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NAUTILUS
Federation
A Federation of Maritime Professionals

the global seafarer

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'Industry must act on emission risks'

Study reveals that seafarers suffer from the highest occupational rates of chronic lung disease

→ Nautilus has expressed concern about new research which reveals that seafarers are the workers with the highest risk of contracting chronic lung disease.

A study published last month shows that seafarers have more than double to normal occupational rate of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) — a condition that is blamed for 25,000 deaths in the UK every year.

COPD — an umbrella term for chronic bronchitis, emphysema and chronic airways disease — is a lung condition that reduces the ability to breathe properly, and causes symptoms such as shortness of breath, coughs and increased mucus production.

The research, carried out by Imperial College London, suggests that exposure to particulates in ship exhaust emissions and fuels onboard may account for the high rates of COPD among seafarers. The next stage of the study — funded by the Health & Safety Executive and the large-



Ships' smoke can damage your health, researchers are warning

est ever undertaken in Europe — will examine the potential causes more closely.

Lead researcher Dr Sara De Matteis commented: 'This study has shed more light on the specific occupations associated with an increased risk of COPD in the UK general population. Some of

them were already known, such as coal miners, but others are new findings — such as seafarers or cleaners.'

The research team analysed more than 350 occupations and the health records of more than half a million people aged between 40 and 69. They found

the rate of COPD among seafarers to be 2.64 times the average — higher than coal miners, industrial cleaners, roofers and tilers.

Researchers said the many of the people in the study had been exposed to the risks decades before industrial standards and regulations introduced protection from hazardous substances — but they warned that more must be done to monitor and minimise levels of exposure in high-risk occupations like seafaring.

Dr Lisa Davies, chair of the British Thoracic Society executive committee, said workplaces have the key role in monitoring and promoting better lung health. This may include offering lung function testing, minimising exposure to chemicals and also cigarette smoking policies.

'The occupations highlighted in this report must take the issue onboard quickly and strengthen their procedures as appropriate,' she added.

Another study published last month also warned of health hazards associated with ship emissions. Research produced by Lund University in Sweden estimated that nanoparticles — including soot particles — from shipping in the North Sea and the Baltic contribute to some 10,000 premature deaths a year.

Nautilus senior national secretary Allan Graveson commented: 'This Union has consistently, over recent years, drawn attention to the dangers of SOx, NOx and particulate matter in heavy fuel oil.'

'These findings should be considered alongside the high incidents of cancer in port areas associated with the burning of diesel oil. It is disappointing that ship owners have consistently argued against a change to cleaner fuels on cost grounds, despite the evidence that burning such fuels is injurious to health and costs countries billions.'

Limassol is a popular visit

by Michael Howorth

Operated and managed by Camper & Nicholsons Marinas, in partnership with Francoudi & Stephanou Marinas, Limassol Marina in Cyprus has stepped in to provide an ideal stop-over or winter berth.

Since superyachts first sailed into the marina back in 2013, it has become an increasingly popular visit. After the 75m Oceano-built Anastasia became the largest vessel to enter a marina on the island, some 50 other superyachts have visited or signed long-term berthing agreements — one of the largest being the 119m, A.

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Federation considers joint global support network

Pictured left is a meeting of legal officers and advisers from Nautilus Federation member unions last month, looking at proposals for developing a joint assistance and support network (Jason).

Chaired by Nautilus head of legal services Charles Boyle, the seminar was organised to discuss ways of providing reciprocal support to members involved in incidents around the world, based on the principles laid down in the IMO/ILO Fair Treatment Guidelines and the IMO Casualty Investigation Code.

The Jason initiative also aims to develop a concise and practical legal checklist for seafarers, so that members are aware of their rights and can access advice from local unions if they are caught up in incidents in other countries.

Last month's Council meeting heard that the Nautilus

Federation of like-minded maritime unions from around the world is continuing to expand. A total of 10 unions, plus the three Nautilus national branches, now belong to the global grouping — with the latest member being the Seafarers' Union of Croatia (SPH).

'We have witnessed positive growth and consolidation of the Federation, and it is now a truly global entity with a membership that reaches out far beyond the former Officers' (Merchant Navy) Federation,' said general secretary Mark Dickinson.

He told the meeting that the Federation aims to harness the benefits of working together with similar unions in other parts of the world, providing mutual support and services to members wherever they may be.

Membership now includes unions in countries such as the



United States, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Hong Kong and Belgium.

Mr Dickinson said members of the Federation are presently involved in a number of projects to develop practical initiatives and shared services, working together on a range of legal, industrial and technical issues.

Federation members are collaborating to improve the representation of seafarers at the International Maritime Organisation, he added. Work is also underway to conduct research into shared issues, such as seafarer supply and training incentives and career development opportunities.

NEWS

Guidelines to cut threat of cyber-attacks

Shipowners have published industry-wide guidelines on cutting the risk of maritime cyber-attacks — including a recommendation for special training and awareness programmes for seafarers.

The advice issued by the owners' organisations BIMCO, Intercargo, Intertanko, the International Chamber of Shipping and the Cruise Lines International Association aims to help protect against unauthorised access or malicious attacks on ships' systems and networks.

The guidelines warn shipping companies of the potentially significant safety, environmental and commercial consequences posed by the increasing threat of cyber-attacks.

The document provides advice on how to assess the risk and to implement measures to protect IT and operational technology (OT) infrastructures and connected equipment, how to manage users, and how to guard against data misuse.

It explains the different types of cyber-attack and the stages in which they are carried out. The guidelines highlight the particular need to address the vulnerability of key shipboard systems, including cargo management, bridge, propulsion and machinery management, power control, communications, access control, and passenger services systems.

There is also advice on the secure configuration of network devices, and hardware and software, as well as protecting satellite and radio communications. Guidance on data recovery capability stresses the need for OT systems vital for safe navigation and operation to have back-up systems to enable rapid recovery after a cyber incident.

The guidelines recommend appropriate training for masters, officers and other seafarers and an awareness programme aimed at all crew.

BIMCO secretary general Angus Frew said the advice is based on the latest expert research and will be regularly updated to reflect the changing threats. 'The aim is to provide the shipping industry with clear and comprehensive information on cyber security risks to ships enabling shipowners to take measures to protect against attacks and to deal with the eventuality of cyber incidents,' he added.

Union warning over harassment study

More than 75% of female Danish officers say they have experienced sexual harassment at some stage of their seagoing career.

A new report reveals the scale of the problem faced by female seafarers — detailing cases of unwelcome sexual advances by men, including crew members port officials. The study warns that derogatory attitudes and actions towards women seafarers can make them unhappy and isolated.

The Danish officers' union SL said it will do whatever is needed to support its members facing such problems. Members should always seek help from colleagues and union reps, it

said, and company management have a legal duty to address the matter.

The report formed part of a Master's degree in technical management and was written by Lisbeth Skräe and Uli Heyden. It concluded that it was important to change the general masculine culture on ships, with more information to promote awareness of what constitutes sexual harassment and to enhance the professional standing of women at sea. Owners and their crewing/HR departments should communicate clear lines to end the prevailing culture and not just deal with things on paper, it added.

Fast service vessel for P&O Repasa



P&O Repasa — formed last year after the acquisition of Spanish towage firm Repasa by P&O Maritime — has taken delivery of the fast craft supply vessel Red Eagle, left.

Built in Vietnam, the 50m Damen FCS 5009 vessel will ferry up to 50 personnel and equipment, and supply drinking water and fuel to offshore rigs and platforms from Malabo on Bioko Island, Equatorial Guinea, at speeds of up to 23 knots.

P&O Repasa is intending to expand into fast intervention for the offshore industry in areas including the west coast of Africa and it believes the design of the FCS 5009 will be ideal for operations in the Gulf of Guinea, where sea conditions can vary from long, slow swells to a short chop.

France ordered to re-pay SNCM aid

Union accuses European Court of 'provocation' with subsidy judgment

by Jeff Apter

The European Court has rebuked France for failing to recover €220m 'illicit' state aid given under a public service contract for 'lifeline' ferry services between the French mainland and Corsica.

The money was given to the Mediterranean ferry operator by the Corsican regional authority between 2007 and 2013 to support SNCM services in the high season, and the court determined that it was 'incompatible' with state aid rules and distorted competition with operators such as Corsica Ferries.

In May 2013 the European Commission ordered the aid to be repaid within four months — a decision which France and SNCM fought to have annulled.

France argued that the subsidy was needed to avoid the collapse of the company, with the loss of some 1,500 jobs.

France also claimed that the liquidation of SNCM would result in a new public service contract having to be agreed for the services — posing another threat to the continuity of 'lifeline' services to Corsica.

But the European Court rejected these arguments, accusing France of a failure to fulfil its obligations.

Its judgement stated that Corsica could be supplied by vessels from other companies or by air if SNCM went bust — even if there was a long-term blockade in protest at the situation. 'The court considers that it was not absolutely impossible for France to recover the aid,' it added.

No further appeal is possible and the European Commission, which has ordered SNCM to repay after the court's first ruling, could impose fines on France if it does not execute the order.

A separate EC demand to recuperate a further €220m of subsidy paid during SNCM's privatisation in 2006 is still pending but has not yet been reactivated.

Jean-Philippe Chateil, general secretary of the officers' union FOMM-CGT, said that while the court's decision was not unexpected, it was published to coincide with SNCM's summer season — when it services are expected to do well.

He said the timing appeared to be a provocation and the unions would continue to press the government to consider the demands as null and void.

SNCM went into receivership in November 2014, but attempts to find a new owner have been delayed as a result of a decision by the commercial court in Marseilles to reject the three bids submitted and to order a new tender for the operations.

Unions had opposed all three proposed takeover packages. But they called off planned strike action when the Marseilles court agreed with the SNCM works council's view that none of the offers was acceptable and ordered the administrators to organise a further tender.

Consideration of any new offers has been put back to 25 September — two months before the end of the court's period of observation, after which SNCM will either have a new owner or face liquidation.

Warning on piracy dangers

UK maritime unions have agreed proposals to reduce the high-risk piracy area in the Indian Ocean, with effect from 1 December 2015, providing a meeting of national warlike operations area committee (WOAC) is tabled within six weeks to discuss concerns over the southern Red Sea and Iranian coastal areas.

The reduction of the BMP4 High Risk Area (HRA) — which had been in place since 2012 — was agreed in

response to the marked reduction in attacks by Somali pirates. The Indian government had also been seeking changes, warning that the scope of the previous agreement was creating congestion and threatening safety in its waters.

While accepting that there has been a dramatic decrease in attacks in the Indian Ocean over the past three years, Nautilus has echoed concerns from naval forces and security firms

about the potential impact of scaling back the HRA.

Peter Cook, chief executive of the Security Association for the Maritime Industry, described the changes as 'a dangerous gamble' and warned: 'Any resurgence of piracy is unlikely to be immediate because the heavy seas of the monsoon. However, as the monsoon weather recedes in the spring we will see if the pirates return to plunder the seas off the Horn of Africa,'

Gerry Northwood, COO of the UK-based maritime security company MAST, urged owners to continue to think very carefully about the level of risk to their vessels. 'Somali pirates have previously demonstrated that they can operate in the centre and northern reaches of the Indian Ocean, and vessels that are high risk with a low freeboard and slow speed should continue to take armed security in that area,' he added.

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Swiss ship rescues four

by Michael Howorth

A Swiss-flagged merchant ship rescued four crew from a cruising yacht taking part in the ARC transatlantic rally last month in an operation coordinated by MRCCs in Falmouth and Cape Verde.

The 9,990gt SCL Basilea went to the aid of the British-registered Magritte, a Moody Grenadier 134, after its crew reported that the yacht was taking in water around 130 miles off the Cape Verde islands and that the ingress could not be stemmed. Falmouth Coastguard advised the skipper to

escalate the situation to a Mayday and activate the EPRIB. SCL Basilea responded to their distress call and arrived on the scene nine hours later, safely evacuating the crew shortly before the yacht sank.

The ship disembarked the rescued crew in Spain.

Shipping slated in talks on CO2 cuts

Owners defend industry's green credentials as UN considers new curbs

➔ As top-level talks on a new global deal to cut greenhouse gases took place last month, Nautilus International warned that the shipping industry must do more to improve its environmental performance.

In hotly-debated sessions, the United Nations COP21 climate change conference was considering whether the shipping industry should be included in a global carbon dioxide emissions reduction target, or if it should be made subject to a carbon tax.

Owners told the meeting that they are already making greater CO2 reductions than many countries — cutting shipping's share of global emissions from 2.8% in 2007, to 2.2% in 2012.

They warned that treating the global shipping industry like a developed country for the purpose of setting CO2 targets would be 'inappropriate' and incompatible with UN sustainable development goals.

International Chamber of Shipping secretary general Peter Hinchliffe said that the industry had reduced its total CO2 output by more than 10% since 2007 and new IMO rules will mean all ships built after 2025 will be at least 30% more efficient than those operating today.

'These dramatic further CO2 reductions will be genuine and real,' he promised. 'We will have bigger ships, better engines, cleaner fuels and smarter speed management.'

'The mandatory worldwide use by ships of low sulphur fuel to reduce air pollution will provide a further significant incentive to



'Elephant in the room' protesters outside the IMO's London HQ last month

improve fuel efficiency,' he added.

Nautilus senior national secretary Allan Graveson said there is a need for practical solutions to reduce shipping's environmental impact without detriment to the safety of life at sea. 'Most impor-

tantly for seafarers and the general population — particularly for those living and working in port areas — are the issues of damage to health caused by SOx, NOx and particulate matter,' he added. 'Shipping is by far the worst

form of transport for these particulates, with the largest 15 ships emitting the same as every single car on the planet.'

Environmental groups called for shipping to be subjected to tighter CO2 reduction targets, warning that the industry could be responsible for 17% of global CO2 emissions in 2050 if left unregulated.

In a dossier presented to the IMO's 2015 Assembly, Seas At Risk, Transport & Environment (T&E) and the Marine Conservation Society claimed that emissions from shipping, along with aviation, are 'the elephant in the COP21 negotiations room'.

They said research revealed that the two industries would be responsible for almost 40% of all CO2 emissions in 2050 without further controls and claimed that the IMO's proposals would fall short of what shipping needs to do to help meet the UN's 2°C warming target limit by some 121%.

Studies show that greenhouse gas emissions from shipping are up 70% since 1990 and are projected to grow by up to a further 250% by 2050, they added.

John Maggs, policy advisor at Seas At Risk and president of the Clean Shipping Coalition, commented: 'This should be the moment when the world sets itself on a course that avoids dangerous climate change. To achieve this, all will have to play their part; there is no room for shirking responsibility or special pleading, least of all from an industry like shipping that has so much untapped potential to reduce emissions and move to a low carbon business model.'

Mission hits out as crew face prison

Indian court imposes hard labour sentences on piracy vessel personnel

➔ The Mission to Seafarers has hit out at an Indian court's decision to sentence the crew of the counter-piracy vessel Seaman Guard Ohio to five years' hard labour.

