

THE LANCHESTER GUN COMPANY

Tel: 01763 248708 Fax: 01763 243271

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT BY THE LANCHESTER GUN CO ON THE POSSIBILITY OF SHELL DAMAGE TO THE FISHING VESSEL WESTERN, (PORT SIDE)

This report follows that dated 24th June, following receipt by me, from the Justisdepartementet Kommissjon into the sinking of the Western, of a second video giving further details of the hole in the port side of the vessel. The Commission have asked me to give explicit information, based on the second video, on the port side hole, since this was only partly covered in my earlier report, and I am asked to comment on whether this hole could be caused by high speed missiles or by fabrication (e.g. drain holes).

The attached photograph 1, (lower picture) shows the portside hole in its original state; this is taken from the 2007 video, since the 1981 black-and-white video is not sufficiently clearly focused to give much help (photograph 3). Photograph 1 shows an approximately circular hole, with a large half-moon-shaped whitish area below it. This area was gradually poked with a 16mm metal rod by the submersible, and the white parts fell away. I am not a marine archaeologist, and I do not know the effect that nearly thirty years under water will have on aluminium sheet, so it is not possible for me to say whether this white half-moon is corroded metal or barnacles.

I examined this hole with care, (from the outside only, of course) and I did not find any of the characteristic entry marks that shells make in this material. There was no sign of the extruded crown-shaped ring that surrounds a shell entry-hole, and there are no signs of rifling grooves on the edges of the hole (to show what I mean here, please see the lower hole in photograph 6 in my main report).

All the above is important because much can be learnt from the shape of the hole. Once the marine growth has been removed, it can be seen, as outlined in black ink on photograph 4 (lower picture) that the original hole was in fact elliptical in shape, and there is some evidence that the top side is protruding slightly and the bottom side pushed back. An elliptical hole is evidence that whatever caused the hole entered at an angle, and it appears that in this case the entry was made from below at an angle of approximately thirty degrees from the vertical; this is best shown by photograph 2. An entry from below would obviously rule out shell damage, and the fact that the hole was not originally perfectly circular would seem to rule out deliberate fabrication. I therefore conclude, from the evidence so far available to me, that this hole can only have been caused by static penetration by some object unknown.

