette slipway where the rescue vessel would be recovered. He met with the two rescued persons to enquire about their welfare. The skipper was in shock but requested he be breathalysed. The Duty Officer made a request through the Coastguard MOC for a police officer to attend.
- 5.2 Some ten minutes elapsed and the police officer appeared and breathalysed the skipper at his request. The result was zero. The Duty Officer then invited the two crew to back to the Coastguard Silver Command Room for tea and a hot de-brief.
- 5.3 The owner and his skipper were driven to the Coastguard MOC where they met with the duty coastguard team and the Harbour Master. The skipper was keen to discuss what had happened but appeared to be still in shock. He stated that he had difficulty in reducing the back scatter of lights from the bridge console. He remembered turning the navigation lights on at some stage. He admitted being in a hurry. He also admitted he became aware that he was too far south of the Western Leads and rather than turn sharply and disturb the owner elected to make a gradual turn to the north to regain the leads. He made no mention of the inbound fishing vessel using Danger Rock Passage.

6.0 DUTY OFFICERS STATEMENT

- 6.1 The Duty Officer was called by the Coastguard & VTS Operations room at 1746. He immediately drove to Maritime House to co-ordinate the incident. He requested the Fire & Rescue Service launch their vessel and launched pilot cutter **RIVAL** to attend the scene. He also called the Harbourmaster. Once the two persons were picked up by **FIRE BRAVO MARINE** he drove to La Collette Slipway,
- 6.2 He arrived on the slipway to meet the returning Inshore Rescue Boat. He found both survivors to be dry and uninjured but the skipper was in shock.
- 6.3 The skipper requested to be breathalysed and the Duty Officer contacted the Operations Room to arrange a Police Officer to attend. The skipper was subsequently breathalysed and found to have a zero level of alcohol.
- 6.4 The Duty Officer then suggested the skipper and owner accompany him to the Coastguard & VTS Silver Command Room to warm up and have some tea and an incident hot debrief.
- 6.5 The skipper was keen to discuss the incident and referred to the light pollution from the main console and remembers turning on the navigation lights after departure. He admitted being in a hurry. The Duty Officer recalls him stating that he assumed that the buoy was lit.
- 6.6 The Skipper realised that he had travelled too far south of the leads and started to make gradual alterations rather than a significant manoeuvre to avoid upsetting the owner.

7.0 HARBOURMASTER'S STATEMENT

- 7.1 The Harbourmaster received a call from the Duty Officer, and elected to proceed to the Coastguard & VTS MOC at Maritime House. He arrived at 1900 and set himself up in the Silver Command Room as he expected a long evening ahead. He also asked the Operations Manager to attend as there was a risk of the main approach channel being blocked.
- 7.2 He recalls the Duty Officer directing the Inshore Rescue Boat to La Collette Slipway before leaving to meet it.
- 7.4 After a period of time the skipper and owner of **P6T2** arrived in the Coastguard Silver Command Room where they were discovered to be dry shod and uninjured. He noted that the skipper was keen to talk. He admitted coming out of the Elizabeth Marine without displaying navigation lights and also observed that the console lights were too bright. He eventually managed to dim the lights. He stated he found himself too far south of the leads. Being wary of the owner he did not wish to alter course too sharply and then heard a loud bang.
- 7.5 The Harbour Master noted that no mention was made of altering course for the fishing vessel.