The 35 crew — comprised of 10 seafarers and 25 security personnel, including six former British soldiers — were found guilty by a district court last month of carrying illegal firearms, illegal refuelling, and unlawfully entering Indian waters.

They were working for the US private security firm AdvanFort when the Sierra Leone-flagged ship was arrested in Indian waters in October 2013 and was accused of carrying weapons and ammunition without the right documentation.

Prosecutors told the court that police found large numbers of 'unlicensed and illegal' weapons aboard the ship when it was searched after entering Indian waters following a storm.

The detained crew members subsequently served nine months in prison until charges against them were dropped in July 2014. After being released from prison, the crew were not allowed to leave India while prosecutors appealed against the decision, and they will now return to prison to serve out their five-year sentence of 'rigorous imprisonment'.

Their lawyer, Arumugaram Ravipandian, described the judgement as 'totally unfair and a great injustice to the accused'. He said the men would seek bail and challenge the verdict in a higher court.

The Mission to Seafarers said the men and their families were 'deeply shocked and devastated' at the decision and 'stunned that the evidence has not irrefutably

proven that they were acting legally under international maritime law'.

Canon Ken Peters, director of justice and public affairs, added: 'I am horrified and filled with anguish at this decision, which is deeply unfair and unjust. These men are seafarers, but it seems the court did not accept the basic fact that the ship was, and is, an anti-piracy vessel.'

'The men carried arms in accordance with international maritime law for the purpose of ensuring the merchant fleet was protected properly from the very real risk of pirate attacks and hijack,' he pointed out. 'The men have already suffered so much, so this is a terrible outcome. It is beyond belief.'

A Foreign & Commonwealth Office spokesman commented: 'Our staff in India and the UK have been in close contact with all six men since their arrest to provide support to them and their families, including attending court. We recognise what a difficult time this is for those involved. There is now a 90-day window to appeal and we will continue to provide consular assistance.'

Relatives of the six Britons have launched an online petition urging the UK government to do more to secure their release. It had been signed by more than 340,000 people by the third week of January.

'We understand fully that one country cannot intervene in another's judicial process, but when innocent men are being prosecuted for a crime they have not committed, then they should have an obligation to protect the human rights and freedom of these men and have them released and brought home,' the families said.

Captain navigated with an iPhone

The captain of a motor yacht involved in a fatal collision in the Caribbean in May 2015 had been navigating the vessel with a iPhone as its GPS was out of action, an accident investigation discovered.

A crew member on the sailing boat Pastaga suffered a fatal head

injury in the collision with the 27m Madeira-registered motor yacht What Else, in good visibility close to the island of Saint Barthélemy.

The French maritime investigation body BEAMer said the use of an iPhone as the primary means of navigation of What Else was an underlying risk factor.

Investigators said the professional captain of the vessel had been so preoccupied with checking the passage plan and the settings that he had failed to notice the sailing boat until too late.

BEAMer noted that the general ergonomics of the bridge of What Else were suited for two-

person operation, but the AB onboard had been undertaking steward's duties soon after the vessel got underway. The report recommends that the managers of What Else ensure that the yacht and others in its fleet operate with two shiphandlers and one steward.

Amels 188 goes green

The Dutch yacht builder Amels is claiming to have become the first to meet stringent new International Maritime Organisation (IMO) emissions regulations.

It says tests conducted under independent Lloyd's Register class supervision have ensured the generator

sets of the new 57.7m Amels 188, left, will comply with IMO Tier III NOx emissions limits — with selective catalytic reduction and an exhaust gas purification system on generators for soot particles.

In addition to IMO Tier III NOx compliance, the new Amels 188 will be the first yacht from the builder to

feature a hybrid power switchboard with battery bank and a generator set configuration with Amels Smart Power Management (SPM).

The vessel will also be equipped with an advanced heat recovery system that uses residual energy from the generators to heat potable water and the Jacuzzi.

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NEWS

EU backs trials of sea traffic project

The European Union has agreed to give €21m to support the further development of a new project to improve the safety and efficiency of shipping operations.

The funding will go towards the Sea Traffic Management (STM) Validation project, which aims to link 300 ships, 10 ports and three shore-based centres to optimise routes and share voyage information.

STM seeks to develop 'intelligent information exchange' in the maritime sector, sharing real-time data between ships and shore to encourage better voyage planning, improved vessel traffic coordination and route optimisation, and to support 'just in time' arrivals and automatic reporting.

The grant will enable two significant test sites to get underway — one in northern Europe and one in the Mediterranean. Researchers want to sign up 300 ships to take

part in the project and these vessels will be fitted with special STM systems at no cost, running live from March 2017 and connecting them with ports, pilots, VTS centres, cargo owners and other 'concerned stakeholders'.

The STM concept was developed as part of the EU's Mona Lisa 2.0 project, which also examined proposals for improving the evacuation of large passenger ships. The study also trialled a new RFID-based system onboard the cruise ship Ruby Princess, which aims to keep track of crew members working in potentially dangerous areas.

Researchers say the pilot application of the RFID technology for internal positioning of crew and passengers, together with emergency guidance, has indicated that it can reduce the number of fatalities and injuries, as well as damage.



IMO leader Koji Sekimizu presents a certificate of commendation to Maersk Line AB Vincente Somera to mark his 'great courage' in an at-sea rescue

Rescue bravery is honoured at IMO

A US Coast Guard rescue swimmer who saved four men from an ocean-going rowing boat that was sinking in a Pacific storm has been presented with the International Maritime Organisation's annual award for exceptional bravery at sea.

Aviation Survival Technician Christopher Leon was lowered into the sea to help airlift the four crew to safety when their boat, Britannia 4, took on water in severe conditions while taking part in the Great Pacific Race in June 2014.

The race support vessel had been unable to reach the stricken boat in the 30-knot winds and waves of up to 20ft.

AST Leon was reunited with three of the people he rescued in an emotional ceremony at the IMO headquarters last month.

He said he was honoured and humbled to receive the award and thanked his fellow crew members — 'because nothing I do can be done

without them; and everything we do is a team effort, especially for this case'.

A certificate of commendation was presented to a Filipino seafarer from the containership Lars Maersk, who was honoured for his role in rescuing a yachtsman in heavy weather in the Tasman Sea. Able seaman Vicente Somera was praised for showing great courage in the three-hour operation to save the yachtsman in total darkness and gale force winds.

Georgian priest Father Ilia Kartoza was posthumously awarded a certificate of commendation for his role in helping fellow passengers to escape from the ro-ro ferry Norman Atlantic following a fire in heavy storms during a crossing from Greece to southern Italy. Survivors told how the priest had encouraged them during the rescue and had refused opportunities to save himself, giving up his place in a lifeboat to make room for a Greek woman and her baby.

Car carrier crew didn't know they had hit trawler

The crew of a Cyprus-flagged car carrier which collided with a fishing vessel off the coast of Denmark failed to notice the vessel and did not realise that they had sunk it until the next day, an investigation has revealed.

The 9,233gt Necker Highway, right, which was sailing from Sweden to Germany at the time, ran into the Danish fishing vessel Orion at a speed of 16 knots, some 4nm off the port of Hirtshals in conditions of good visibility and calm seas.

The fishing boat sank soon afterwards, and its skipper was rescued by another vessel, some 20 minutes later.

Investigators found that the Polish second mate on the car carrier — who was alone on the bridge at the time of the accident — had heard a VHF-DSC distress call from the Orion, but took no action as there had been several other alarms that night with no relevance to his ship. He believed it was connected to a Navtex alert that he had received just before, which did not apply to the area his ship was in.



But the Danish Maritime Accident Investigation Bureau (DMAIB) contacted Necker Highway on the following day after determining that it was likely it had been the ship which struck the Orion. Paint samples taken from the fishing boat, along with AIS and radar records proved that the vessels had collided.

The DMAIB said neither vessel had complied with the collision prevention regulations and neither the car carrier's OOW nor

Orion's skipper was aware of the risk of collision until it became unavoidable.

The report says the AIS overlay used on the car carrier's radar may have impaired the officer's ability to calculate the risk of collisions. 'The number of fishing ships equipped with AIS has increased dramatically in recent years to such an extent that most Danish fishing ships can be identified by AIS,' it adds. 'Therefore, a fishing vessel without AIS has

become a rarity and these ships become more exposed to collision.'

'The extended use of AIS are more easily overlooked on the navigational equipment, as navigators tend to rely on the display of AIS data or become impaired by a cognitive fixation, which furthermore can be worsened by a weaker visual representation of the unidentified vessels on the instruments.'



BIMCO tribute to refugee rescue ships

The shipowners' organisation BIMCO has presented an award to honour seafarers who have been involved in rescuing refugees in distress at sea.

During the organisation's annual conference in Hamburg last month, BIMCO president Philippe Louis-Dreyfus presented the award to the German-based company Columbia Shipmanagement, pictured left, for its 'outstanding' work in rescue operations involving migrant boats in the Mediterranean.

He asked the company's quality, health, safety and environmental policy manager Captain Andreas Horber to accept the award on behalf of Columbia's crews and also on behalf of all seafarers who risk their lives in rescue operations.

Delegates at the BIMCO conference saw a video showing how the Columbia containership King Julius responded to two calls to assist boats in distress in one night in September 2013, bringing more than 180 people to safety in a matter of hours.

Mr Louis-Dreyfus described the 'exemplary' rescues as 'a classic example of the outstanding work done by our seafarers' and said many people owed their lives to the seamanship and skills of merchant vessel crews.

'Let us not forget, these seafarers are ultimately risking their own safety during a normal working shift to help men, women and children who are terrified and going through a traumatic experience,' he added.

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India urged to free crew

UK prime minister David Cameron has written to his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi urging him to intervene to secure the release of six Britons who have been held since their ship was seized in

Indian waters in October 2013.

The six British men were among 35 seafarers and armed guards who were detained when the Indian coastguard intercepted the Sierra Leone-registered counter-piracy vessel

Seaman Guard Ohio and accused the crew of carrying arms, illegal refuelling of the vessel at sea and straying into Indian territorial waters.

In a letter to the Indian prime minister, sent shortly before his visit

to London in November, Mr Cameron called for the men to be released, warning that the long-running legal case was causing their families immense mental agony as well as financial hardship.

shortreports

RIG FORECAST: almost 150 oil platforms in the UK sector of the North Sea will be scrapped over the next 10 years, according to a report from the analysts Douglas-Westwood. The company said life extension no longer makes economic sense for many fields and the low oil price will see many operators ceasing production — with 144 platforms likely to be removed between 2019 and 2026. Its research predicts that between US\$70bn and \$82bn will be spent on decommissioning activity in Denmark, Germany, Norway and the UK between 2016 and 2040.

TECHNIP TALKS: a significant reduction in the number of members facing redundancy from Technip (Singapore) has been achieved following 'intensive' talks last month. Nautilus national secretary Steve Doran said he was pleased that the number of redundancies had been cut from 38 to eight. As part of the agreement, officer ranks will see a 5.5% reduction on basic pay and changes to travel day arrangements with effect from 1 March 2016.

BOURBON BLOW: the French operator Bourbon Offshore said it had a total of 44 supply vessels in lay-up of the end of 2015 — representing 9% of its fleet. Announcing its annual results last month, company CEO Christian Lefèvre said it may put as much as 20% of its vessels into lay-up to reduce operating costs.

FARSTAD WRITE-DOWN: Norwegian operator Farstad says it has written-down the value of its fleet by NOK1.09bn (\$127m) because of poor market conditions. The company has cut its fleet to 59 vessels in response to low rates in the North Sea.

Owners call for action on STCW

Employers urged to act to avoid seafarer training and certification 'logjam'

International shipowners have echoed Nautilus calls for rapid action to ensure compliance with new seafarer training and certification rules which come into effect at the end of this year.

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) has urged its members to take a series of precautions to ensure that their seafarers meet the requirements being introduced through the 2010 amendments to the Standards of Training, Certification & Watchkeeping convention.

The ICS — which represents owners from 37 countries with around 80% of the world fleet — said the action is necessary to prevent last minute certification 'logjams', and potential difficulties during port state control inspec-

tions next year.

The so-called Manila amendments introduce new and updated seafarer competences, as well as new refresher training requirements for all officers and additional ancillary technical training requirements for deck, engine and electrotechnical officers.

Most maritime administrations have determined that seafarers holding national certificates of competence will need to complete mandatory updating courses in order to be certified beyond 31 December 2016.

The ICS says employers should liaise closely with maritime administrations to ensure that they are fully prepared to cope with the new rules and that arrangements have been made to ensure that any necessary updat-

ing training can be undertaken by the seafarers they employ.

ICS says it believes maritime administrations should have already approved any special updating courses for seafarers and made any necessary arrangements for the issue and revalidation of seafarers' certificates.

'In their capacity as flag states, administrations also need to be ready to process a potentially large number of applications for flag state recognition endorsements towards the end of 2016,' it notes.

To ensure that any applications can be processed well ahead of 1 January next year, ICS says that ship operators should be taking all necessary steps now to facilitate the attendance of their seafarers at relevant training courses.

Secretary general Peter Hinch-

liffe said: 'Shipping companies should take early action to ensure seafarers' certificates are renewed or revalidated as may be required before the end of the transition period, and to plan for their seafarers to attend any necessary courses.'

'But as we approach 2017, employers will be reliant on the availability of courses from training providers and their timely approval by maritime administrations,' he added. 'This should be a simple matter of logistics, but shipowners, administrations, training providers and all other parties involved should undertake to work together to avoid either non-compliance with the new STCW regime or the disruption of the operation of the world fleet due to a lack of certified seafarers.'



PM opens first Thai show

by Michael Howorth

The inaugural Thailand Yacht Show was officially opened in Phuket last month by the country's prime minister, General Prayut Chan-o-cha, pictured above.

The show — which ran from 8 to 14 February — was supported by the Thailand government, which has recently changed its policies governing the chartering of foreign-flagged vessels in the country's

waters. More than 40 yachts, ranging from 13m to 73m, took part in the event.

Show organiser Andy Treadwell commented: 'I have worked with a lot of governments, but never with a more proactive and enthusiastic one, who completely understand the potential benefits for the local community and are totally dedicated to developing a successful future for yachting in Thailand.'

Picture: Frances Howorth

Tanker master is sentenced to jail

Unions and owners condemn Spanish court's ruling in long-running case

Nautilus International has joined other shipping industry bodies in condemning the Spanish Supreme Court's decision to jail the master of the tanker Prestige for two years — 14 years after the ship sank off the country's NW coast.

The court ruled that Captain Apostolos Mangouras, who is now aged 81, was guilty of recklessness resulting in catastrophic environmental damage — overturning a previous sentence which cleared him of criminal responsibility for the accident, in which some 63,000 tonnes of oil was spilled.

