

PORT OF LONDON AUTHORITY

THAMES NAVIGATION SERVICE

BOWBELLE/MARCHIONESS COLLISION 20.08.89

EXTRACT OF VHF CHANNEL 14 TAPE FROM WOOLWICH RADIO

COPY NUMBER 3

THAMES NAVIGATION SERVICE
TAPE EXTRACT VHF CHANNEL 14 AT WOOLWICH RADIO

DATE: 20TH August 1989

TIME	SHIP/STATION	MESSAGE
01 02 48	Bowbelle	Woolwich
01 02 53	Woolwich	Bowbelle
	Bowbelle	Yea just singling up at Metro Greenham Nine Elms draft 3 decimal 2 exemption 230 - Over
	Woolwich	Bowbelle Roger thank you.
	Bowbelle	And we will be back early hours of Monday morning - Over.
	Woolwich	Roger - Thank you.
01 03 26	Woolwich	All ships navigational information the Bowbelle singling up from Metro Greenham Nine Elms, and soon to be proceeding outwards through bridges.
01 14 18	Woolwich	All ships, All ships, Woolwich Radio with the river broadcast for 0115. Tide at Woolwich 3.3 metres above chart datum. The Thames Barrier echo span navigation in and charlie span for navigation out. Navigational information all vessels to ease down when passing the Dartford Bridge construction site in Long Reach. All vessels pass with caution Albert Bridge where a 30 foot cabin cruiser is aground. Bowbelle at presently outbound through bridges from Metro Greenhams. Motor vessel Bowherald and Arco Axe both approaching Margaretness inbound through the Thames Barrier. Repeating the tide height at Woolwich 3.3 metres above chart datum. End of the river broadcast. Woolwich out.
01 20 16	Bowbelle	Woolwich Radio Vauxhall Bridge outwards.
	Woolwich	Bowbelle Vauxhall Bridge out - Thank you.
01 35 02	Bowbelle	Woolwich Radio Bowbelle approaching Waterloo Bridge outwards.
	Woolwich	Bowbelle Waterloo Bridge out - Thank you.
01 44 39	Woolwich	All ships Woolwich Radio with the river broadcast for 0145 the tide at Woolwich 4.1 metres above chart datum. At the Thames Barrier echo span for navigation in and charlie span out. All vessels to ease down and pass with caution the Dartford Bridge construction site in Long Reach. All vessels pass with caution Albert Bridge where a 30 foot cabin cruiser is aground. Navigation information the Bowherald presently manoeuvring to berth at Orchard Wharf. The Arco Axe soon to be manoeuvring to berth at Peruvian. The Bowbelle at presently outward bound through bridges and repeating the tide at Woolwich 4.1m above chart datum. End of river broadcast Woolwich out.

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01 46 11	Unknown Vessel.	Wapping Police, Wapping Police, emergency. Pleasure boat is sunk Cannon Street Railway Bridge all emergency aid please.
01 46 27	Woolwich	Thames Police Wapping - Woolwich.
01 46 31	Thames Police Wapping	We only heard part of that can you give me the rest.
	Woolwich	Yea pleasure boat sunk at Battersea Road Bridge it was very muffled, but that's what I got here.
01 46 42	Unknown Vessel	(unintelligible) Marchioness is sunk, Bowbelle just sunk her.
01 46 48	Woolwich	Thames Police Wapping - Marchioness has sunk understand the message.
01 46 54	Thames Police Wapping	Yes we did get that we'll get everybody available that we can.
01 46 59	Woolwich	Roger.
01 47 02	Unknown Vessel	Royal Princess your position over much as I can sir.
01 47 21	Royal Princess	My position is Waterloo Bridge outward bound may I assist in the Mayday.
01 47 27	Woolwich	Yes Royal Princess we have got a garbled message we believe it is Battersea Bridge can somebody confirm.
01 47 44	Unknown Vessel	I believe its Cannon Street Sir its the Bowbelle hit him outward bound so it will be at Cannon Street.
01 47 51	Woolwich	Yes Roger Bowbelle we have a Mayday we believe its in the region of Battersea Bridge the Marchioness has sunk.
01 48 01	Bowbelle	Woolwich Cannon Street, Cannon Street Bridge here, we're in the centre arch of Cannon Street now Sir and its this pleasure boat we didn't see sir.
01 48 13	Woolwich	Yes Roger you struck the pleasure boat is that correct Bowbelle.
01 48 20	Royal Princess	Waterloo Bridge outward bound full speed to assist in the Mayday.
01 48 25	Woolwich	Yes Roger Roger.
01 49 09	Bowbelle	Woolwich Radio.
	Woolwich	Bowbelle.