8.0 OWNER'S STATEMENT

- 8.1 The owner had requested he be taken to St Peter Port, Guernsey, where he would stay the night before travelling by air to the mainland on an early flight the following day. He had arranged for a 1730 departure with the skipper.
- 8.2 He sat next to the skipper initially on departure. He admitted he had only ever experienced a night time passage once before. The skipper explained some of the differences in night passages particularly in reference to the lights.
- 8.3 At some point, time and location unknown, he recalls the skipper adjusting the lights on the console and being asked to go below to turn off one of the bedroom lights.
- 8.4 He recalls seeing a vessel inbound for the harbour which they passed ahead of. He recalls the skipper checking the outside lights were on. It is assumed this refers to the navigation lights, which he subsequently confirmed to be on.
- 8.5 The owner returned to the seat beside the skipper and noted the vessel was picking up speed. The skipper was looking out of the cockpit and checking the screens on the console. He recalls the vessel banking to the right before straightening up. At this moment there was an impact and he was thrown forward onto the console.
- 8.6 He observed the skipper to check the engine room and other spaces. He observed water coming into the vessel. The skipper put out a Mayday on the VHF before they both evacuated into the life raft.
- 8.7 They were picked up by the Fire Service Inshore Rescue Boat and landed ashore at La Collette slipway where they were driven to Maritime House.

9.0 FINDINGS

- 9.1 The recordings from CCTV Camera 15 and the VTS VTMS system match both in image and time. There can be no doubt that the images on the CCTV show the progress of **P6T2** outbound from St Helier.
- 9.2 The Ruaudiere Buoy was lit up until the time of impact, displaying its charted Fl G 3secs. This fact was further confirmed by a written statement from the Master of **SHETLAND TRADER** that had departed from St Helier 30 minutes earlier. The CCTV footage viewed between 1730 and 1745 on the day of the collision shows the Ruaudiere Buoy flashing as charted.
- 9.3 The vessel was observed on CCTV Camera departing down the Small Road without navigation lights. There was some light emanating from some of the cabin ports and the shore lights reflected against the high gloss hull of the vessel.
- 9.4 The vessel disappears from camera view after clearing south of the La Collette Tanker Berth, although it was still being tracked on radar and AIS. As the vessel turns to starboard, heading westwards, the navigation lights were switched on and show the passage of the vessel clearly from that time on.
- 9.5 The inbound fishing vessel **PENN KALET** is clearly visible on camera throughout the video sequence.
- 9.6 The vessel **P6T2** tracks west with the Ruaudiere Buoy flashing in sequence. The final flash was exhibited approximately one second before the vessel collides with it.
- 9.7 Initially the aspect between the two vessels was nearly end on and would require a manoeuvre as prescribed in COLREGS Rule 14. There was sufficient sea room for **P6T2** to alter course to the west, to starboard, and pass port to port with the inbound **PENN KALET**. Despite this the skipper stood on and allowed a close quarter situation to develop. He then created a crossing situation elected to pass starboard to starboard and cross ahead of the vessel in contravention of COLREGS Rule 15. This action put the outbound vessel well south of the Western Passage leads.
- 9.8 The vessel's speed leaving Elizabeth Marina remained around 8 knots until passing south of La Plate Beacon, where the speed was variable between 12 and 15 knots.
- 9.9 Once the CPA with **PENN KALET** had been achieved, and the vessel had passed clear, **P6T2** began to increase speed and altered course to starboard.
- 9.10 From that time the vessel continues to accelerate and head straight for the Ruaudiere Buoy. At the moment before impact the vessel's AIS was reading 277°T at 21.1 knots. It should be noted that the vessel's speed was increasing as shown by AIS but there is a time lag between the GPS calculation of speed, transmission over AIS and being processed by ECDIS therefore actual speed at time of impact may have been higher.
- 9.11 At the informal debrief after the incident the skipper admitted he was being distracted by the brightness of the console lights and had departed without navigation lights exhibited. The owner's written statement reflects this.
- 9.12 The manoeuvring characteristics of the vessel show that when accelerating the bow does rise until trimmed down once the vessel's speed passes 28 knots. Since the speed at the time of impact was in the region of 21 knots the bow's height would have risen as expected.

- 9.13 The quick thinking of the skipper on discovering the rapid ingress of water, sending a MAYDAY, and preparing the life raft for immediate abandon ship produced a positive outcome in both persons were picked up by the rescue boat dry shod and uninjured.

