

Class B Accident Report

Lady Kawhia

Mechanical Failure

Kawhia Harbour on 14 November 2004

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REPORT No: 04 3604

LADY KAWHIA – MECHANICAL FAILURE



Details of Vessel, Owner & Management, Classification, Navigational Equipment, Manning & Crew:

Name of Vessel:	<i>Lady Kawhia</i>
Vessel Type:	Restricted Passenger Ship
Port of Registry:	Auckland
Flag:	New Zealand
MSA No.:	191791
Built:	1949
Construction Material:	Wood
Length Overall (m):	13.97
Maximum Breadth (m):	4.25
Gross Tonnage:	15.94
Net Tonnage:	5.96
Propulsion:	Gardener 6LX
Safe Ship Management (SSM) Company:	Survey Nelson Ltd
Accident Investigator:	Andrew Hayton

- **Owner Details**

The vessel is owned by the 'Taylor Whanau Trust'. They have owned the vessel since December 2003.

- **SSM Certificate**

The Safe Ship Management Certificate was issued on 4 March 2004.

- **Skipper Details**

The 48 year old Skipper holds an Inshore Launch Masters Certificate of Competency issued in 2003. He has experience in the operation of small commercial vessels.

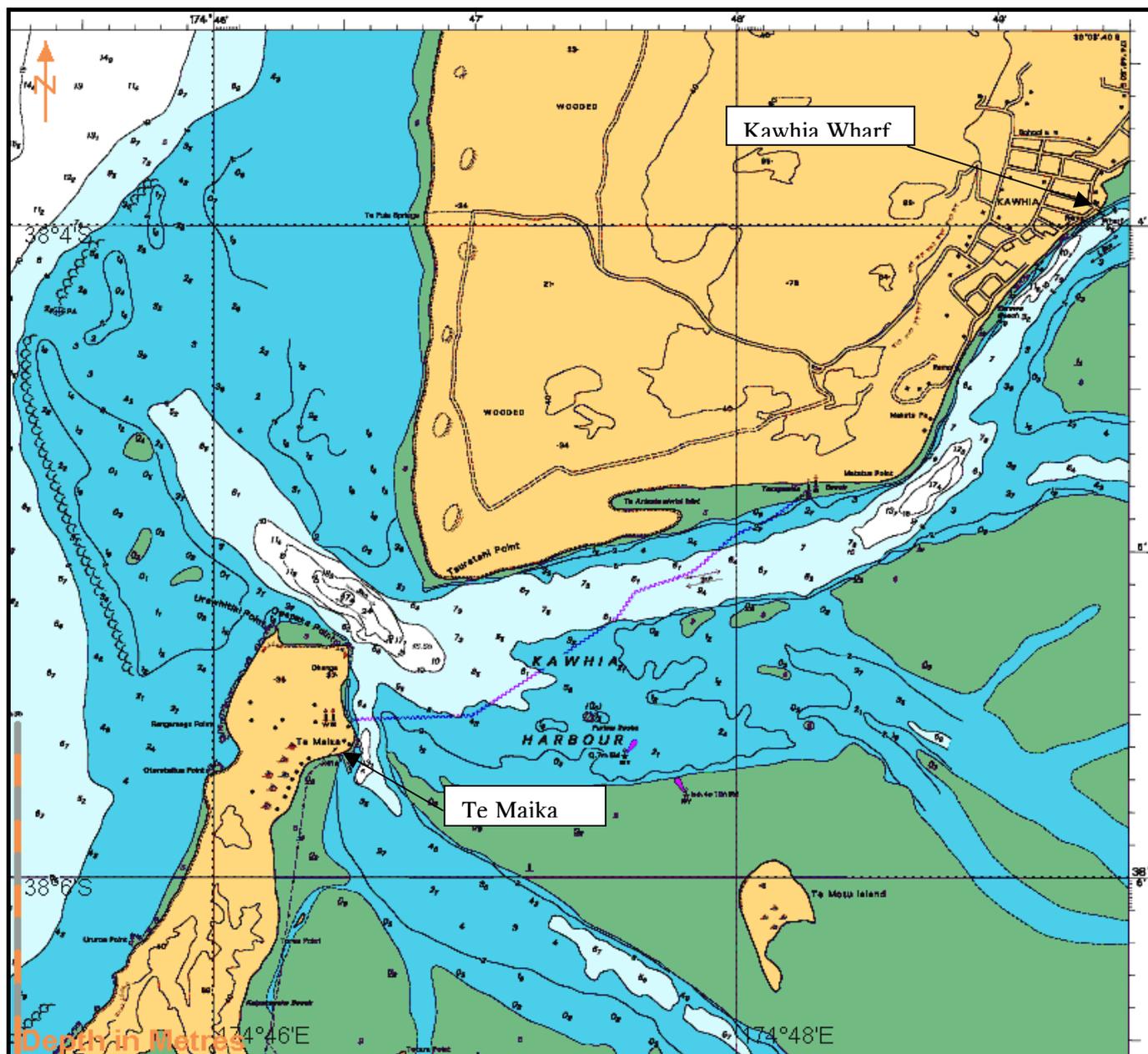
- **Crew Details**

The crewmember/engineer was 32 years old. He holds a Commercial Launch Masters Certificate of Competency issued in 1997. He has considerable experience in the operation of small commercial vessels

