

## 2. History of ETV Provision (1994 to 2010)

The tanker BRAER ran aground on 5 January 1993 spilling its cargo of nearly 85,000 tonnes of crude oil and heavy fuel oil. This led to a comprehensive review of measures to protect the United Kingdom coastline from the threat of pollution from ships. Lord Donaldson of Lymington and two experienced Assessors carried out the review. Their report, **“Safer Ships, Cleaner Seas”** made 103 recommendations and was published in May 1994.

Recommendation 85 called on the Government to set up a system to ensure tugs with adequate salvage capacity are available at key points around UK shores. Lord Donaldson recognised the contraction of the salvage industry and the lack of specific stationed Salvage Tugs at key geographical locations around Europe. Because of this contraction, several countries have pursued a policy of government-funded tugs for more than 30 years.

A Study Team led by Captain CPR Belton was established in the Coastguard Headquarters in Southampton to undertake the task in late August 1994.

### **The Interim solution – Introduction of Dover and Minches ETV**

Recommendation 85(m) declared that: **“there should be interim arrangements during the winter months [1994-95] until the new system is fully operational and that the UK Government should be prepared to bear the full cost of such arrangements”**.

The Study Team’s remit was to **“make costed proposals for such arrangements which might be put in place to provide emergency towing cover for the winter of 1994/95”**. This became known as the Interim Solution or Emergency Towing Vessel Trial. The Study Team examined Lord Donaldson’s assessment that Dover and the Minches should take priority over all other areas [85(g), and established from where tugs could be obtained and the likely costs. The recommendation was accepted and two vessels were chartered from 17 December 1994 until 16 April 1995 to cover the Dover and Minches areas.

In May 1995 the Study Team (Belton Report) concluded that ETV cover should be provided throughout the year in the Primary Danger Areas of DOVER, HEBRIDES (Minches) and the SOUTH WEST APPROACHES; and for the winter only (1 October – 31 March) in the Secondary Danger Areas of FAIR ISLE and NORTH CHANNEL.

### **South West Approaches ETV**

Following the SEA EMPRESS incident off Milford Haven between 15 and 21 February 1996, Ministers approved a third ETV, again on a trial period for the winter period of 1996/97, to be positioned to provide cover in the Western Approaches.

The subsequent trial report submitted to Ministers in 1997 recommended that Government-funded ETV’s had proved their worth, and in 1997 arrangements were made to provide ETV cover, but for the 6 month winter period only, at the above 3 locations for a longer term.

## Fair Isle (Northern Isles)

In the winter of 1999, a fourth ETV, positioned to provide cover for the Northern Isles, (Shetland, Orkney and Fair Isle Channel), was chartered, following recommendations made by the Marine Accident Investigation Branch after investigation into the loss of the GREEN LILY on the 19 November 1997.

[Recommendation 4.1: The Director of Logistics and Maritime Transport of the Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions is recommended to:

**“Review previous decisions not to provide the recommended ETV cover in “Fair Isle” and re-examine the need for emergency towing cover in the area”.**

## Shared ETV with France

Whilst France was one of the first countries to acquire Government-funded ETVs following the AMOCO CADIZ incident in 1978, now protecting the Brittany and Normandy coastlines, there was always steadfast refusal to co-operate with the UK for the joint provision of an ETV to protect the Dover Strait. However, the unfortunate sinking of the ERIKA in 1999 off the coast line of Brittany, causing one of the greatest environmental disasters in the world from her cargo of 30,000 tonnes of fuel oil provided the catalyst for a joint initiative and the existing jointly-managed and funding arrangements for this provision commenced on 1 April 2000.

In January 2001 the Maritime and Coastguard Agency published the report “A Review of Emergency Towing Vessel (ETV) Provision Around The Coast Of The United Kingdom”. The Report recommended that ETV cover in the existing geographical locations: Dover Strait, The Minches, South West Approaches and Fair Isle, should be provided on a **“Year – round”** basis rather than being seasonal. It also recommended that the UK should **enter into a dialogue for a sharing arrangement with the Irish for an ETV in the Irish Sea** area in a partnership arrangement **dependant** upon the Irish establishing an ETV on their East Coast and a suitable Operating Agreement being put in place with the MCA.

In October 2001 a Contract for ETV provision was awarded to Klyne Tugs Ltd on an 8 year term with an option to extend the Contract for a further 2 years by agreement. In 2009 the Contract was extended for a further 2 years.