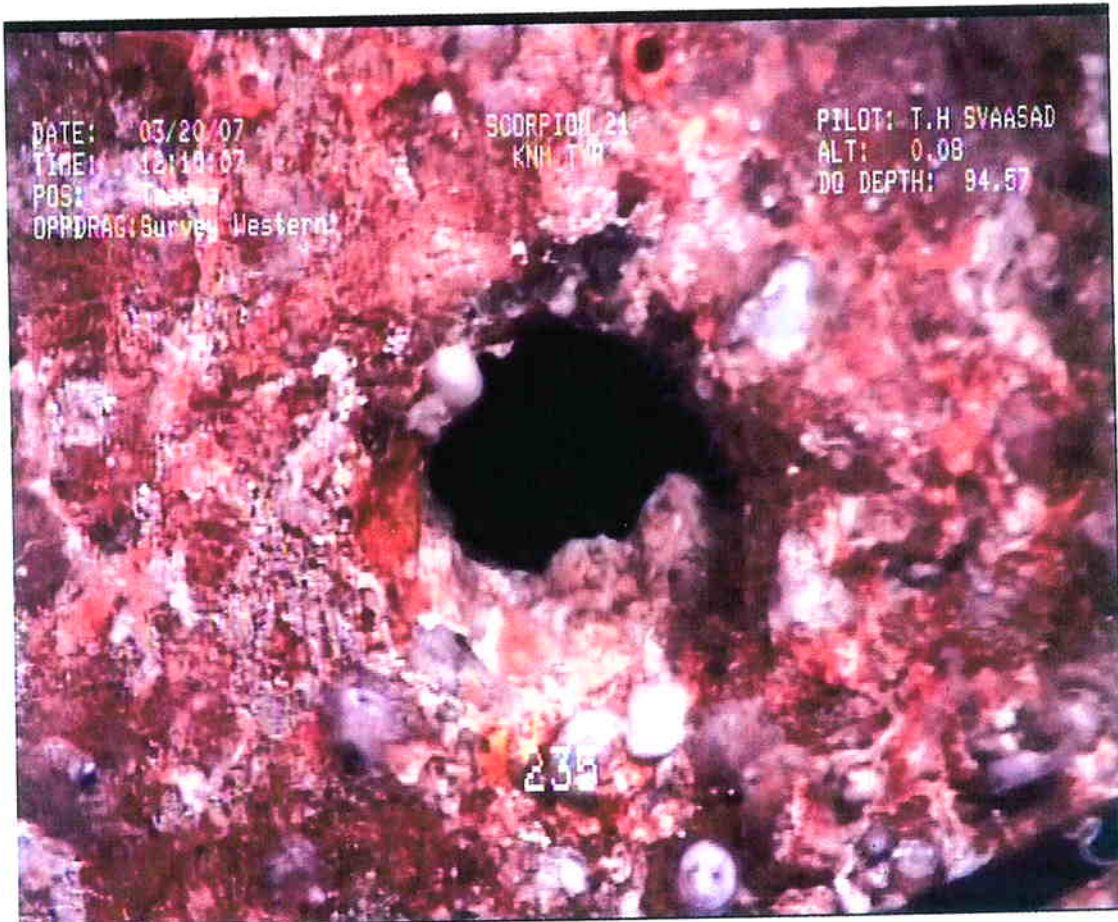
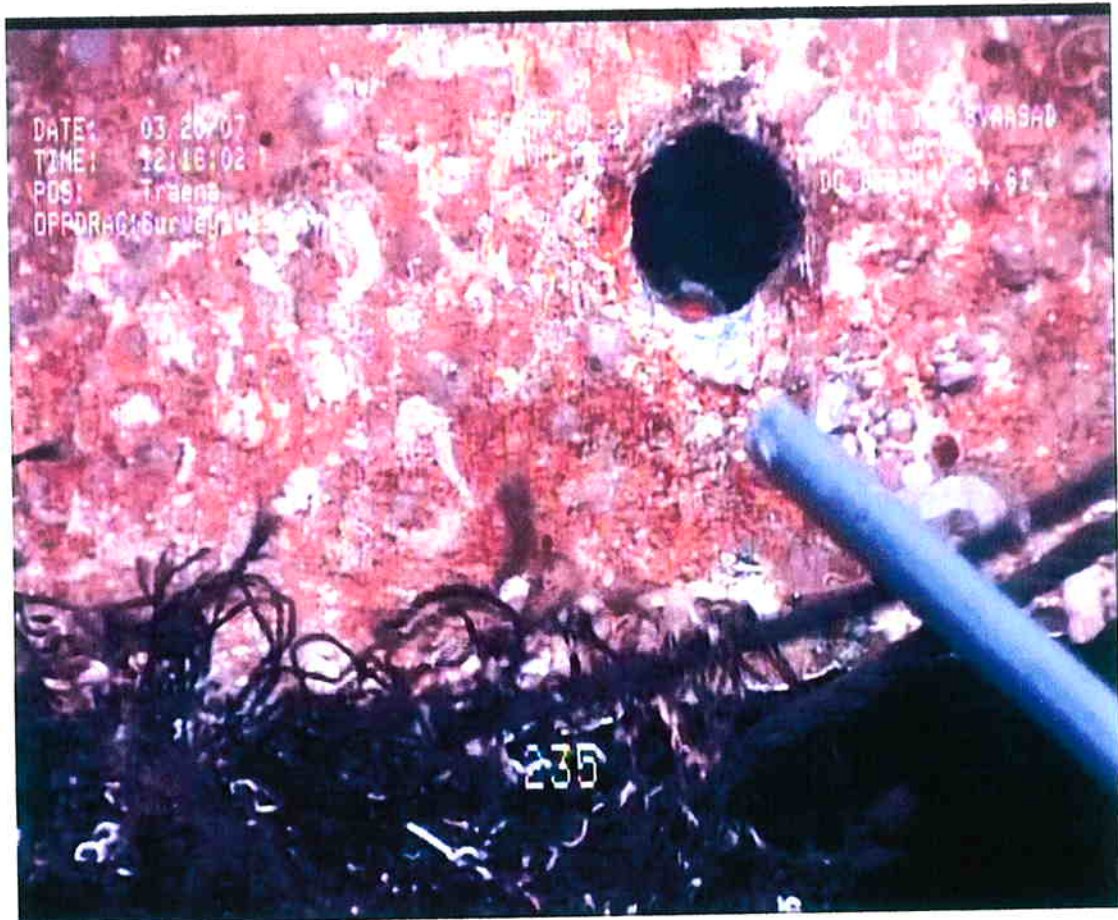
In both this supplementary report and my earlier one, I must emphasise that much more information is available (about what caused a hole in metal sheet) from the inside of the hole rather than the outside. Unfortunately, the presence of a great deal of netting rendered it impossible to take any pictures of the inside of the portside hole, and therefore my comments on the portside hole will always be on the basis of insufficient information. For this reason, although I have said that I can be 99%