Nautilus general secretary Mark Dickinson said the ruling was the latest in a long line of

cases where masters have been singled out for prosecution while other parties — in particular flag states, class and insurance — have escaped justice.

'Owners and managers have a responsibility for the maintenance and operation of their ships and not to seek the "most favourable" regime in which to operate,' he added. 'We have to stop swatting the mosquito and start to drain the swamp,' he said.

'Let's not forget that Capt Mangouras was effectively abandoned by the flag state when he was held in a high security jail after the accident and spent 83 days in prison while the case was investigated,' Mr Dickinson stressed.

'The repeated treatment of

seafarers as criminals points to a pressing need for countries to abide by the international guidelines on the fair treatment of seafarers involved in maritime incidents, and if masters and officers are found to have acted improperly professional sanctions rather than criminal sanctions remain the most appropriate way in which to deal with them.'

International Transport Workers' Federation seafarers' section chair Dave Heindel said: 'This decision represents the dying gasps of a 14-year-old attempt to deflect blame onto the shoulders of an octogenarian man, who has been cleared in the court of world opinion and by his peers. Thankfully it is likely to be as unenforce-

able as it is illogical. This innocent man cannot again be made to sit needlessly in jail.'

The International Ship Managers' Association described the court's ruling as 'abhorrent' and 'totally unfair'. InterManager president Gerardo Borromeo said it had very worrying implications for the role and responsibility of masters in certain jurisdictions.

And the tanker owners' body Intertanko said the sentence was unjustifiable and fundamentally wrong. 'This sets a deplorable precedent,' said managing director Katharina Stanzel. 'Are ships' masters who exercise best professional judgement in impossible circumstances to be shamefully treated as criminals?'

Officer killed in bridge fall

A ship's officer died when he lost his footing and fell from a bridge wing while inspecting lifebuoys off the coast of Denmark last year.

An investigation into the accident highlights the lack of

detailed instructions for the monthly inspections of the lifebuoys and the inherent difficulties of checking the equipment.

The incident occurred onboard the Danish-flagged chemical tanker

Selandia Swan, while it was sailing from Rotterdam to Russia in ballast in July last year.

The officer was alone on the bridge at the time and his disappearance was discovered by an AB who had come to

use the telephone to call his family. His body was found in the sea by a rescue helicopter some two and a half hours after the ship raised the alarm.

The Danish Maritime Accident Investigation Board found evidence

that the officer had been checking the lights on the lifebuoys and it was likely that he had fallen into the sea while leaning over the guard rail to loosen a light cap.

While the ship's maintenance system required monthly inspections of the lifebuoys, the DMAIB said it did not specify how the inspections should be carried out. 'During the investigation, no manual from the manufacturer or any other written

information on how to go about inspecting the buoy was found,' the report notes.

Furthermore, no spare parts for the buoys were found — which meant that if a deficiency was found, then repairs could not be carried out,' it adds.

Investigators said the ship's operators have taken a series of preventive measures in response to the accident.

NEWS

Owners warn on shipping waste

Brussels urged to improve provision of port reception facilities in Europe

→ European shipowners have called for major improvements in the provision of port reception facilities — warning Brussels of the ‘compelling need’ to cater for new types of waste, such as exhaust gas cleaning sludge, bleed-off from NOx abatement systems, and ballast water sediments.

In a position paper tabled ahead of the upcoming revision of the European Union’s port reception facilities (PRF) directive adopted in 2000, the European Community Shipowners Associations (ECSA) says it is vital to provide proper facilities to reduce the discharge of ship-generated waste at sea.

But, it warns, there is presently a lack of adequate and sufficient facilities in EU ports, and the fees charged by many harbour authorities are neither fair nor transparent.

ECSA says there also needs to be a better monitoring and enforcement mechanism, with inspections and an electronic system that will allow ships to report on PRF inadequacies as well as receiving information on the availability of facilities prior to a port of call.

The EU’s new PRF directive will transport MARPOL Convention requirements into European law and aims to ensure that member states provide adequate reception facilities for ship-generated waste and cargo residues.

‘For the directive to be effective, adequate port reception facilities must be available in EU ports. These facilities must also be able to handle new types of waste resulting from stricter environmental requirements such as ballast water and scrubber waste,’ said ECSA secretary-general Patrick Verhoeven.

‘The next step is to ensure that the fee paid to the port of call is structured in such a way that it encourages shipowners to deliver ship’s waste to the appropriate facility.’

ECSA says the current system allows a wide range of fee systems which creates such problems for shipowners as:

- fees for ship-generated waste are too high
- the fixed fee is charged but there is no right to deliver ashore
- fees are disproportionate to the delivered waste or category, type or size of the ship
- the calculation basis varies from port to port and/or is not available to the port users

ECSA also calls for a ‘more pragmatic approach’ to ships operating in shortsea trades, making frequent port calls, and ships with sufficient storage capacity to avoid the need to dispose of their waste at every single port call. It says the new directive should clarify the exceptions and exemptions regime by offering more flexibility without endangering the aims of the regulation.

ECSA’s paper also complains that while seafarers make substantial efforts to ensure that garbage waste is segregated onboard, reception facilities in many ports take the waste into a single receptacle, without segregation — meaning that all waste delivered may be treated as contaminated, which brings zero environmental benefits.

‘There is no harmonised set of requirements between member states on how to sort this type of waste in reception facilities, and the application of many different requirements causes confusion and certainly frustration to the ship’s crew side,’ it adds. ‘Agreeing on standardised rules with regard to the segregation of ship-generated waste ashore that all parties could adhere to is imperative so as to respect waste reduction and/or segregation practices.’

Navy alarm over terror risk to ships in the Med

Merchant ships in the Mediterranean could be the target of a terror attack by militant groups, a senior Royal Navy officer has warned.

Vice Admiral Clive Johnstone, the UK’s highest-ranking NATO officer, said Islamic State’s spread into Libya had cast an ‘uncomfortable shadow’ over the eastern Mediterranean — posing a ‘horrible opportunity’ to

attack shipping in the area.

He said there are concerns that Islamic State terrorists have ambitions to mount seaborne operations. ‘We know they would like to have a maritime arm, just as al Qaeda had a maritime arm,’ he added.

The availability of Chinese, Russian and Korean weapons in the area presents ‘a horrible opportunity

in the future that a misdirected, untargeted round of a very high quality weapons system will just happen to target a cruise liner, or an oil platform, or a container ship’.

Vice Admiral Johnstone said such an attack would have ‘extraordinary implications for the western world’ and he argued that it is important for NATO not to be ‘hustled out’ of the eastern Mediterranean.



Vice Admiral Clive Johnstone
Picture: NATO

IMO urged to act on ship stability

Union voices support for research recommending higher passengership survivability standards

→ Nautilus International is backing top-level moves to improve the standards governing the survivability of cruiseships and ro-pax vessels.

Proposals for stricter safety measures have been tabled at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) as a result of research conducted in response to the Costa Concordia disaster in January 2012.

The IMO’s ship design and construction sub-committee (SDC) will debate calls for changes to the SOLAS Convention rules on subdivision and damage stability. The recommendations are based on studies examining grounding and collision risks, watertight doors, raking damage, and damage stability.

‘The hard reality is that passengerships and ro-pax vessels are not built to the standard to which they could be built,’ said Nautilus senior national secretary Allan Graveson.

Speaking at the IMO on behalf of the International Federation of Ship Masters Associations, he supported International

Transport Workers’ Federation concerns over the ‘safe return to port’ concept.

‘Although this is a laudable aim, the assumption that any ship is “unsinkable” is a dangerous one and is certainly not a situation that has been achieved to date,’ Mr Graveson added. ‘For this reason we are fully supportive of measures to improve the watertight integrity and stability of passenger vessels and to enable the master to make a correct decision.’

A paper submitted to the SDC by 28 EU member states and the European Commission says studies commissioned by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) show the need for a new level of the required subdivision index ‘R’ which is used to determine the probability of survival of a ship.

The EMSA research examined the levels of risk to six different ship types arising from grounding and contact accidents and concluded that risks from side grounding were significantly higher than from collision and bottom grounding.

The EU member states propose amendments to SOLAS that would raise the ‘R’ subdivision index in line with a formula related to the number of people onboard a ship.

A document submitted by the United States notes that the gradual increase in the ‘R’ index proposed by the EMSA research ‘reflects the stark reality that mass evacuation to life-saving appliances for very large passengerships is extremely difficult and undesirable’.

However, the proposals are set to face some opposition — with European shipbuilders submitting a paper arguing that raising the ‘R’ level would widen the ‘significant safety gap between new and existing ships, which — due to resulting economic differences — could lead to significant market distortions’.

The European yards argue that the IMO should instead focus on ways to implement ‘appropriate and cost-effective safety standards on existing ships through retrofitting and/or operational measures’.

Mr Graveson said the EMSA

research had made the case for change clear and had vindicated the Union’s arguments about the watertight integrity and stability issues affecting the safety of passengerships and ro-ro ferries.

The IMO will be examining measures to improve damage stability, including double side skins and double bottom protection. ‘There are questions about the depth to which double side skins should go,’ Mr Graveson said. ‘While double side skins and double bottoms may give some protection against raking damage, they will not necessarily give adequate protection against oblique or acute collisions involving two or more bulkheads.’

‘We believe, therefore, that the ultimate solution is adopting the recommendation made in Lord Mersey’s inquiry into the Titanic — giving ships greater longitudinal and transverse sub-division,’ he added.

‘Such construction will give the ability to cross-flood to avoid heavy lists and capsize and to enable a damaged vessel to settle in the water,’ he pointed out.

Ballast convention finally takes effect

The long-awaited international Ballast Water Management (BWM) Convention is set to come into force worldwide by the end of 2016 following a flurry of ratifications last month.

The International Maritime Organisation has been conducting tonnage verification checks to ensure that the convention has passed its target thresholds of being ratified by at least 30 member states accounting for more than 35% of the world fleet.

The BWM Convention was agreed in 2004 in an effort to halt the spread of harmful and invasive aquatic species in ships’ ballast water, but has struggled to gain sufficient support to take effect.

Shipowners have been expressing concern over the standards for BWM

equipment, and have urged the IMO to finalise the revision of the G8 type approval guidelines as soon as possible, to ensure that operators ‘can have absolute confidence that the expensive equipment they will soon have to install will be effective in treating ballast water conditions normally encountered during worldwide operations and be regarded as fully compliant during port state control inspections’.

The International Chamber of Shipping said the fixing of a definite implementation date would give owners ‘some of the certainty needed to make important decisions about whether to refit the new mandatory treatment equipment or otherwise to start sending ships for early recycling’.

But it also warned that the entry into force of the new IMO regime would not resolve ‘the extreme difficulties that still exist in the United States’ and the uncertainty over the more stringent US approval regime for treatment equipment.

‘There are over 50 treatment systems approved under the current IMO regime, but worryingly fewer than 20 manufacturers have so far indicated their intent to submit their systems for US approval,’ the ICS said. ‘The conflicting IMO and US requirements, when combined with the complete lack of systems fully approved by the USCG, could produce an impossible situation in which some ships might not be able to operate in US waters when the IMO Convention enters in force.’

Union backs plans for updates to MLC

Shore leave, pay protection and bullying on the agenda in talks on 'bill of rights' amendments

➔ Nautilus has welcomed the outcome of top-level talks last month on updates to the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) — including measures to address bullying and harassment and to safeguard seafarers' wages when they are held captive.

Officials from the Union took part in the week-long talks at the International Labour Organisation which saw delegates representing governments, shipowners and seafarers discussing amendments to the MLC and ILO Convention 185 on seafarers' identity documents.

Key points agreed at the meetings included an amendment highlighting the importance of health and safety onboard and proposing the inclusion of the newly-published ITF/ICS guidelines on eliminating bullying and harassment at sea. The MLC guidelines on investigations will also be modified to include problems arising from harassment and bullying.

The talks also agreed to establish a working group to draft proposals for a future amendment to the MLC to protect seafarers' wages when they are held captive, on or off their vessel, as a result of acts such as piracy.

'The amendment, which was submitted by the seafarers' group, was extensively debated and a lot of member states were supportive, with general agreement that we must go beyond piracy to cover any criminal act of detaining a

seafarer,' Nautilus general secretary Mark Dickinson explained. 'However, the issue proved to be complex and has effectively been put off for further discussion at a working group.'

Shipowner proposals to harmonise MLC certificate renewal provisions with other international certification were also adopted, with a new amendment that will provide an option for flag states to extend the validity of a MLC certificate by up to five months when a new certificate cannot be immediately issued or made available onboard a ship.

Delegates unanimously supported a resolution on the facilitation of access to shore leave and the transit of seafarers joining their ships. This had been jointly tabled by seafarer and shipowner groups to reflect frustration at the slow progress in adoption of the seafarer ID convention.

'The resolution reminded everyone of the reasons why we are doing this work — to improve the working conditions of seafarers who continue to face difficulties in securing shore leave and being able to travel to and from their ships without the costly and time-consuming need for visas,' Mr Dickinson said.

ITF seafarers' section chair Dave Heindel commented: 'We believe we have made substantial progress and look forward to the provisions of the resolution being delivered in the real world for the benefit of our



Nautilus delegates Mark Dickinson and Sascha Meijer at the ILO talks

seafarers.'

Some 70 countries accounting for 80% of world shipping have now ratified the MLC. The new amendments to the convention will be considered for adoption at the next session of the ILO's international labour conference, and are expected to enter into force in late 2018. Work on amendments adopted in 2014 covering the financial security of crew claims and cases of abandonment is continuing, and they are due to come into force in January 2017.

Mr Dickinson described the meetings as 'positive' and said unions and owners had also agreed to examine ways to

improve cooperation for future meetings.

'The MLC is a "live" convention that is kept under continuous review, and we want to make sure that we work closely together on future amendments,' he added.

Peter Hinchliffe, secretary-general of the International Chamber of Shipping, said: 'The meeting has reaffirmed the strength of the tripartite system involving ILO member states and seafarers in debate with shipowner representatives. The effort to promote the widest possible ratification of this landmark maritime convention continues to be a core priority for ICS.'



Abandoned AB Zaude Paolo Bandivas, right, is pictured during one of the Mission to Seafarers' visits to his vessel

Abandoned AB wins Lloyd's List seafarer of the year award

➔ A Filipino rating who was stranded in a port in the Middle East for more than two years after his ship was abandoned by the owner has been presented with a Lloyd's List 'seafarer of the year' award.

Zaude Paolo Bandivas was an AB onboard a counter-piracy vessel when he, and another crew member, were left unpaid and without supplies for long periods after the owner abandoned the vessel.

He was finally repatriated at the end of a long and complex contractual dispute and mediation, which lasted almost two and a half years.

Mr Bandivas was named as seafarer of the year at the Lloyd's List Middle East and Indian Subcontinent Awards, with judges praising him for 'bravely continuing his work onboard for many months until being repatriated' and going on to get his certificates revalidated before returning back to sea with another company.