10.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 The vessel departed St Helier in a hurry.
- 10.2 The vessel was not fully configured for night time running because the display screens needed further dimming and the navigation lights were only switched on after departure. There is some conflicting evidence as when the navigation console was sufficiently dimmed. This would have detracted from safe navigation and good watch keeping.
- 10.3 CCTV footage shows the navigation lights only switched on once the vessel had passed down the length of the Small Road.
- 10.4 The speed in the Elizabeth Marina Channel and in the Small Road was in excess of the 5 knot speed limit.
- 10.5 The distractions caused by the light pollution from the console and the cabin lights below contributed to the Skipper's interpretation of the actions required to take to avoid collision with the inbound fishing boat. His manoeuvre resulted in a starboard to starboard passing after he crossed ahead of the other vessel. This contravenes COLREGS Rule 15.
- 10.6 Had the skipper been fully focused on navigation he would have determined there was sufficient room to pass port to port and only make a minor deviation north of the Western Passage leads. The tide was within minutes of High Water at 10.5m height so there was no danger to navigation in passing close to the Oyster Beacon.
- 10.7 The unconventional collision avoidance manoeuvre was instigated by lack of appreciation as to what the other vessel was doing. The **PENN KALET** was approaching via the Danger Rock Passage and would have to regain the Western Passage, by turning more to starboard before entering the Red & Green Passage (Small Road). Had **P6T2** altered to starboard he would have passed well clear on north of the other vessel.
- 10.8 This collision avoidance manoeuvre placed **P6T2** well south of the western leads. And the skipper was initially unsure how far off track he was, as indicated by the owner's statement, which noted him scanning the horizon and the instruments to determine his exact location.
- 10.9 After passing the inbound fishing vessel **P6T2** was turned to starboard and began increasing speed before an accurate position was established. The vessel was not yet trimmed for full planning speed and would have had its bow slightly elevated impairing forward visibility, and in particular, close forward visibility.
- 10.10 The skipper should have established his position accurately before setting course to regain the Western Passage and certainly before beginning to increase speed. His actions here were in contravention of COLREGS Rules 5 & 6 in that he was not proceeding at a safe speed taking into account all the prevailing circumstances and conditions and was not keeping a proper lookout.

- 10.11 This collision was caused by a number of factors including a hasty departure, lack of pre-departure preparation, including the distraction of setting up night dimming to the right level, checking if navigation lights were exhibited while under way, and the encounter with an inbound vessel. These actions should have been undertaken before the vessel departed its berth. All of these distractions served to put the vessel well south of its intended track. The skipper's lack of night time passage experience with this vessel also contributed to the incident.
- 10.12 Vessels under 25m in length are considered non-participating vessels in St Helier VTS's operating procedures so movements of such vessels would not necessarily be monitored, unless there was potential conflict with large commercial vessels manoeuvring. In this situation the VTSO was aware of the inbound French Fishing vessel **PENN KALET** as it had called for clearance and requested a layby berth. No communications had been received from **P6T2** until after the collision.

12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 Safety Bulletin promulgated to all boat owners about the need to set up steering position console lights and instruments effectively before effecting a night passage.
- 12.2 Navigation lights should be exhibited before leaving the berth.
- 12.3 Mariners should familiarise themselves with night passages including the location of buoys and beacons and undertake appropriate training with more experienced skippers.
- 12.4 All mariners should be familiar with the definition of a safe speed, which is defined as one in which proper and effective action can be taken to avoid collision and be stopped in a distance appropriate to the prevailing circumstances and conditions.
- 12.5 In particular mariners should be aware of the presence of background light such as from shore lights or back scatter from the vessel's own lights when navigating at night.
- 12.6 The Skipper's Local Knowledge Endorsement should be reviewed in light of the various issues that contributed to the collision and sinking of **P6T2**.
- 12.7 General Direction 6 defines vessels over 25m in length as "reporting vessels" and requires them to communicate with VTS. It is recommended that all vessels departing St Helier Harbour in the hours of darkness consider themselves reporting vessels and call St Helier VTS before departure.