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	Bowbelle	Yes Sir I have to get underway and proceed out through bridges eh I believe I have struck a pleasure craft it has sunk. I am getting clear of the bridges now um I was distracted by flashing lights from another pleasure craft um my vessel was proceeding outward bound just approaching Cannon Street Bridge and I just lost steerage um and I dont know after that, I cannot say anything else Sir - over.
01 49 52	Woolwich	Yes Bowbelle can you just confirm there were people on the pleasure boat.
01 50 01	Bowbelle	Yes Sir there were the pleasure craft was full. The Royal Princess I believe and the Hurlingham are proceeding to its assistance now.
01 50 12	Woolwich	Yes Roger Bowbelle understood.
01 50 18	Unintelligible	conversation as two vessels speaking together then
	Unknown Vessel	Southwark Bridge outward bound do believe 125 persons on board Sir, I do believe that's a rough estimate, Sir.
01 50 27	Woolwich	Yes understood 125 people on board.
01 50 31	T.P.6.	I didnt get any of that message could you is it something that concerns us over.
	Woolwich	All available boats please proceed Cannon Street Railway Bridge the Bowbelle has struck the pleasure cruiser Marchioness believed 125 people on board and reported Marchioness sinking.
01 50 55	T.P. 6	Right received.
01 52 04	Unknown Vessel	Their just outside St. Pauls now.
01 54 02	Thames Police Wapping	Woolwich have we got a definite location for this incident we are getting confused reports over.
01 54 08	Unknown Vessel	Unintelligible then:- Railway Bridge, groups some of them have got liferafts some of them haven't. Drifting up towards Blackfriars rail
01 54 19	Thames Police Wapping	Blackfriars - Thank you.
01 54 30	Unknown Vessel	Unintelligible then:- A couple of them driftwood kedge cases outside St. Pauls we'll go and get them don't worry.
01 55 16	T.P.106	Woolwich this is a full emergency get men here if you can.

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	Woolwich	Roger 106 what else will you require any ambulances anywhere and where would people be landing.
	T.P.106	Pleasure vessels in the area assist in rescuing people from the water from the wreckage please that's what we want first of all; any vessels whatsoever to stop and assist.
01 55 48	Woolwich	Roger 106 vessels are turning round and coming in to that vicinity all vessels are heading for your way.
01 55 55	T.P.106	Yes received we have numerous people in the water in the flotsam 106 out.
01 56 10	Woolwich	PAN PAN PAN, PAN PAN PAN, PAN PAN PAN, PAN PAN PAN, this is Woolwich Radio with PAN message. All vessels are requested to go to the vicinity of Cannon St. and Blackfriars Rail where people are in the water. Say again all vessels are requested to proceed to Cannon St. and Blackfriars Rail where people are in the water this Woolwich Radio out.
01 57 10	Woolwich	London Pheonix, London Pheonix (No reply)
01 57 14	Royal Princes	Hurlingham, Hurlingham 13
	Unknown	What channel ?? 13
01 59 59	Bowbelle	Woolwich yes I have just cleared Tower Bridge I expect I will have to anchor will Long Reach be suitable for the necessary enquiries and police. over.
	Woolwich	Yes Bowbelle if you proceed down to Long Reach and find a suitable anchorage there.
02 00 28	Bowbelle	Roger many thanks.
02 00 58	Swanage Queen	Woolwich I have just come away from the Tower I dont know whether we will be able to do any good if we come up there we are sort of quite big and we've got no sort of facilities for getting anybody on board she's pretty high. Have they got enough boats up there.
02 01 19	Woolwich	We have got all boats that can get up there at the moment I don't think any boats would be too, they would be short of any at the moment if you could lend a hand. We have also had another report with the possibility of another boat was sinking somewhere close to the Chelsea Embankment with 21 people on board, from the Fire Brigade and Scotland Yard, but if you could proceed and get as