The Revd Dr Paul Burt, regional director for The Mission to Seafarers in the Gulf and India, said:

'Zaude exemplifies everything that is courageous about seafarers around the world. He is patient, he is calm, and above all, he believed that with careful negotiations, he would be able to secure the pay he was in desperate need of, and get home safely.'

'The Mission visited Zaude regularly and made essential supplies and subsistence finance available to him when he needed it most,' Dr Burt said.

'The other ships in the local port also took him under their wing, as there was no air conditioning or power for cooking, in over 50 degrees heat. He joined neighbouring vessel crews for meals and essential company through these long dark days,' he added.

'I am truly thankful that we were able to pressure on the disputing parties and help bring this matter to a resolution eventually,' Dr Burt said. 'This case highlights the real plight and suffering of seafarers who are abandoned in port, but feel that they must stay onboard to ensure that their pay is duly handed over to them for their families who are depending on them back home.'

Dutch yard claims a first with LNG vessel

➔ The Dutch builder Ferus Smit has delivered what is claimed to be the first dry cargo vessel with an LNG-fuelled propulsion system and LNG tanks integrated inside the hull.

The Bahamas-flagged cement tanker *Greenland*, pictured right, has been built for the joint venture JT Cement, formed by Swedish shipping company Erik Thun and Norway-based Jepsen Cement.

The unique design incorporates a pressurised LNG tank positioned in the foreship of the 4,500gt vessel.

Greenland also features a fully-automated loading and unloading system, based on the principle of fluidisation of cement with compressed air.

Cargo holds are completely closed, ensuring environmentally friendly, dust-free operation and delivery — with the ability to load and unload cement in all weather conditions.



Maersk accused of scrapping U-turn

➔ Campaigners have criticised Maersk Line after it revealed plans last month to use four scrapping facilities on India's Alang coast to dismantle its redundant ships.

Announcing the decision, the company said it was committed to responsible recycling of its ships, but had selected the yards because 'the current cost of sustainable ship recycling is not feasible'.

Maersk claimed there are only a limited number of yards around the world that offer sustainable shipbreaking, and it would cost the company as much as US\$150m extra to handle the vessels it has earmarked for disposal over the next five years.

It said it had chosen four sites in Alang that met Hong Kong Convention standards for health, safety and environmental standards and would work with them to upgrade their facilities and practices.

But the campaign groups NGO Shipbreaking Platform and Transport and Environment (T&E) described

Maersk's decision as 'hypocritical' and motivated more by its bottom line than by corporate social responsibility.

'We expected visionary leadership from Maersk and that their CSR report boasted support for the setting up of a truly modern ship recycling facility in India,' said NGO Shipbreaking Platform executive director Patrizia Heidegger. 'Instead they are rubber-stamping practices that they previously denounced.'

NGO Shipbreaking Platform said that 469 of the 768 large ocean-going ships sent for scrap last year went to South Asian beaches, where breaking yards fail to respect fundamental workers' rights, ignore international waste trade law, and flout international environmental protection standards.

It said Greek owners made the most use of sub-standard facilities and even some companies claiming 'green' credentials, such as Hyundai, Evergreen, MOL and K-Line had sold vessels for breaking in Bangladesh.

NEWS

Drones used for emission checks

Denmark and the Netherlands are working on a project to use 'drone' aircraft to check that ships are complying with emission control regulations.

The two countries are cooperating on a European Union scheme to develop technology for the aerial surveillance of ships' SOx and NOx emissions, using low-cost sensors on drones and helicopters.

The initiatives were revealed in an action plan published by the Danish Maritime Authority (DMA) and the Danish Environmental Protection Agency last month in a bid to ensure that Emission Control Area (ECA) requirements are effectively enforced.

Denmark has been in the forefront of policing the emission rules, with port authority sampling of bunkers on visiting ships having doubled and additional checks being carried out through surveillance from small aircraft, ships and one main bridge.

The DMA said its data suggests there has been 'considerable

success' in ECA implementation, with a compliance rate of 96% in the EU ECA areas, and a 98% rate in Danish waters, based on sniffer measurements. One study shows that the quantity of sulphur in Danish air has fallen by 60% since the ECA rules came in.

But the paper warns of the need to boost consistent enforcement and centralised reporting within Europe, and it says this will depend on better technology, assistance from bunker brokers, and more international cooperation among ECA signatory countries.

Noting the need to ensure a 'level playing field', the report stresses the case for 'strategic efforts' on global enforcement from 2020 or 2025, when an international 0.5% sulphur content cap is set to take effect. Denmark is pressing for specific IMO guidelines for enforcement, and penalties to address the global surveillance and jurisdiction challenges.



A tender from the Braemar assists the drifting yacht Nicollet

Cruiseship aids yacht adrift in the Atlantic

The crew of a Fred Olsen cruiseship were involved in a dramatic mid-Atlantic rescue over the festive period — going to the aid of a drifting sailing yacht in heavy sea conditions.

The 24,344gt Braemar was cruising from Santa Cruz, Tenerife to Bridgetown, Barbados, when the officer of the watch spotted the 14m Nicollet on the radar, and discovered the yacht was drifting and no sails were hoisted.

Braemar made contact to check if there was a problem, and the Nicollet's skipper reported that his steering gear was broken and the sea anchor had been deployed. The yacht had been drifting for 2.5 days with two crew members and two passengers.

A tender from the Braemar delivered a supply of wood, a

hacksaw, two wooden oars and a box of water to the stricken Nicollet and brought in the yacht's passengers, who had a medical check onboard the cruiseship and were found to be in good health.

Both the Braemar and the Nicollet were eventually able to continue to their planned destinations.

Braemar's master, Captain Robert Bamberg, said: 'The sea conditions at the scene were very challenging, with three to five metres of swell, and my officers and crew showed true professionalism and knowledge while carrying out this rescue operation. We regularly conduct safety drills and practices, but it was great to see such teamwork, spirit and determination implemented so successfully in a real-life situation.'



Stena Bulk has taken delivery of its fifth in a series of 10 IMOIIIMAX chemical/product tankers — the 50,000dwt Stena Imperative, pictured above. The Chinese-built vessel is designed specifically for IMO2 cargoes — both vegetable oils and chemicals such as oil and petroleum products — and is equipped with 18 tanks, each of 3,000 cu m capacity.

The Bermuda-registered Stena Imperative has a range of 'green' features, including main engine auto-tuning, a boiler that recovers energy from the main and auxiliary engines' exhaust gas, and a hub vortex absorbing fin.

Methanol 'is green choice'

Industry urged to adopt 'future-proof' alternative fuel

Shipowners and industry regulators have been urged to do more to encourage the use of methanol as a 'green' fuel for shipping.

A new study on the viability of methanol as an alternative marine fuel concludes that it offers a safe, cost-effective and environmentally sound option for ensuring that ships meet the strictest emission standards.

Written by Professor Karin Andersson, of Chalmers University in Sweden, and published by FCBI Energy last month, the report notes that methanol is a low-emissions fuel that has sometimes been overlooked in policy and industry discussions.

Marine methanol fuel produces no sulphur emissions and very low levels of nitro-

gen oxide emissions, the report adds, and it therefore offers a 'future-proof' way of complying with current and predicted regulations.

The study points out that methanol is plentiful, available globally and could be 100% renewable. As a liquid, it avoids the need for the expensive cryogenic equipment required for LNG and as it is biodegradable, the environmental effects of any spill would be minimal.

Existing engines have performed well with the fuel, the report notes, and current bunkering infrastructure requires only minor modifications to handle it.

Stena Line has been trialling methanol on its ro-pax ferry Stena Germanica, and the

study says that both conversion and new-build costs are competitive.

While marine methanol costs less than marine LNG and the costs of emission abatement measures such as scrubbers, the report says the slump in oil prices has eroded its advantages over low-sulphur marine gas oil.

The report does caution that methanol is a low flashpoint fuel — which will need to be addressed in the safety assessment — but says there is ample experience in handling it safely.

Research funding on alternative fuels for shipping tend to be focused on LNG, it adds, but policy-makers need to ensure it is promoted as a compliant fuel and as 'a pathway to a sustainable shipping industry'.

China 'set to become key supplier of seafarers'

China could become a leading supplier of female seafarers, according to researchers investigating why so few women work in the international shipping industry.

The Chinese government's removal of the single-child policy and a new drive to widen training of cadets — including females — look set to increase the number of women seafarers, the Southampton Solent University study team suggests.

Researchers from the Gender, Empowerment and Multicultural Crews (GEM) research project have

just completed a six-day data collection visit to China as part of their work to examine the reasons why only 2% of the world's seafarers are women.

Sponsored by the ITF Seafarers' Trust, the GEM project is investigating the welfare needs of seafarers in today's multicultural working environment and is examining issues such as working conditions, attitudes and cultural behaviours.

Information gathered from the trip to China — which included visits to Shanghai Maritime

University's Merchant Marine College and meetings with other key maritime stakeholders — will help to provide an overall summary of female seafarers' participation in the country, as well as being used comparatively against the maritime sectors in the UK and Nigeria.

Project leader Dr Kate Pike commented: 'Although the research is in its early stages and we are just beginning the data analysis from our recent visit, China's latest initiatives could herald a change for female seafarers in the future.'



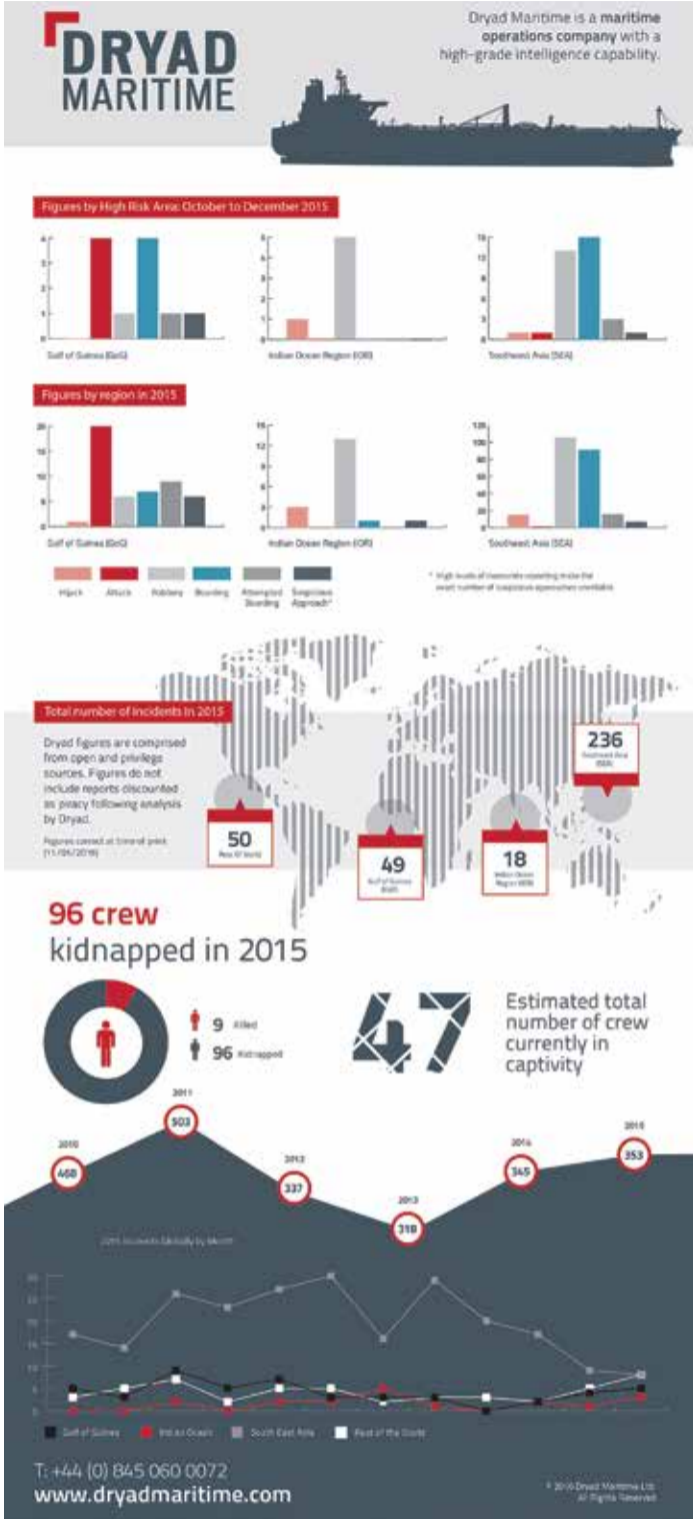
Mediterranean mission for RFA Mounts Bay

Crew members and embarked forces onboard the Royal Fleet Auxiliary landing ship Mounts Bay are pictured above being addressed by carrier strike director Rear Admiral Graeme Mackay as they sailed from the UK on deployment to the Mediterranean to provide a continuous amphibious capability over the coming months.

The 16,000 tonne vessel sailed from her home port of Falmouth last month to Marchwood, Southampton, to

load up vehicles, boats, personnel and stores.

Second officer Mark Martin, the ship's communications officer, said: 'We are deploying with a sufficient amount of equipment and personnel to enable us to respond to a broad range of operational demands during this deployment. Once we are in the Mediterranean we will also embark a Wildcat helicopter from 825 Naval Air Squadron, which means we will be able to start conducting aviation exercises with partners.'



Experts warn on piracy risk

Reports highlight changing threats of attacks on ships

Two new reports have warned the shipping industry to remain vigilant against the threat of attacks, despite a dramatic reduction in Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden piracy.

The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) said there were no Somali-based attacks during 2015 and the industry-defined high-risk area in the Indian Ocean has been reduced by 55%.

But, its annual report notes, the total number of piracy incidents worldwide increased last year — from 245 to 246 — while the number of vessels being boarded rose by 11%, and the number of crew kidnapped doubled from the previous year.

A total of 203 ships were boarded during 2015, 15 were hijacked and one was fired at. One seafarer was killed, at least 14 were injured and 271 were held hostage on their ships — down from 442 in 2014.

The IMB said it welcomed action by Malaysian and Indonesian authorities which had led to a marked reduction in attacks on small fuel tankers in SE Asian waters last year. But it pointed out that the region still accounts for most of the world's piracy incidents and masters and crews should remain vigilant.

Incidents in Vietnam 'surged' last year — rising from seven to 27, the report adds. Four incidents were also recorded in China at the end of the year — the first in a long time.

The report says Nigeria remains a 'hotspot for violent piracy and armed robbery' and many incidents in the area go unreported.

Although there were no attacks by Somali-based pirates last year, the IMB urges vessels transiting the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean to stay particularly vigilant. Director Captain Pottingal Mukundan commented:

'Somalia remains a fragile state, and the potential for an attack remains high. It will only take one successful hijacking to undo all that has been done, and rekindle this criminal activity.'

The IMB's warning was echoed by the shipping security firm Dryad, as it published its maritime crime report for 2015.

