

Oil Spill Response in the United Kingdom



Nautical Institute Conference
Novotel Southampton



UK history

- 💧 Number of significant spills over years
 - Torrey Canyon
 - Esso Bernicia
 - Tarpenbek
 - Eleni V
 - Braer
 - Sea Empress
- 💧 Events cause events

Torrey Canyon

- 💧 First major incident
- 💧 Lack of preparedness
 - Plans
 - Techniques
 - Technology
- 💧 Aftermath
 - Compensation system
 - Investment in R & D



UK philosophy of response

An aerial photograph of a large white oil tanker ship at sea. The ship is viewed from an elevated angle, showing its four propellers and wings. A large, dark, irregular spill of oil is visible in the water to the left of the ship, with a yellow containment boom partially visible. The background is a dark, choppy sea under a bright sky.

- First option
 - If practicable leave alone
 - Allow natural dispersion
 - Oil types
 - Weather
- Second option
 - Aerial dispersant application
- Contain & recover
 - Weather
 - Logistics
- Shoreline clean up

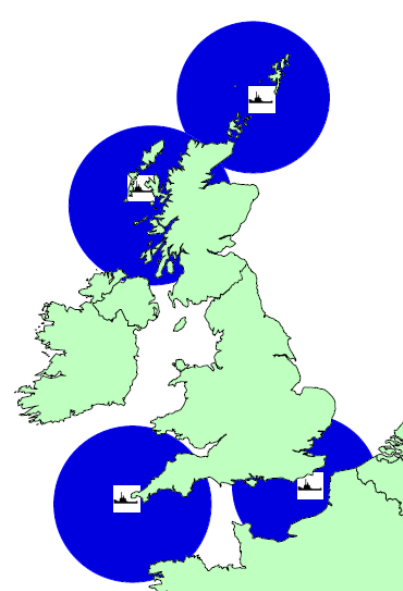
Braer

- 💧 Grounding of Shetland
- 💧 Salvage arrangements
- 💧 82,000 tonnes Gulfaks crude
 - Very light oil
 - Sever weather
- 💧 Limited impact from oil
 - Evaporation
 - Natural dispersion
- 💧 Fisheries impact
 - Salmon farms
 - Pelagic Fisheries



ETV Locations

ETV LOCATIONS



MCA contracted ETVs

North Isles

Minch

SW Approaches

Dover Straits



Milford haven

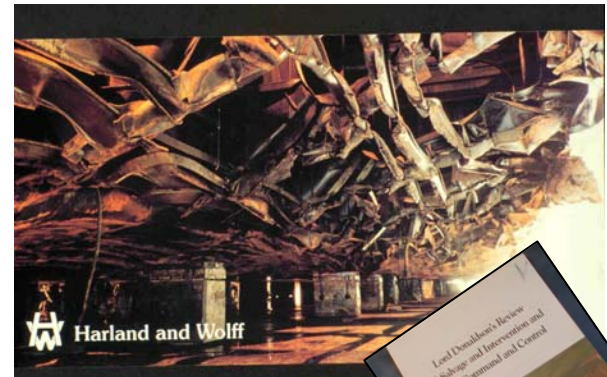
💧 Borga

- Vessel Grounded in Haven
- No oil loss
- 8,000 tones oil lightered
- Ship re-floated
- WHAT IF?



💧 Sea Empress

- Vessel grounded in entrance
 - Initial loss 3,000 tons
 - Final loss 72000 tons
- Issue of salvage command and control



Command and control



Maritime Salvage & Intervention

One person to act as representative of Secretary of State

Cannot choose to ignore a situation

Free to act without recourse to higher authority

Ultimate voice

Decisive voice

Ultimate control

Control not Command

“Back or sack”

Role in action ~ Napoli

🔹 Napoli

- Vessel in imminent danger of loss
- Assess options for action
- Situation changing constantly
- Decision on where to take vessel based on
 - Safety
 - Environment
 - Ability to deal with wreck
 - Ability to deal with cargo
 - Infrastructure
- Limited oil loss from vessel

Summary

- 💧 Response arrangements have evolved over time
- 💧 Lesson learned drive policy and practice
- 💧 Prevention is better than cure
- 💧 UK has been fortunate it has not experienced serious heavy oil spill similar to Erika or Prestige