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		close as you can you might be able to help.
02 01 49	Swanage Queen	I don't want to go ploughing up through there and running down myself I got no room to turn you see.
02 01 47	Woolwich	Yea Roger well just standby where you are in case you're needed, don't proceed up if you think its too dangerous, but just stay where you are.
02 01 56	Swanage Queen	O.K. I'll hang about just above the Tower then.
02 02 30	T.P.6	To Woolwich we're picking up loads of people in the water here the driftwood from the wreckage is now passing where the old Chrysanthemum berthed so people could be in the river as high as that at the moment.
02 02 51	Woolwich	Roger T.P.6 understood driftwood is down to Chrysanthemum.
02 02 58	Royal Princess	Thames Police boat in charge of the operation this is the Royal Princess taking a swing at St. Pauls and heading up.
02 03 08	Woolwich	T.P.6.
	T.P.6	Woolwich yes go ahead.
	Woolwich	I have just been talking to the Fire Brigade they advise me they have no boats available to come to help. I have also received a report from New Scotland Yard that another boat was in trouble somewhere close to the Chelsea Embankment with 21 people on board can you confirm one way or the other.
02 03 27	T.P.6	Not heard anything about that M.P. sorry Woolwich we have got about 150 people in the water down heré we are trying to deal with over.
02 03 36	Woolwich	Yea Roger understood.
02 03 48	Unknown Station	Unintelligible then:- People any ambulances showing up.
02 03 51	T.P.6	Yea we asked them to come to Waterloo Pier Police Station being the nearest station - over.
02 03 58	Hurlingham	Hello Hurlingham on their way there now.
02 04 06	T.P.4	Woolwich Radio T.P.4 Re this incident will you ask any vessel picking up people to take them to Waterloo Pier Police Station where ambulances will meet up there - over.
02 04 28	Woolwich	Roger T.P.4.

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02 04 35	Woolwich	All ships Woolwich Radio with information, all vessels who are picking up passengers out of the water are to take them to Waterloo Police Pier, I say again, all passengers are to be taken to Waterloo Police Pier where ambulances are waiting Woolwich out.
02 05 00	T.P.106	Persons with the sighting repeat the location is it Blackfriars.
02 05 05	Hurlingham	Hurlingham I can't chuck round because I am on the Hurlingham.
02 05 13	T.P.106	Blackfriars, Blackfriars.
02 05 19	Unknown Police Boat	Yea Hurlingham whereabouts over.
02 05 22	Hurlingham	On the north shore Sir about the second arch.
	Unknown Police Boat	O.K. Skipper
02 08 43	T.P.6	Hurlingham, Hurlingham. over (No reply).
02 15 22	Bowbelle	Woolwich yes further to the incident when I stopped to try and get clear I was in impact with Cannon Street Bridge and my port navigation light is inoperative. over
02 15 45	Woolwich	Roger Bowbelle thank you
02 15 50	Woolwich	All ships Woolwich Radio broadcast for 0215 tidal information North Woolwich 5 point correction, N. Woolwich 4.9 metres above chart datum. Navigation information regarding the sinking there are people in the water possibly as high as the Chrysanthemum. The driftwood from the Marchioness is now above the Chrysanthemum, vessels are requested to search the upper parts as well and all people who are taken out of the water are to be taken to Waterloo Police Pier where ambulances are waiting. I say all people taken out of the water are to be landed at Waterloo Police Pier. Repeating the tide 4.9 m. a.c.d. End of the broadcast Woolwich out.
02 18 24	T.P.4	Woolwich over (No reply)
02 18 32	London Phoenix	To Woolwich we're now at Charing Cross and searching downstream from Charing Cross, Charing Cross over.
02 18 40	Woolwich	London Phoenix I understand you are mobile now is that correct.
	London Phoenix	Say again Woolwich.