While noting a drop in recorded incidents off the west and east coasts of Africa, it warned of a marked increase in seaborne crime around the world — and notably in the number of robberies from vessels in the Caribbean, and central and south America.

Dryad also expressed concern about the security of shipping in the Mediterranean in the face of the continued civil war in Libya and the expansion of the Islamic State terrorist organisation in the Middle East. It said the continuing migrant crisis in the area shows the diverse scale of challenges facing the shipping industry.

Australia brings in LY3 Code standard

Australia's Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) is to apply the Large Yacht Code for superyachts and training vessels of 24m or more with effect from 1 March.

Announcing the move last month, AMSA chief executive Mick Kinley said it would ensure that Australia regulates the sector in line with international norms, setting an equivalent standard to the UK's LY3 Code.

'Australia shares the view of the UK Maritime & Coastguard Agency that prescribed merchant ship safety standards may be incompatible with the safety needs of large yachts given the nature of their operations,' he added.

The changes focus on the survey and certification requirements of large yachts engaged in commercial operations and how they will be regulated under the Australian Navigation Act 2012.

Large yachts regulated under Marine Order 52, will be defined as motor or sailing vessels of more than 24m in load line length, of 150 gross tonnes or more, in commercial use for sport or pleasure and not carrying more than 12 passengers.

'Where compliance is not practical because of the structure or arrangement of the vessel, AMSA will consider the use of equivalent solutions as allowed under marine orders and the LY3 Code,' Mr Kinley said.

AMSA's introduction of the LY3 Code follows the introduction of crew qualifications for superyacht masters and deck officers in January this year, along the lines of the UK structure.

Insurers warn over low-sulphur risks

Marine insurers have called for improved seafarer training to help cut the growing risk of machinery damage arising from the introduction of low-sulphur limits.

The International Union of Marine Insurance (IUMI) said it is concerned about the increasing incidences of cat fines and warned of the 'clear need' for improved crew training. 'Filtration of fuel has been a requirement on board for many years, but crews are now noticeably less experienced and less reliable in operating the systems,' it said last month.

IUMI said losses caused by cat fines have, until recently, been put down to engine damage or crew negligence and only now are definite attributable losses being reported — with claims ranging between US\$300,000 to \$1.5m, mostly in low-speed engines.

It said more should be done to ensure sampling and testing of fuel before use, improved fuel handling onboard, regular cleaning of filters, cleaning of settling and service tanks during dry docking, and intensified monitoring of fuel treatment efficiency.

IUMI said it was also concerned at statistics showing that switch-overs between heavy fuel oils and distillate fuels to comply with the 0.1% sulphur limit in the Californian ECA increase the risk of vessels losing power. 'The risks related to the complex switch-over will have to be carefully monitored, and proper crew training and awareness is needed,' it added.

Another report from the US Coast Guard confirmed reports stating that main engines may not attain the expected speed when using ultra low sulphur fuel oil. In a safety alert issued last month, it stressed the importance conducting fuel oil switching outside of busy traffic lanes and ECAs, and urged operators to provide initial and periodic crew training 'for accomplishing safe, effective and leak-free fuel switching'.

Sharp fall in norovirus cruise cases

The number of norovirus outbreaks on cruiseships has halved over the past two years, according to a report released by US health authorities last month. Statistics published by the US Centre for Disease Control's vessel sanitation programme show that the rate of acute gastroenteritis cases on cruiseships fell to just three per thousand voyages in 2014, down from over six per thousand in 2012.

Researchers surveyed sanitation report data from larger cruiseships between 2008 and 2014 — a total of about 30,000 voyages and 75m passengers. They found that outbreaks of diarrhoea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, headache, muscle aches, or fever dropped significantly over this period and that they accounted for just 0.01% of the total number of norovirus cases in the United States.

Just 0.18% of the passengers who took a cruise between 2008 and 2014 suffered from acute gastroenteritis, the study said. The rate for crew members was only 0.15%, and the report concludes that the cruise industry has been doing a better job of preventing and controlling outbreaks.

STCW 'is outpaced by advances in ship technology'

Global standards for seafarer training and certification are failing to keep pace with technological advances, a marine simulation conference heard last month.

Neil Bennett, vice-president of Transas Americas, told the Simulation User Conference in Singapore that major reviews and updates of the STCW Convention only occur every five to 10 years.

Changes tend to be adopted slowly, he added, and there is confusion in the industry as well as differing interpretations by flag states.

Training needs are becoming more sophisticated because of the vast differences in bridge, automation and user interface designs aboard ships, Mr Bennett pointed out, and owners are seeking more non-regulatory and

type-specific training for their crews.

Mr Bennett also warned that increasing skill shortages are having an impact — with a scarcity of qualified operators and trainers, along with high personnel turnover and limited product knowledge. There is also a gap in technological understanding and acceptance between younger and older seafarers, he added.

However, he told the conference, advances in IT mean that online training, e-learning and distance learning offer the way ahead — enabling simulation-based training to be delivered when and where it is needed.

Transas has developed the first cloud-based maritime training simulation package, Mr Bennett said, but questions remain on how such training will be viewed by the regulatory bodies.

'Discovery yacht' designed for polar cruising



An Australian company has revealed plans for what is billed as the 'world's first discovery yacht' — a 165m luxury vessel designed to take up to 228 passengers to remote regions in the Arctic and Antarctic.

Being built for the Scenic Group at the Uljanik shipyard in Croatia, the 16,500gt 'six-star luxury discovery yacht' Scenic Eclipse, pictured left, will operate with 172 crew and is due to come into service in 2018.

The expedition cruise vessel will be classed by Bureau Veritas and will meet the requirements of the newly-adopted Polar Code, allowing operation for a certain period of the year in Polar waters.

BV says particular attention has been paid to safety and meeting the 'safe return to port' criteria. The ship will have several additional class notations related to pollution prevention, including an advanced waste water treatment system, ballast water management system, waste-holding capacity and Green Passport.

Scenic Eclipse will be powered by two separate diesel-electric propulsion plants and two pods, and will also be equipped with a new generation of zero-speed high efficiency stabilisers. The vessel will also carry two helicopters and a seven-seat observation submarine.

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AUCTION PLAN: a French court has ruled that the general cargoship Ocean Jasper, detained in the port of Brest since 2007 after a fatal collision with a fishing boat, will be put up for sale. France's merchant navy social security body has asked the judge to fix the estimated value at €100,000, while lawyers for the skipper's widow and the Sokalique's crew are seeking €300,000.

LNG FIRST: the Finnish firm ESL Shipping is to order what are claimed to be the world's first LNG-powered large bulk carriers. The two 26,500dwt ice-class 1A ships will be built in China and will start operating in the Baltic Sea in early 2018. CO2 emissions per ton of cargo transported will be reduced by more than 50% compared with current vessels, the company claimed.

BULKER HELD: a Liberian-flagged bulk carrier was detained by the US Coast Guard for more than a month while potential environmental law violations were investigated. The German-owned Cornelia had been held in Duluth Bay on Lake Superior since 2 November.

SUICIDE PROTEST: a 31-year-old seafarer committed suicide by hanging himself at a crewing agency's office in Manila last month. The seaman, John Elejan, was reported to have been made redundant by the company for unspecified 'bad behaviour'.

LOST BOXES: a major search and recovery operation was launched in the Channel last month after 12 containers were swept overboard from the Liberian-registered reefer containership Star First in rough weather off Boulogne.

GREEK STOPPAGES: unions representing Greek seafarers and port workers staged a 24-hour strike early in December in protest at plans to cut pensions, increase the retirement age and privatise some of the country's main ports.

CHINESE CLAMPDOWN: China has revealed plans to introduce Asia's first emissions control areas (ECAs) within its waters — with a 0.5% sulphur content cap on bunkers to be phased in over the next three years.

VALE SALES: the Brazilian mining firm Vale is planning to sell its remaining 11 Valemax bulk carriers in a US\$1.1bn leaseback deal. The company disposed of eight of the 400,000dwt vessels in 2015 and in 2012.

TUG TALKS: French transport minister Alain Vidalies had talks with unions representing tug crews after they warned of strike action in protest at European Union plans to liberalise port towage services.

BUNKER SPILL: an investigation was launched in New Zealand last month after a spillage from the Hong Kong-flagged multipurpose cargoship Ning Po during bunker operations in the port of Whangarei.

RESCUE APPEAL: the French national maritime rescue organisation SNSM has appealed for more donations to support its 24/7 services and its network of 219 rescue stations and 32 training centres.

Protests as SNCM deal is approved

Unions worried by continued uncertainty over 'lifeline' ferries contract

by Jeff Apter

→ Seafarers serving with the French ferry company SNCM staged symbolic strike action last month to protest over the sale of the Mediterranean operator to one of four firms that had made final bids for its services.

The stoppage was held after the Marseille commercial court chose Corsican transport entrepreneur Patrick Rocca as the preferred bidder for the firm, which runs services between the French mainland, Corsica and North Africa.

The ruling came one year after SNCM's majority shareholder Transdev — a transport

firm jointly owned by the Veolia group and the French state bank CDC — asked the court to put the company into receivership when it failed to repay a loan.

Mr Rocca — who is Corsica's biggest road haulier, but has no maritime experience — is set to take over SNCM with effect from 4 January.

The €8.9m deal covers assets valued at around €220m and includes four ro-pax vessels and two passenger ferries.

Under an agreement with the unions, a total of 583 SNCM staff will be made redundant — leaving a total of 873 seafaring and shore-based posts.

Volunteers will be sought initially and French transport min-

ister Alain Vidal said he was committed to saving as many jobs as possible.

But the unions are unhappy that SNCM — which had reported an excellent summer season — will operate against a background of uncertainty caused by continued delays in the publication of the Corsican Assembly's new subsidised public service contract.

The new 'lifeline' services contract is due to come into effect on 1 October 2016. Marcel Faure, CGT union secretary of the SNCM works council, said he feared a second wave of redundancies will arise as a result of the new contract terms.

The unions are also awaiting the European Commission's

definitive decision on whether to absolve the buyer from repaying €440m in 'illegal aid' that was said to have been given to SNCM following its privatisation in the 1990s.

Meanwhile, SNCM's rival Corsica Ferries has bought a second Estonian ferry to increase its fleet to 16 vessels. The company is planning to open two new routes linking Sardinia with Corsica, Toulon and Nice, while the Italian operator Moby Lines has announced a new ferry service linking Nice and Bastia.

Baja Ferries — another company that submitted a bid for SNCM — says it still intends to develop new services between France and North Africa.



THE 13,892TEU APL Vanda is one of the largest and newest ships in the NOL fleet of more than 80 vessels Picture: Eric Hourri

CMA CGM in Neptune Orient Lines takeover

French maritime unions are considering the potential impact of a US\$2.4bn takeover deal between the Marseilles-based container shipping operator CMA CGM and Neptune Orient Lines (NOL) of Singapore.

If approved by EU, US and Chinese competition authorities, the combined company will operate 563 vessels and have about 11.5% of the global

market — narrowing the gap with market leader Maersk Line, which has a 14.7% share.

The French officers' union FOMM-CGT said it would examine the effect on seafaring jobs — and particularly on European officers. The French unions have a long-standing negotiated agreement on jobs and conditions which is not expected to be affected by the tie-up with NOL.

CMA CGM — currently the world's third-largest container shipping operator — said the deal would enable it to deploy ships more efficiently. 'We operate in a very fragmented world with many players and the industry as a whole suffers from volatile freight rates,' said vice-chairman Rodolphe Saadé. 'We believe that scale is more critical than ever to ensure profitable growth.'

Australian union welcomes vote to protect coastal ships

A union campaign against moves to open up Australian coastal trades to foreign shipping has chalked up a major victory — with the country's Senate rejecting the government proposals.

The Maritime Union Australia (MUA) said common sense has prevailed with the Senate voting by 31 to 28 against the draft regulations, which would have replaced a three-tiered licensing system with a single permit allowing foreign-flagged vessels to access Australian ports for 12 months.

It would also have allowed foreign vessels running between Australian ports for more than six months per year to pay foreign wages to their crew.

Green party senator Nick McKim told the Senate debate that the government plans would effectively establish a parallel industrial relations system in Australia in which shore-based workers would be treated far better and far more fairly than seafarers.

And independent senator Jacqui Lambie warned: 'If we destroy the maritime skills of our merchant marine and destroy our shipping capacity, and this legislation will surely do that, then we undermine and attack Australia's national security.'

MUA national secretary Paddy Crumlin said the Senate had voted against a short-sighted policy proposal and 'rightly decided that the

Australian shipping industry is vital in terms of jobs and value to the national economy'.

He said the government's plans had raised serious questions on national security, fuel security, jobs and skills, and protection of the environment.

However, Mr Crumlin warned, the campaign to defend the sector needs to continue. He said the MUA was continuing to campaign on behalf of members serving onboard the general cargoship Portland, whose jobs were at risk as a result of a move by the Alcoa aluminium company to use a foreign-crewed vessel in their place. The union is mounting a legal challenge to the plans.

Danish income tax blow for seafarers

Danish officers' union Søfartens Ledere has lost a long-running legal case claiming that income tax concessions introduced by the government in 2010 and 2012 should have extended to crews under the country's DIS second register.

The union has appealed against the ruling, arguing that the tax breaks fail to benefit its members on DIS ships as owners deduct their employees' income tax equivalent and keep it as a state subsidy.

SL general secretary Fritz Ganzhorn said: 'One has to ask Danish MPs about the obvious injustices inherent in the net salary scheme set up between the state and shipowners.'

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P&O expands Australian cruise fleet



P&O Cruises Australia claimed a bit of maritime history last month when its five ships sailed into Sydney harbour to mark the arrival of the new additions Pacific Aria and Pacific Eden.

The two former Holland America vessels are pictured left as they joined Pacific Dawn, Pacific Jewel and Pacific Pearl to make a V formation before a 'social media naming ceremony' in the port, with their godmothers simultaneously christening the ships through Twitter messages.

With the addition of the two vessels, P&O Cruises Australia has increased its passenger capacity by 50%.

The operator now has five ships cruising year-round from eight homeports in Australia, New Zealand and Singapore.

In the space of the past decade, the P&O Cruises Australia fleet has grown from just two full-time ships and it is set to introduce another ship in May 2017. Currently sailing as Princess Cruises' Dawn Princess, the vessel will be renamed Pacific Explorer and will sail from Sydney during its inaugural season.

Australia's cruise market has been the fastest growing in the world, with passenger numbers up by an average of 20% year over the past decade — passing the one million mark in 2014.

CANAL CONTRACTS: the UK-based BMT Group has secured contracts to carry out a series of marine and port assessments for the proposed US\$50bn Nicaragua Canal. Under the deals with the Hong Kong Nicaragua Canal Development Group (HKND), its BMT Asia Pacific and BMT ARGOS units will examine issues including design, vessel movements, traffic and capacity constraints and to update the business case for the Canal's Pacific and Caribbean ocean ports.