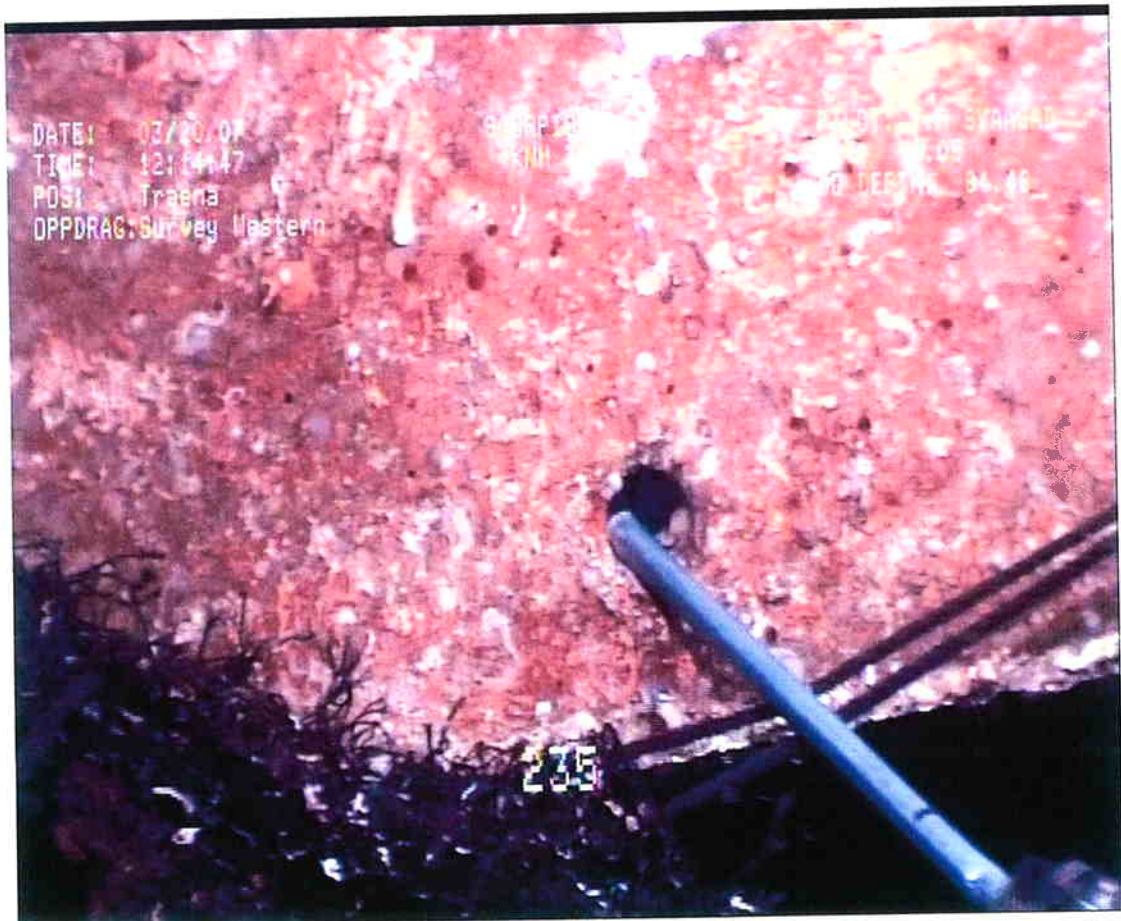
certain that I am correct as regards the starboard hole, I can only be at best 75% certain as regards the portside one.

Should it ever be decided that the vessel is to be raised, then I should be able to give a conclusive answer, but only if the raising does not cause significant damage and if the effects of so many years under water have not altered the evidence (and also providing that nothing has damaged or affected the interior of the portside hole that we have yet to see).

Giles Whittome 22. vi. 07

G.H. WHITTOME





14:41 20/03/81 02:33:59 0003

Dive No. 00000000