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	Woolwich	You are afloat now and mobile.
	London Phoenix	Yes we are on scene on scene Charing Cross, proceeding downstream in search over.
	Woolwich	Roger T.P.6 appears to be co-ordinating the search.
	London Phoenix	Received.
02 19 01	T.P.6	Unit from T.P.6 through Blackfriars Bridge now there is another police boat ahead of us I don't know what it is. It doesn't look like there is anybody left up here, they must have all gone through Blackfriars so we are heading down now and sweeping down river. over.
02 19 39	London Phoenix	Dory Go ahead (No reply nothing heard).
	London Phoenix	Say again (Nothing heard).
	London Phoenix	Which bridge north shore Waterloo received.
02 20 10	London Phoenix	Waterloo Bridge.
02 20 13	T.P.4	To Woolwich Yes I have had a word with the skipper it might be prudent to close No. 2 arch Cannon Street and Southwark Bridges we have estimated the wreckage is probably somewhere down there it is probably no problem at the moment but later on there might become. over.
	Woolwich	Roger.
02 21 01	Woolwich	All ships navigational information No.2 arch Cannon Street and Southward Bridges are closed to navigation, I say again vessels must not use No. 2 arch Cannon Street and Southwark railway bridges because of the possible wreckage Woolwich out.
02 21 18	Swanage Queen	Woolwich I am going up through Cannon Street now.
	Woolwich	Roger.
02 21 38	Woolwich	Bowbelle, Bowbelle (No reply).
02 21 47	T.P.4	Hurlingham, Hurlingham (No reply).
02 21 54	Woolwich	Bowbelle, Bowbelle, (No reply).
02 21 57	T.P.4	Hurlingham, Hurlingha, (No reply)

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02 22 04	Unknown Vessel	He is alongside Waterloo
02 22 09	Bowbelle	Woolwich
	Woolwich	Yea Bowbelle would you proceed on to Gravesend and anchor at Gravesend please.
	Bowbelle	Yes I will proceed to anchor at Higham Bight if that's alright sir.
02 23 53	T.P. Wapping	Any Thames unit from Thames Police Wapping. Any Thames unit receiving from Thames Wapping.
02 24 42	T.P.4	(Muffled message)
02 24 48	Unknown Vessel	Still alongside Waterloo.
02 25 09	T.P. Wapping	Woolwich yea can you give me any idea how many pleasure craft other than ones that are involved picking up casualties. We are trying to get a picture of how many boats are actually out there and who's picked up who. over.
02 25 30	Woolwich	Um. T.P.W. Woolwich I am afraid we can't from here your T.P.4 is in the vicinity he may have a better idea how many vessels are out there.
	T.P. Wapping	Yea I am not having much luck contacting anybody at the moment thank you.
02 25 44	T.P.Wapping	T.P.4 (No reply)
02 25 45	Royal Princess	Thames Police Wapping.
	T.P. Wapping	Yes Royal Princess are there any other boats other than yourself civilian craft involved in this operation. over.
02 25 58	Royal Princess	Hurlingham is involved but he picked up several survivors at St. Paul's he is now alongside at Waterloo. I am in the vicinity of Waterloo at the moment searching down the north side and expect them to come up with the flood into the Bight um but there's a few boats around plenty of police boats about London Phoenix their little dory boat and I believe the Swanage Queen is also looking out now she is just coming up through the bridges.
02 26 30	T.P. Wapping	Much obliged are all the casualties being landed by boats like yourself at Waterloo can you tell me.
02 26 38	Royal Princess	Affirmative on that I picked none up myself but because of the situation some of them are in I