CREW FREED: the Polish master and four crew members from the Cyprus-flagged cargoship Szafir were freed last month nine days after being kidnapped by a group of armed men 130km off Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Eleven other crew members managed to escape by barricading themselves in the engineroom when the ship — which was en route from Antwerp to the port of Onne port from Antwerp — when it was attacked.

SUILVEN SINKS: 30 crew members and four passengers were rescued when the former Caledonian MacBrayne ferry Sulven sank off the coast of Fiji last month. Fiji's Maritime Safety Authority has launched an investigation into the loss of the New Zealand-flagged vessel at the entrance to Suva harbour. The 41-year-old vessel was operated by CalMac for 21 years before being sold to Venu Shipping in 1995.

BREAKING BAD: the NGO Shipbreaking Platform lobby group has slammed three leading Italian shipping companies for their poor shipbreaking practices. The environmental organisation called for the Grimaldi Group, Ignazio Messina and Vittorio Bogazzi & Figli to end the use of South Asian 'beaching' facilities which do not meet the requirements of the new EU regulation on ship recycling.

RESEARCH PLEDGE: French seafaring unions have welcomed confirmation from the managing director of the national research body Ifremer that its 10 vessels will remain under the full French flag. Concerns were raised when an official report referred to the 'exorbitant' salary bill and mooted a transfer of the fleet to the French international register RIF.

CHEMICAL VENTURE: the Danish operator Nordic Tankers and UK-based Borealis Maritime are launching a joint venture firm to operate a fleet of 15 ice-classed chemical tankers in NW Europe and the Baltic. Crystal Nordic is expected to begin operations in the first quarter of 2016 and will run its vessels under the Danish tonnage tax system.

POLAR ALARM: the French ecological association Robin des Bois says action is needed to strengthen navigation in polar regions after a cruiseship collided with an iceberg. The Marshall Islands-registered Ocean Endeavour sustained hull damage in the incident, which occurred near the South Shetland Islands last month.

OFFICER LOST: US Coast Guard rescue crews recovered the body of an engineer officer who went missing from the Chilean-flagged cargoship Berkay N, 25nm north of Puerto Rico last month.

US study warns on shipping decline

Growth of Chinese fleet raises threat of 'sea strangulation', study argues

➔ US maritime unions have welcomed a new report which warns that the country is putting itself at 'grave risk' by allowing its merchant fleet to decline to dramatically low levels.

The study points out that the US-flagged fleet has fallen to the lowest level in more than a century and argues that US global competitiveness and maritime security is being jeopardised as a result.

While China continues to expand both its naval sea power and its fleet of merchant vessels, the US has adopted an 'abandon ship' policy towards the crucial merchant maritime industry, it

contends. China's has doubled its merchant fleet in the past four years and it now totals almost 4,000 vessels, while there are now fewer than 100 US-flagged merchant ships operating on international trades, it points out.

Similarly, the number of Chinese seafarers has risen from 280,000 in 1989 to more than 500,000 now, while the number of US merchant mariners qualified for ocean-going employment has fallen to fewer than 12,000.

Continued decline of the US maritime sector could put more than 650,000 jobs at risk, the report adds.

China's growing commercial and military sea power will give

it the ability to control—or even halt—shipping of essential goods by other nations, the study argues. The US has never been so dependent on imports and exports delivered by ship as it is today, it notes, yet never has the nation had fewer of its own ships to carry goods.

The authors — retired US Navy Captain and maritime historian Carl Schuster and political scientist Dr Patrick Bratton — warn against the threats to the Jones Act and US Maritime Security Program (MSP) measures to support US-flagged and crewed ships.

"The best and perhaps the only way we can counter the threat of "sea strangulation" is to strengthen and expand the US

merchant marine," they write. "In contrast, an over-dependence on flags of convenience carriers and ships belonging to China or other nations that may test us could lead to hardship for those who live and serve under the flag of the US."

The report was welcomed by the US Masters, Mates & Pilots union. "Few people realise that China does not need to launch a naval attack or conduct a blockade to harm us," said president Don Marcus.

"The economic power of their huge merchant marine, which gives them the ability to control shipping rates and service, has the potential to wreak havoc on our economy," he added.



Union alarm over seismic jobs

French maritime unions have voiced concern over a threat to seafaring jobs from the fleet of the seismic ship operator CGG.

The company has tabled restructuring plans to withdraw six French-flagged vessels from service and to keep only five chartered ships, most of them belonging to or operated in cooperation with Norwegian interests. Three fly the Norwegian flag — including Ocean

Sirius, left — and two others are registered in Panama.

The CGT and CFTD unions say the group is sacrificing the French flag — taking the fleet back to its level of 2005 after rising to 27 ships in 2009. They fear the number of CGG employees will halve from 620 now to 310. The unions are urging the government — which has an 11% shareholding — to step in to save France's seismic research activities.

Master in court after his ship cuts off Algerian telecoms

The Chinese master of a Panama-flagged bulk carrier which has been blamed for cutting off Algeria's internet connections for six days has been brought before a court to answer accusations of negligence and disrespect for regulations.

Captain Du Chang Long was placed under judicial supervision after his vessel, the 28,208 dwt Povosa

Ace, was detained on suspicion of severing the fibre-optic subsea telecommunications cable between France and Algeria when it anchored off the port of Annaba in October.

The break in the SMWE4 subsea cable took down some 80% of Algeria's international bandwidth for almost a week. Algérie Telecom has filed a claim for compensation,

claiming commercial damages of more than 600m dinars (€5.1m), almost €850,000 in lost profits and more than €150,000 in repair costs.

The company said the ships had been arrested as a precautionary measure and the master had been prohibited from leaving Algeria, with his passport and ship documents being seized.

CMA CGM in Neptune

The CGT seafarers' union has welcomed the French National Assembly's decision to register seafarers living in the country with ENIM, the national seafarers' social security system, even if they are working under a foreign flag.

The move — which will require the employer to pay 50% of the contribution — follows a 10-year campaign by the union on behalf of French seafarers serving with Guernsey-based Condor Ferries.



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CREW REPATRIATED: French port state control inspectors intervened to ensure that two Filipino seafarers were able to return home after working seven days a week for nine months onboard a flag of convenience ship which had been held in the port of Sète. Management had claimed there were no available seats on flights back to the Philippines for two crewmen from the Antigua & Barbuda-flagged Oder, but they were repatriated in line with the provisions of the Maritime Labour Convention.

BULKER BLAST: an investigation has been launched into the cause of an explosion in a cargo hold onboard the Cyprus-flagged bulk carrier Akaki while anchored in the Brazilian port of Paranaguá last month. The 84,073dwt vessel had loaded a cargo of maize for Vietnam, but damage was minimal and no one was injured in the incident.

SINGAPORE SLUMP: container traffic through the port of Singapore fell by 8.7% last year — to a total of 30.9m TEU, according to the nation's Maritime & Port Authority. The Chinese port of Shanghai consolidated its position as the world's busiest container port, with a 3.5% increase in volumes — to a total of 36.5m TEU last year.

ITALIAN EXTENSION: the state-owned Italian ferry operator Saremar has been allowed to continue sailings on the route between Sardinia and Corsica for at least a further three months from 31 December 2015 while negotiations take place over its long-term future following its liquidation last spring.

CORSICA CONNECTION: Italy's Moby Lines has acquired two secondhand ferries from the Netherlands and Greece to extend its services between Corsica and the French mainland, with a new link to Nice, and to strengthen its links with Livorno.

PIRATES HELD: Nigerian military officials say they arrested more than 1,600 pirates, militants and criminals in the Niger Delta last year. Those detained were suspected of offences including piracy, illegal bunkering and kidnapping.

LIBYAN ALERT: the UK-based security firm Dryad Maritime has warned of a high threat to merchant ships and seafarers in Libya. The warning came in the wake of attempted attacks in the oil ports of Zueitina, As Sidr and Ras Lanuf last month.

ANTWERP RECORD: the Belgian port of Antwerp handled a record 200m tonnes of cargo last year, confirming its position as the world's 20th busiest port and the second-ranking gateway in Europe, behind Rotterdam.

TOP BREAKER: Bangladesh overtook India last year to become the world's leading shipbreaking nation, French environment group Robin des Bois has reported.

PILOT PROTEST: marine pilots working in the Belgian ports of Antwerp and Ghent staged a 30-hour strike last month in a dispute over their contract terms.

ITF warns over Australian row

Protests as security guards remove crew in night-time 'raid' on coastal ship

→ The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) has condemned a US company for the forcible removal of Australian crew members from a ship that is being replaced by foreign-flagged tonnage operated by low-cost seafarers.

Up to 30 security guards were sent onto the Australian-registered bulk carrier Portland at 1am local time. Five Australian seafarers on the ship were woken, handed their passports and taken off the vessel, which is operated by the US metals firm Alcoa.

The crew had been refusing to sail the ship to Singapore, where it is set to be scrapped after 27 years of transporting alumina around the Australian coast.

They were protesting at Alcoa's decision to replace the vessel with foreign-registered tonnage crewed by Chinese seafarers paid as little as A\$2 (€1.27) an hour.

Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) national secretary Paddy Crumlin said there were many unanswered questions about the legitimacy of Alcoa's heavy-handed approach in forcibly removing workers in the middle of the night and bringing in foreign seafarers to sail the ship to Singapore.

'How did the foreign crew gain permission to enter and then sail the vessel? Where are the crew from? What security checks do they have? What visa are they on?' he asked. 'When did it suddenly become OK to again send in security guards in the dead of night to



Five Australian crew members were taken off the bulk carrier Portland. Picture: MUA

forcibly remove a workforce? This sort of thing shouldn't happen to anyone in their workplace.'

ITF general secretary Steve Cotton added: 'They came for the Portland like thieves in the night. This raid and the flight of this respected vessel — with its 27-year history of serving Australian industry — raises grave questions, not just about the future of Australia as a maritime nation but also about the fitness of the crew who have been para-

chuted in to take this vessel away. The ITF will be investigating these matters fully, including the role of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority in this affair.'

The MUA has criticised the decision to give Alcoa a temporary licence for the use of foreign crew in the Australian cabotage trade. A federal court rejected the union's application for the permission to be withdrawn, even though the Australian Senate ruled against removing the

Australian crew requirement on Australian-flag ships working in domestic trades.

Mr Crumlin said the Australian government was jeopardising the country's seafaring skills base by a deregulation agenda to relax coastal shipping rules. 'Australians have a right to work jobs in their own country and to be treated with respect by an employer profiting off the minerals that belong to the Australian people,' he added.

US unions welcome aid boost

US unions have welcomed presidential approval for a big increase in the support given to shipping under the country's Maritime Security Programme (MSP).

The new arrangements increase MSP funding by \$24m in the current fiscal year — meaning that each vessel in the scheme will be eligible for \$3.5m support, compared with \$3.1m in the previous year.

The legislation also sets out

long-term funding for each of the 60 strategically useful ships in the scheme. It is hoped that the aid arrangements, running until the 2021 fiscal year, will ensure that the ships will remain under the US flag and will continue to operate with US crew.

'This action by Congress is a critically important first step in our ongoing battle to strengthen and grow the US-flag merchant marine,' said Don Marcus, president of the

Masters, Mates & Pilots union. 'It clearly demonstrates that Congress understands that the most cost-effective and efficient way for our government to have the seafill capability it needs is through the MSP and its partnership with US-flag shipping companies and American maritime unions. It goes a long way to keeping ships under the US flag and ensuring that American maritime jobs will not be sent overseas.'

Philippines bid to stamp out rip-off lawyers

The Philippines government has introduced a new law to protect the country's seafarers against 'ambulance-chasing' lawyers charging rip-off fees for personal injury cases.

The long-awaited legislation sets a limit to the amount of damages that law firms can charge from the total awards made to injured crew. There is evidence that some fees have amounted to as much as 60% of the compensation paid.

Under the Seafarers' Protection Act, legal firms found guilty of 'ambulance-chasing' activities will face fines or up to two years in prison. It also limits the fees recoverable by a claimant lawyer to 10% of the total compensation awarded to a seafarer or their family.

Seafarers' representatives have welcomed the measure, describing it as a 'legislative milestone'.

German owners warn on decline

German shipowners have warned of a 'disturbing' new decline in the country's merchant fleet — with the number of ships down by almost 17% over the past three years.

Alfred Hartmann, president of the German Shipowners' Association (VDR), said there had been a net loss of 117 ships from the fleet last year and the continued reduction in German seafarer numbers is now posing a

serious threat to the nation's wider maritime sector.

'With the loss of so many ships, also go German seafarers — and their expertise for the maritime cluster is lost,' he pointed out. 'On land, they are indispensable in pilotage and ports, as well as in the entire shipbuilding industry and its suppliers.'

The number of German seafarers fell to just 6,700 last year and the

federal government has agreed to provide additional tax and social security concessions in an attempt to encourage the increased employment and training of domestic crews.

'If the measures described are rapidly translated into laws and regulations, our companies will be able to reliably plan and the further loss of German seafarers can be stopped,' Mr Hartmann promised.

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Pictured left is the 540TEU Japanese vessel Natori — the first containership to feature a semi-spherical bow design which improves operating performance.
First used on car carriers last year, the innovative design reduces wind resistance by as much as 50%, improving fuel consumption and reducing emissions.
Built by the Kyokuyo Shipyard, the 7,390gt Natori's bridge and accommodation areas are integrated into the forepart to ensure better visibility and crew comfort, and minimising noise and vibration.

Brittany Ferries imposes rotas

Ratings hit out as western Channel operator threatens to switch to UK flag

by Jeff Apter

Seafarers serving with the French operator Brittany Ferries have protested over the company's decision to unilaterally impose new working arrangements that will end the long-standing week-on/week-off rotas for some personnel.

Management had set a deadline of 31 December for agreement on the plans, which have been at the heart of discussions with the CFDT and CGT unions for the past three years.

Unions representing the officers, catering and shore-based staff agreed to changes that manage to maintain the 7/7 arrangements. But deck and engine ratings rejected proposals to replace the existing rotas with four-on/four-off, 4/3 or 5/2 shifts, complaining that the different systems would disrupt rest periods and employees' personal lives.

When the ratings' unions refused to sign a framework agreement by the 31 December deadline, management unilaterally imposed new rotas introducing a four-days-at-sea and three-days-off pattern with effect from 1 January.

Unions also expressed concern at the company's threat to switch its French-flagged high-speed craft Normandie Express to the 'more economic' UK register if an agreement could not be reached.

But members of the CFDT union organised a petition, signed by more than 1,000 staff,



Brittany Ferries union members meet in the port of Le Havre last month. Picture: Eric Hourri

calling for more talks with management in a bid to avert the possibility of a court case against the company over the imposed crewing arrangements.

