

# Synopsis

The accident was notified to Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) at about 1630 on Friday, 16 May 1997. The MAIB investigation was conducted by Captain P Kavanagh. It was also investigated by the Bahamas Maritime Authority.

The accident occurred when the passenger ship ALBATROS, of 24,803 GT, was departing from the Isles of Scilly after a short visit as part of a round Britain cruise. While exiting Saint Mary's Road and entering Saint Mary's Sound, the liner grounded on North Bartholomew Rock just outside the southern side of the navigable channel.

The Pilot was not on board at the time of the accident. With the Master's agreement, the Pilot was leading the vessel out to the open sea from a launch.

After weighing anchor, the Master had to execute a large turn to port before lining up for the narrow passage through Saint Mary's Sound. Navigation was conducted by eye, supported by radar parallel indexing and advice from the Pilot by VHF radio.

ALBATROS completed the turn but was too far to the south of the safe channel and struck a clearly charted rock. The damage to the hull was extensive; mainly on the starboard side. Despite a number of fuel oil tanks being ruptured, very little leakage of oil occurred. The vessel remained for a further nine days at anchor in Saint Mary's Road whilst the passengers and non-essential personnel were disembarked, and fuel oil from damaged tanks was transhipped to a coastal tanker.

The initiating cause of the accident was the Master's failure to execute and monitor the turn to port to ensure ALBATROS was safe as she approached Saint Mary's Sound.

An interim recommendation that vessels liable to compulsory pilotage should have a pilot embarked has been made to the Competent Harbour Authority of the Isles of Scilly.

The Report includes further recommendations to review the navigational aids and pilotage in the Isles of Scilly; to consider extending the Competent Harbour Authority's harbour limits to encompass the whole of the Isles of Scilly and for the Management Company of ALBATROS to enhance their procedures for identifying and assessing potential risks before agreeing to a previously unvisited port being used by a particular vessel.