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		couldn't put the boat there, but I got lifebelts to them, um then the police boats picked them all up um I am now just searching very slow ahead down the north shore. I am going to take a swing shortly and go up through Charing Cross just in case any have slipped by.
02 27 00	T.P. Wapping	Thanks very much, much obliged.
02 27 08	Woolwich	To Bowbelle:- Will you proceed on now to Gallions and anchor in Gallions please.
	Bowbelle	Anchor in Gallions will do.
02 28 53	Swanage Queen	To Woolwich:- Just taking Waterloo now going up through Charing Cross and swing and then I shall work down slow.
	Woolwich	Yes Roger. Swanage Queen any update on the situation approximately the amount of survivors taken from the water.
	Swanage Queen	Well we heard nothing at all. er we heard that somebody got two or three out I understood but that's about all I could say I have seen no wreckage on the way through anyway.
	Woolwich	Yes Roger. Swanage Queen
02 31 33	T.P.6 to Woolwich	Driftwood from the wreckage is now approaching Vauxhall Bridge if we could have more vessels up this end of the river we might find some more people over.
02 31 47	Woolwich	Roger we'll put a broadcast out T.P.6 thank you.
02 31 55	Woolwich Broadcast	All vessels searching this Woolwich Radio, latest update wreckage has now been sighted in the vicinity of Vauxhall Bridge, could vessels proceed up to Vauxhall Bridge possibility of people still in the water. Say again vessels proceed up to Vauxhall Bridge to continue the search. Woolwich out.
02 32 50	Ldn Phoenix to Woolwich	We have now come about at Waterloo and searching upstream over.
	Woolwich	Roger. London Phoenix thank you did you receive the last reference wreckage sighted up at Vauxhall
02 33 02	Ldn Phoenix	Affirmative.
02 34 56	Thames Patrol to Woolwich	Manned up Ravensbourne position please
02 35 03	Woolwich	Roger Ravensbourne will you proceed on best possible speed meet Capt.Bull/Hall at Tower Pier.

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	Thames Patrol	Roger. on my way.
02 35 15	Woolwich	For your information there are any number of police boats, approximately five pleasure craft picking people out of the water eh. the wreckage from the boat has been reported now up as far as Vauxhall Bridge.
02 35 31	Thames Patrol	Understood. thank you.
02 35 35	Swanage Queen	Fire Rescue (No reply)
02 36 26	Swanage Queen to Woolwich	Proceed back down now because we are going to get lumbered with the height otherwise. We will come down nice and slow and take the centre arches.
02 36 38	Woolwich	Roger. Swanage Queen understood thank you.
02 36 48	Bowbelle	Woolwich Radio Bowbelle Victoria Deep Water outwards permission for the Barrier please.
02 36 54	Woolwich	Roger Bowbelle take span delta, span delta.
02 36 58	Bowbelle	Delta span thank you.
02 37 28	T.P.6	All Thames units, all Thames units, from T.P.6 receiving we are going to go through Nine Elms Reach and then turn round and make our way back downriver, if we could all get together, sweep it together, we might be more successful over.
02 37 46	Royal Princess	T.P.6 I am in the vicinity of Waterloo Bridge inward bound I am going to alongside Westminster Pier my passengers have been asked to be landed owing to most of them are upset about the situation, then I'll once I have got them off I'll come up and assist in sweeping.
02 38 01	Ldn Phoenix	T.P.6 now just coming up to London Bridge and will be with you soon. over.
02 39 23	T.P.4	Hurlingham, Hurlingham T.P.4 (No reply)
02 42 44	Ldn Phoenix	Any Thames mobile over
	T.P.6	Receiving
02 42 50	Ldn Phoenix	Thames 3 we have recovered a body between the bridges Vauxhall and Lambeth north side over.
02 42 59	T.P.6	Yea received. any other Thames Police boats we are coming back up from Battersea Power Station. Thames 3, Thames 69, if you can come down to us we'll sweep downriver together. over.
02 47 42	Woolwich River B'cast	Woolwich Broadcast for 0245. Tide N. Woolwich 5.6m A.C.D. Navigation information. The debris from