CFDT member Jean-Pascal Richard, who organised the petition, warned that French jobs could be at risk if the dispute went to court. The CFDT local branch said the union would respect the result of any secret ballot of the seafaring workforce on plans to retain 7/7 patterns for ratings — which would involve an extra 30 minutes of work a day — but said the company must first withdraw its threat to de-flag the Normandie Express.

French seafarers staged a six-day stoppage in the port of Marseilles last month to blockade a Stena Line ferry chartered by a new company operating services to the island of Corsica.

The CGT union staged the protest against the 21,170gt Stena

Carrier because of concerns over the future of operations between the French mainland and Corsica following the sale of the former state-owned ferry firm SNCM.

Stena Carrier, which operates under the Danish international register, has been chartered by Corsica Linea — a joint venture between two of the companies which unsuccessfully bid to take over SNCM, Baja Ferries and Corsica Maritima.

Stena Carrier — which is operating with 22 'European' seafarers — has been deployed to run three weekly all-freight return trips between Marseilles and Bastia, Corsica's main freight port. The chartered ship will be replaced in mid-February by the former Finlines vessel Antares, renamed Corsica Linea Uno. The company says it will operate under a European flag with a 'Corsica-based crew'.

Unions have accused Corsica

Linea of trying to sabotage the launch of MCM, the new company that will be run by Corsica-based businessman Patrick Rocca, who won the bid for SNCM.

They called off the strike after a court imposed a fine of €30,000 for every day it continued. The unions also received assurances from Mr Rocca that they would be involved in all future discussions over the re-organisation of services following the unexpected deployment of the Stena Carrier.

Corsica's regional assembly says it will involve the unions to 'find a way out of the crisis' and discuss 'a new configuration' for the island's maritime transport arrangements. The unions fear it will produce a greatly reduced public service contract to come into effect on 1 October, with adverse consequences for the 900 former SNCM employees and their 400 colleagues at CMN.

Greece is told to tighten up its tonnage tax

Greece has been urged by the European Commission to take steps to ensure that its state aid for shipping complies with EU rules.

Brussels said it had determined that some of the special tax arrangements provided for the Greek maritime sector may be in breach of the EU guidelines.

'The Commission has concerns that the Greek tonnage tax system is not well targeted and benefits the shareholders of shipping companies

as well as companies other than maritime shipping companies, beyond what is permitted under the maritime guidelines,' it stated.

Brussels said it had asked Greece to review which vessels are eligible for support and to exclude fishing vessels, port tugs, and some yachts from the preferential tax regime, along with insurance intermediaries, ship brokers and shareholders in shipping companies.

But the Commission said Greek bulk carriers

and tankers can continue to benefit from a tonnage-based taxation instead of profit-based tax as long as their operators maintain the share of the fleet they have under EU or European Economic Area flags.

Greece has been given two months to inform the Commission whether it agrees to the measures proposed, in which case it would need to amend its national rules with effect from 1 January 2019 at the latest.

FRENCH ROW: leaders from six French seafaring unions pulled out of a meeting of the merchant navy council in the presence of sea minister Alain Vidalies last month in protest at the government's decision to dilute plans to update rules requiring a proportion of domestic oil cargoes to be carried on French-flagged ships. The unions say the draft decree fails to adequately protect job security and energy supplies. French owners have also criticised the proposals.

OILY FINE: a Turkish shipping company has been fined US\$1m, and a Filipino chief engineer ordered to pay a \$50,000 penalty, after being found guilty of oil pollution offences last month. A court in Baltimore heard that a US Coast Guard investigation had found that the Maltese-flagged bulk carrier Artvin had been using a 'magic pipe' to bypass pollution prevention equipment and routinely discharge oily water into the sea between March and November 2014.

CHINESE FINES: China has imposed fines totalling US\$65m on seven foreign shipping firms following an investigation into price fixing on shipments of cars, lorries and construction machinery on seven key routes. The penalties were levied on MOL, KKK, Eastern Car Liner, Eukor Car Carriers, Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics, CCNI and CSAV under anti-monopoly laws.

LAY-UPS INCREASE: the number of laid-up containerships rose five-fold last year in the face of a difficult market, according to the industry analyst Alphaliner. It revealed that the idle boxship fleet totalled 331 vessels with a total capacity of 1.36m TEU at the end of 2015 and warned that a significant improvement in the situation is not expected before April this year.

PORT PANNED: Australian environmentalists have slammed the government's decision to approve the expansion of the Abbot Point shipping terminal — used for loading coal to markets in Asia — warning that the increase in shipping movements will add to the risks facing the World Heritage-listed Great Barrier Reef.

PANAMA PLEDGE: the expanded Panama Canal is set to open in the second quarter of 2016, despite delays caused by cracks discovered in the new locks, the head of the waterway authority has promised. Navigation tests are expected to take place in April, said Panama Canal Authority chief Jorge Quijano.

CHINA CUTS: a scheme to cut pollution from shipping has been introduced in 11 major ports in China. The 0.5% sulphur limit for marine fuels will be extended to all the country's territorial waters from 1 January 2019.

COMPETITION CONCERN: the Dutch Shippers' Association (EVO) has expressed concern that an increase in container shipping industry alliances will hinder competition and reduce customer choice.

DRINK DETENTION: a Russian cargoship was detained in Denmark last month after breath tests found that the master, chief mate and chief engineer were over the alcohol limit.

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VDR SEARCH: accident investigators in the US have announced a second mission to search for the voyage data recorder of the ro-ro cargoship *El Faro*, which sank off the Bahamas in October last year with the loss of all 33 crew onboard. The National Transportation Safety Board will use a remotely operated vehicle to search a 35 sq m area for the 'black box' and other wreckage.

MALTESE BOOM: Malta's ship register — the sixth largest in the world — grew by more than 14% last year, according to new figures released by the country's maritime administration last month. Around 900 ships of 12m gt transferred to the flag during the year, meaning that it has grown by more than 45% in tonnage terms since 2011.

FEES ROW: more than 300 Nigerian navigation and engineering students studying at Romania's Constanta Maritime University through Nigerian Maritime Administration & Safety Agency scholarships are facing expulsion after the Agency was accused of failure to pay their school fees and other allowances.

FARES WAR: a price war has broken out between the major ferry operators on services between the Italian mainland and Sardinia. Grimaldi has cut fares on its new service between Livorno (Leghorn) and Olbia by up to 40% in a bid to break Moby Line's dominance of the route.

GREEK STRIKES: Greek seafaring unions have staged further strike action in protest at government plans to cut pensions, labour and insurance rights, and to increase the retirement age. The unions were also protesting at moves to privatise the port of Piraeus.

REPAIR CENTRE: Singapore has confirmed its place as the world's leading ship repair location with 2015 port statistics showing that more than 6,330 ships contracted work ranging from equipment repair to technical overhauls needing dry docking.

WAGES WIN: French union reps have secured two months of unpaid wages owed to the crew of the Panama-flagged general cargoship *Buse Trio*, which was towed into the port of Brest after suffering a loss of power off the coast of Brittany last month.

BRITTANY HOURS: the works council representing seafarers serving with the French operator Brittany Ferries has withdrawn its court challenge to the company's plans to introduce new working rotas for deck and engine crews.

TANKER DEATH: a Russian seafarer died and two other crew members were taken to hospital ashore in a serious condition after being overcome by fumes during tank cleaning onboard the 7,024dwt tanker *Araz River* last month.

CHANNEL RISE: cross-Channel freight figures last year reached 42.27mt, a 5% increase on 2014 and beating its previous record notched in 2013. Passenger loads rose 4% to 10.7m.

Sweden detains 'worst ever' ship

Union inspectors shocked by squalid state of FoC vessel carrying explosives

by Andrew Draper

→ The Swedish seafaring unions have condemned conditions onboard a Panama-flagged general cargoship detained in the port of Varberg last month after an inspection found more than 20 deficiencies, including problems with life-saving and fire-fighting equipment and substandard accommodation.

The local International Transport Workers' Federation inspector described the Turkish-owned *Whiskey Trio* as 'the worst ship I have seen in all my life'. The SEKO union said crew quarters were appalling, food was rotten, a sick seafarer had been prevented from seeking medical help and wages were well below ILO standards.

Union inspector Göran Larsson said he was shocked at seeing the poor living conditions, including dirty and dilapidated cabins, outdated food and beds consisting of wooden boards without bedding.

'When we came the crew were having breakfast. They were eating old, dry bread which they tried to toast, olives and tea. It was horrible to see,' he added.

ITF inspector Sven Save said *Whiskey Trio* — which had sailed from the UK port of Sheer-



The Turkish-owned *Whiskey Trio* under detention in the Swedish port of Varberg. Picture: SEKO

ness — was found to be carrying explosives and other military equipment. Port state authorities detained the 1,984gt ship and Mr Save said the explosives were being transferred to another vessel.

Inspectors discovered bare 380-volt cables and other ignition risks. Fire protection systems were found to be deficient and containers incorrectly stowed, with freeboard marks incorrectly marked.

'They did a fire drill onboard, that was a real disaster,' Mr Save added. 'They didn't know what they should do, it was a complete disaster. After 10 minutes they had water, but they didn't have anything else. The inspectors found it really bad, and we told them we didn't need to see any more.'

Mr Save said the 27-year-old vessel is owned by Trio Shipping of Istanbul. Crew members were reportedly paid US\$600 a month

for 12 hours' work a day, seven days a week. There were nine crew members on the ship — five from Georgia, three (including the master) from Turkey and one from India — and port state control inspectors said they had been unable to establish what the working language onboard was.

Five of the crew returned home after *Whiskey Trio* was detained, and some reports suggested the ship's final destination was in the Middle East.

Norway launches new probe into Scandinavian Star blaze

→ The Norwegian parliament, the Storting, has opened a fresh investigation into the 1990 Scandinavian Star ferry disaster in which 159 passengers and crew died.

Despite numerous official investigations, controversy continues to surround the incident and campaigners argue that many key questions about the cause of the fire onboard the ship remain unanswered.

The new investigation will report back in June 2017 and will consider

whether the previous probes provided 'an accurate and complete picture of the case', whether recommendations were adequately followed up, and whether survivors and family members were taken care of.

However, the commission will not address the question of criminal responsibility — although many people believe the blaze was started by arson and there have also been claims the fire was an attempted insurance fraud.

The Norwegian Scandinavian Star support group has welcomed the decision and the 3F union in Denmark said it wanted to see the role of the Danish Maritime Authority examined.

National secretary Henrik Berlau claims Authority personnel have been gagged. 'I believe there are many who know it was wrong and didn't do anything,' he added. 'They're keeping their mouths shut. There are several people at the DMA who know the story.'

France 'fails to protect seafarers'

→ French seafaring unions have accused the government of being 'the gravediggers' of the country's shipping industry.

The CGT unions representing officers and ratings said ministers have failed to take effective measures to end a long-running decline in seafaring jobs, conditions and salaries despite three years of discussion about proposed new maritime regulation.

Jean-Philippe Chateil, general secretary of the FOMM-CGT officers' union, said deepsea jobs for French seafarers have almost disappeared, leaving ferries as the last sector for employment — and jobs there are now under attack with the demise of *SeaFrance*, *MyFerryLink* and *SNCM*.

In an attempt to reduce French seafaring employment costs, the government has agreed to introduce a net salary scheme for companies employment crews on international trades. The move has been welcomed by the owners' association, AdF, which complains that French crews cost 20% more to employ than their UK counterparts and 40% more than Italian seafarers.

Greek shipowners reject EU call for tough tonnage tax controls

→ Greek shipowners have hit back at European Union calls for tighter controls on the country's tonnage tax scheme — warning that the Commission could 'seriously disrupt the shipping sector in the EU after 20 years of successful growth'.

Brussels has given Greece two months to decide what action it will take in response to an investigation showing that its tax arrangements for the maritime sector may be in breach

of EU state aid guidelines.

But the Union of Greek Shipowners (UGS) rejected the Commission's claims that the support package goes beyond what is permitted by Brussels. It warned that the action could have 'unforeseeable consequences which would be detrimental not only for Greece but also for the rest of the EU, as they would seriously undermine one of its most important strategic sectors which remains prominent

internationally in the face of fierce competition'.

The owners added: 'The UGS is concerned that the negative climate created by the decision regarding Greece risks severely undermining one of the Greek economy's primary pillars at a time of exceptionally high unemployment and urgently needed growth and the EU may lose a substantial part of its fleet and maritime cluster.'



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Biggest boxship comes in empty



The downturn in world trade was symbolised when one of the world's largest containerships, the 19,224TEU MSC Oscar, arrived in the French port of Le Havre with no boxes onboard. The 192,237gt vessel — which came into service last year and is deployed on MSC's Asia-Europe service — spent 10 days in Le Havre before departing for the UK port of Felixstowe to resume trade.

Industry analysts are predicting a tough year ahead for containership operators, blaming 'reckless' over-ordering of new ultra-large tonnage for overcapacity in the market and dire freight rates.

Fleet capacity is set to grow by 4.6% this year, but a report from Alphaliner last month suggested that some owners may delay deliveries or cancel orders as a result of the poor conditions.

Picture: Eric Hourii

Unions protest at Australian action

Foreign crew replaces local seafarers following night-time raid by police

→ Unions have condemned a decision to send in armed police to remove five seafarers protesting about the loss of their jobs from a ship in Australia.

More than a dozen police boarded the Barbados-flagged bulk carrier CSL Melbourne in the port of Newcastle to order the Australian crew members off the vessel and to escort a foreign crew onboard.

During the night-time raid, the Australian seafarers were removed from their beds, marched off the ship and abandoned on the wharf.

Unions are questioning what type of visas and Customs clearance were given to the Indian crew who replaced them.

The 49,502dwt CSL Melbourne has been carrying alumina between the ports of Newcastle and Gladstone for the past five years, but the Pacific Aluminium company decided to replace the Australian seafarers with cheaper foreign crew after securing a tem-



The CSL Melbourne crew before they were removed from the ship

porary licence from the government.

The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) described the removal of the Australian crew as 'an absolute outrage' and accused the company of exploiting the country's coastal shipping regulations to bring in seafarers paid as little as A\$2 (€1.27) an hour.

The International Transport Workers' Federation also condemned the Australian government for diluting the country's

cabotage protection laws even though politicians had voted in November to retain them.

The ITF said its cabotage taskforce found that 47 countries have some form of protection for their coastal shipping services. Failing to protect cabotage undermines sovereignty and has national security implications, it added, and also has serious economic implications for maritime regions and communities.

ITF seafarers' section chair

Dave Heindel said: 'Coming on the heels of the dawn raid removal of the crew of the Portland, this is another example of the Australian government shooting itself in the foot. It is beginning to look almost like it wants to punish the Australian people, by removing their jobs and national shipping industry in favour of dodging tax and national labour standards.'

The ITF is now considering whether to make a formal complaint to the International Labour Organisation over possible infringements of the Maritime Labour Convention.