- **Manning Details**

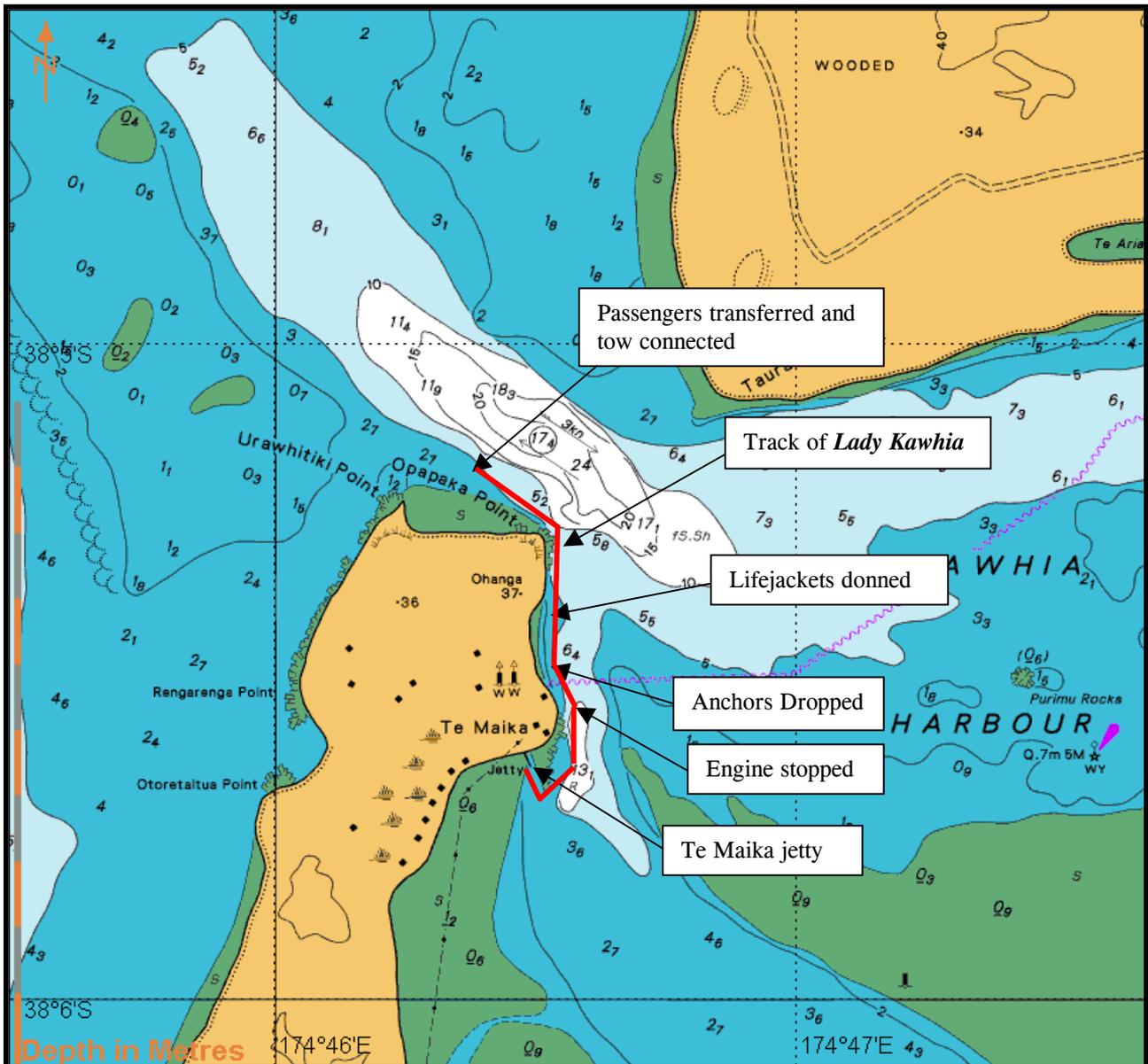
At the time of the incident, in addition to the two crewmembers, there was a local tour guide and 18 fare paying passengers onboard.

NARRATIVE



At approximately 1100 hours on 14 November 2004, the passenger vessel *Lady Kawhia* departed Kawhia Wharf bound for Te Maika where it was to disembark the 19 passengers. *Lady Kawhia* departed from Te Maika and arrived back at Kawhia at approximately 1230 hours. At approximately 1415 hours the vessel left Kawhia to return to Te Maika in order to pick up the passengers that were landed earlier. When approaching the pier, the Skipper observed that the engines revolutions had dropped for no apparent reason. The vessel was berthed without incident. The crewmembers checked the engine and could find nothing wrong but the Skipper contacted another local commercial boat operator by cell phone to notify him that should there be further problems, his services may be required to transfer the passengers back to Kawhia onboard his vessel *Kotuku*.

After the passengers embarked, *Lady Kawhia* departed Te Maika pier at approximately 1500 hours. Shortly afterwards, *Lady Kawhia's* engine failed. The engineer went to the engine room and soon discovered the fuel filters and fuel lines to be blocked, thus starving the engine of fuel.



The Skipper dropped the main anchor. He observed that the anchor was dragging and a second anchor was dropped. The vessel continued to drag and as the outgoing tide was carrying *Lady Kawhia* towards the harbour mouth, the Skipper instructed the passengers to don lifejackets. At 1528 hours, the Skipper called for assistance on VHF channel 16 and on VHF channel 04, which is the working channel for Kawhia harbour. *Lady Kawhia* dragged its anchors parallel to the coastline. The closest it got to the shore was approximately 35 metres.

At 1541 hours, the support vessel *Margaret J* left Kawhia to assist. At 1543 hours, a recreational boat *Dreamweaver* came alongside *Lady Kahia* but was too small to offer assistance.

At approximately 1545 hours, one of the anchors held, stopping *Lady Kawhia's* drift. At this point, the vessel was approximately 200 metres east of the bar.

At 1559 hours, 17 of the passengers were transferred to *Kotuku*, which returned them to Kawhia wharf. *Margaret J* connected a towline to *Lady Kawhia* at 1603 hours. Once the weight was taken off the lines, the anchors were pulled onboard and the tow back towards Kawhia commenced at 1613 hours.

At approximately 1700 hours, *Lady Kawhia* arrived safely at Kawhia where the three remaining passengers were disembarked.



Main Anchor



Spare Anchor

FINDINGS

Although known as *Lady Kawhia*, at the time of the incident the vessel was still officially registered as *Marie II*. The Maritime Safety Authority has not received a Carving Note from the owners in regard to its new name.

When the anchors were recovered, it was found that they were fouled on a large commercial fishing net and in its associated traces. The anchors would not hold because of this.

The engine stopped because the fuel filters and fuel lines were blocked by contaminates. The contamination resembled a thick black tar like substance. The diesel fuel had been bunkered from the fuel tank on Kawhia wharf as normal. *Lady Kawhia* has two fuel tanks each of 500-litre capacity. The fuel lines from each tank join at a 'T' before forming a common line leading to two fuel filters.

Mobil supplies the fuel at Kawhia wharf. Kawhia Motors Ltd owns the tank.

The fuel tank at the wharf was at a low level. Shortly after bunkering his vessel, the Skipper noted that a road tanker refilled the tank.

The Skipper bunkered 200 litres of fuel from the tank at his last bunkering operation. *Lady Kawhia's* engine had been operated for approximately eight hours since the last fuel was bunkered without incident. The table below details all of *Lady Kawhia's* fuel purchases from the Kawhia wharf pump since it first arrived in Kawhia.

27/1/04	201 litres
7/2/04	228 litres
22/3/04	303 litres
3/11/04	201 litres
16/11/04	500 litres

There is a seven and a half month period between March and November when no fuel was bunkered.

No other local vessels have reported fuel contamination. There is only one marine fuel pump in Kawhia. It supplies Mobil diesel. The wharf's tank is three years old and is of 4500 litres capacity. It is filled on average once a week at which time it is dipped and visually checked. The fuel pump is fitted with a very fine micron filter.

Lady Kawhia's engine was reconditioned approximately 900 hours prior to the incident.

In eleven months of owning *Lady Kawhia*, the Skipper had not experienced any previous fuel contamination.

The *Lady Kawhia's* engineer stated that fuel filters were almost due for changing after having been in use for nearly 200 hours.

Lady Kawhia's engine burns approximately six litres of diesel per hour at a service speed of 8.5 knots.

The weather at the time of the incident was calm. The sea was smooth and there was a very low swell. It was half tide on the ebb and the current was between 2 and 4 knots.

The source of the fuel contamination is unknown, but in the opinion of the MSA, it is unlikely to have originated from the wharf fuel tank. It is possible that sediment in the vessels fuel tanks was disturbed when the vessel was bunkered on 3/11/04.

There is also a remote possibility that the fuel onboard *Lady Kawhia* may have been contaminated in an act of sabotage.

SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the incident, the fuel lines have been unblocked and the filters replaced. The fuel in the tanks has been discarded and the tanks have been cleaned out. The engine has been run for approximately 30 hours without incident and there have been no further signs of fuel contamination.

The Skipper and engineer have been bleeding off approximately five litres of fuel from the bottom of the tanks after each bunkering operation. They are also considering fitting a lock to the fuel filler cap to prevent any possible sabotage of the fuel when the vessel is unattended.