Abdulgani Serang, general secretary of the National Union of Seafarers of India, said the Indian crew deployed on CSL Melbourne had been deceived and not told that they were replacing Australian seafarers on an Australian-flagged ship in an Australian port. 'My union has condemned this fraud,' he added. 'We are all for Australian jobs on Australian-flagged vessels. We support the Australian seafarers.'

Master shares pollution fine

A French appeal court has upheld the conviction of a ferry company and a ship master for pollution in the Mediterranean — imposing increased fines on both of them.

The Aix-en-Provence court ordered that Compagnie Tunisienne de Navigation (CTN), owner of the 32,298gt ro-pax Carthage, should pay a €500,000 penalty — of which €50,000 must be paid by Faouzi Zorgati, the ship's master.

The court heard that the ferry had been spotted by a surveillance aircraft trailing a 1.6sq m slick

during a voyage from Tunis to Marseilles in October 2009. This was the first case to come to court in which images taken at night were used to prosecute an operator for pollution in the French 200-mile ecological protection zone, and the court was shown images recorded by a side scan radar and by an infrared scanner.

CTN denied the charges, arguing that the ferry had sailed through an existing patch of pollution and it also unsuccessfully invoked the Montego Bay Convention, claiming that the case should be heard

in Tunisia, the flag state.

In the original hearing, held in December 2012, the company had been fined €125,000 and Capt Zorgati had been ordered to pay €25,000. CTN and the master were also told to pay €2,000 to three environmental protection bodies.

The France Nature Environment (FNE) organisation welcomed the ruling, stating that the decision sends 'a strong signal to shipowners and shipmasters to end such practices, devastating the marine environment'.

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CRUISESHIP CALL: US politicians have called for a National Transportation Safety Board investigation into an incident in which the Bahamas-flagged cruiseship Anthem of the Seas was caught up in a hurricane-force storm south of North Carolina last month. The vessel's owners, Royal Caribbean, said the company storm avoidance policy was being strengthened after the ship suffered minor damage and some passengers were injured during 120mph winds and 30ft seas.

COSTA CASE: a Florida appeal court has ruled that Costa Concordia passengers cannot seek compensation in the US for any injuries suffered in the 2012 disaster off the coast of Italy. The judge ruled that the 57 claimants — including five US nationals — will have to take their case to Italy, arguing that litigating in Florida would result in 'material and manifest injustice' to parent company Carnival because the vast majority of evidence and virtually all of the witnesses are located in Italy.

CANADIAN GROUNDING: an investigation has been launched in Canada after a Panama-flagged containership ran aground in the St Lawrence river shortly after leaving Montreal. The 37,398gt MSC Monica was refloated on the high tide, and although initial reports suggested the ship had suffered steering failure, the federal transportation safety board said it had begun an investigation into the causes of the incident.

GOING HOME: 15 Ghanaian seafarers have returned home after being stranded on a flag of convenience bulk carrier in the French port of La Rochelle for six months. The crew of the Liberian-flagged Sider Pink received almost US\$350,000 in owed wages after being supported by the International Transport Workers' Federation, local unions and welfare agencies since the Greek-owned ship was detained last August.

CONDOR VICTORY: two years after staging a 12-day strike on the Condor Rapide in 2014, French seafarers have at last obtained the social security rights that they were fighting for. The French parliament has passed a law ensuring that all French-resident seafarers serving on flag of convenience ships can have the right to be part of the ENIM national insurance scheme, to which employers must contribute.

DRONE CHECKS: maritime authorities in Turkey are set to start using drones to monitor the Bosphorus for maritime pollution. Istanbul's marine directorate said it had imposed fines totalling around US\$1m on 90 ships caught making illicit waste discharges in the waterway last year and the checks will be intensified when the use of drones starts in March.

ORDERS SLUMP: worldwide orders for new ships have almost halved over the past year, according to a new report. A total of 1,306 vessel orders were placed in 2015, down from 2,164 a year earlier. While the number of tanker orders increased 14% to 424, there was a 73% fall in offshore vessel orders and a 68% reduction in bulk carrier orders.

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HUMAN FACTORS



The Shared Display enables seafarers to annotate charts and leave messages for colleagues

Making work for

↙ If you want to make a system or a machine work better, try asking the people who use it all the time. That was the principle driving the CASCADE study (model-based Cooperative and Adaptive Ship-based Context Aware Design). The three-year project aimed to harness the experience of seafarers to improve communications and cooperation within bridge teams by optimising bridge design and developing new ways to share and display information.

CASCADE was born out of concerns about key 'human factor' safety issues — such as fatigue and stress, automation, situational awareness, decision-making, and teamwork — and it built on previous studies warning that the proliferation of increasingly complex bridge technology confronting officers, together with the multitude of different user interfaces and 'information overload' can have highly negative consequences for safety.

Feedback from seafarers — including many Nautilus members — was gathered through surveys, focus groups and simulation exercises. This identified such problems as over-reliance on technology, communication challenges, and the dangers of over-reliance on pilots.

Researchers sought to develop an 'adaptive' bridge system that aims to curb 'human errors' by improving the interaction between seafarers and their equipment.

The project team began work in March 2012, with a fact-finding visit to a Danish ferry — in which feedback from seafarers persuaded the researchers that radical re-design of bridges was likely to be a poor use of resources and that it would be more effective to explore 'innovative solutions that complement and enhance the current technology rather than trying to re-invent it'.

“Focus groups called for more standardisation of bridge equipment, and better illumination”

'There are clearly examples of poorly-designed bridges, but the new Integrated Navigation System standards adopted by the IMO and brought into force at the beginning of 2011 will go a significant way towards addressing such fundamental problems,' the final project report notes.

On the basis of the feedback from seafarers, the study team decided to examine four core concepts:

- a drawing tool to allow seafarers to annotate over the top of

Is there a way to make a ship's bridge more user-friendly? And can navigational displays be better presented to reduce operator error? Those were among the questions examined in the EU-funded CASCADE research project, which has just reported its findings...



Members of the CASCADE research team with a mock-up of their proposed new bridge design

key pieces of equipment, such as ECDIS
 ■ an operation adaptive display that automatically changes the display of instrumentation, depending on the mode of operation

■ a captain's portable display, relaying key information from the bridge to bring the master 'up to speed' in an emergency

■ a handover tool, to present key information when watchkeepers change

These ideas were refined after further surveys and focus groups, in which seafarers expressed support for moves to improve the standardisation and integration of equipment, to improve bridge lighting and illumination — particularly at night, and to explore the idea of 'heads-up' displays of information on the bridge window.

From this feedback came more detailed work to develop new bridge and equipment design models — including a set of adaptive bridge displays. These include a touchscreen 'Shared Display' intended to aid communication and cooperation on the bridge. This tool is fully customisable and allows one screen to show multiple sources of information in whatever configuration is best for a particular situation.

The Shared Display also allows seafarers to graphically annotate maps, leave notes for other crew members or electronically fill in checklists.

Researchers also worked on ways to integrate the CASCADE console with the tools used by pilots in their Portable Pilot Units (PPUs). They developed a protocol to share pilotage routes between the PPU and the ship's electronic charts — establishing

a link between the PPU and mirroring of information, members to see additional pilot.

The project team invested design — including the a console, to support work in evaluated concepts for four

Both the CASCADE tools using a physical simulator and a virtual simulator (a bridge).

'The virtual simulation new bridge designs at the based purely on computer. 'By simulating human-m to analyse information fl exchange between seafarers

The final CASCADE co traditional displays, which to be taken by watchkeep helping to improve situatio

The design features a can be used by seafarers o situational awareness and voyage planning and collis

The console height can coupled with the console di multi-function touch disp alarms and checklists or to and there is a cap over the wheelhouse lighting syste

The project involved s countries — including the BMT Group, the German Raytheon Anschutz, the Mastermind Shipmanag manufacturer Marimatech

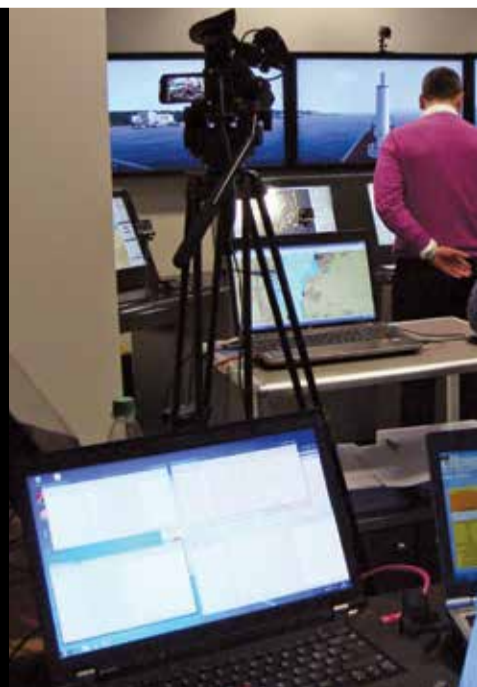
↘ 'Innovative research simulation, listen cross-discipline co ideas, has produced new the researchers concluded cooperation and providin CASCADE has contributed and the improvement of fe be felt by both individual a whole.'

Further information c www.cascadeproject.eu



Left: CASCADE researchers filming on the bridge of a Danish ferry to assess the way crew interact with their systems and equipment

Right: CASCADE team members used simulators to test their new bridge designs and equipment and system display concepts



HUMAN FACTORS

the machines for the mariners

and the bridge screens to enable the
from the PPU screen, allowing crew
data normally only available to the

investigated ideas for improving bridge
ability to adjust the height of the
a sitting or standing position — and
alternative bridge layouts.
s and the bridge designs were tested
(a ship simulator used for training)
software-based simulation of a ship

platform makes it possible to test
very earliest stages of development,
ational models,' the team noted.
achine interaction, it is possible
ow and optimise the information
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console design features large (32in)
are intended to enable information
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onal awareness in the process.

new kind of shared display which
n both sides of the console to share
work cooperatively on tasks such as
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splays. The console includes two 12in
lays, which can be used to present
command specific ship equipment,
displays to prevent reflections from
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even partners from five European
University of Cardiff, the UK-based
bridge and navigation systems firm
Cyprus-based shipowner/manager
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collaboration and forward-thinking
concepts in bridge console design,'
'By improving communication and
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towards the prevention of accidents
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seafarers and the maritime world as

on the project is on the website:



The Rolls-Royce Unified Bridge Design in action on the PSV Stril Luna Picture: Christoffer Furnes

Ergonomic bridge design has seafarers at its heart

Rolls-Royce has won a top award for its project to radically redesign the ship bridge environment by putting the seafarer 'at the heart of the process' to create a safer, more efficient and clutter-free working space. The company's Unified Bridge Design (UBD) — which was first installed in 2014 onboard the platform supply vessel Stril Luna — was selected as the winner of the 2015 Ergonomics Design Award, presented by the UK Chartered Institute of Ergonomics & Human Factors. The UBD was developed following a series of ship visits, onboard observation

of seafarers at work on North Sea support vessels, and simulator tests to investigate officer interaction with equipment, identifying which functions were vital and which could be removed or merged to improve operator performance. Key features include changes to console design, colour and graphical user interfaces — with improved standards of visibility and reduced reflection. A unified software platform was developed across applications and screen sizes, with a common way of navigating across and switching between systems.

The vessel's control levers were also given a makeover to simplify and prevent error, with motorised levers giving tactile feedback to the users. Console 'footprint' was reduced by combining a number of levers with similar functions — putting more equipment within arm's reach than in traditional bridge consoles. A unified alert philosophy, enabling all bridge alerts to be silenced and handled from one panel was introduced, while emergency switches were placed in easily recognisable positions.

Alarm systems 'impossible to use in real life'

Some ships' officers are having to deal with anything from 50 to 150 alarms an hour, delegates at an international conference on marine control systems were told.

However, new industry requirements should help to combat the problem — with changes to the rules for alert management on the bridge expected to cut the number of alarms and to make it easier to deal with them.

In a presentation to the two-day 2015 Marine Electrical and Control Systems Safety Conference (MECSS), Joanne Stokes, head of human factors for Lloyd's Register Marine Consulting, said that there is 'compelling evidence' to show how a greater focus on human issues in the design stage would have huge benefits for safe and efficient operations.

She said an alarm assessment held in the engine control room of a large cruiseship found that the engineering officer of the watch was having to respond to an average of 50 alarms an hour during normal 'at sea' conditions.

This rose to 100 alarms an hour during port operations, and 150 alarms an hour when a boiler fault developed, she added.

Some of the alarms could not be dealt with by the OOW and needed the attention of the electrotechnical officer, Ms Stokes said, and others were repeater alarms that were superfluous.

Officers complained that the alarm tags used for the same pieces of equipment were different across vessels in the fleet — meaning that they had to recall and relearn the tags every time they changed ship.

'We can see how it is virtually impossible for the engineer to attend to, understand, filter and react effectively to even a small percentage of these alarms in the time required,' Ms Stokes added.

'Subsequent investigation of three of the ECR-managed systems (steam boiler, oil purifier, converter drive) revealed that the alarms for these systems could be significantly reduced and more effectively presented to the ECR operator,' she added. 'Extrapolating this out to the many other systems managed in the ECR and across the whole ship means that there are major time and operational efficiency savings to be had by rationalising the alarms.'

Dr Peter van der Klugt, from Imtech Marine in the Netherlands, told the meeting that the use of the word 'integrated' in integrated bridge systems 'does not necessarily imply a wide standardisation of visual and audible alarm indications nor minimising the number of alarms'.

Indeed, he warned, the increasing amount of software makes it easier to monitor many variables — which, in turn, increases the amount of alerts. 'Important alarms can be hidden in long alarm lists on alarm displays and, after a time of many spurious alarms, an operator may even fail to identify there is a serious problem,' he added.

Current systems mean that a single problem can cause multiple alarms from multiple locations, with different visual and audible properties, Mr van der Klugt pointed out.

Help may be on hand, however, he said. The International Maritime Organisation has introduced a performance standard for bridge alert management (BAM) and it applies to all bridge equipment presenting alerts — irrespective of whether they originate in emergency systems, navigation systems or machinery systems.

The BAM standards set four alert priorities which will indicate to operators the relevance of an alarm and how quickly action is required. They also set three alert categories, which indicate the lines of responsibility for dealing with alarms.

'Introducing BAM in bridge automation has the potential to be a great relief for the navigator, if properly applied to its full extent,' Mr van der Klugt told the meeting. 'The bridge becomes quieter and there will be fewer — if any — high-priority alarms that will have to be immediately regarded by the bridge team.'

Standardising alert sound and alert state presentation will help officers to quickly recognise the importance of an alarm, he added, and there is no reason why the principles used to apply the system to bridge equipment should not be used to improve engine department systems.

'Manufacturers should take responsibility for how problems detected by their systems are handled by their systems,' he concluded. 'They should no longer claim that their responsibility stops after having alerted the operator about a symptom. They should embrace SAM with all its possibilities and use that as guidance for how their own systems should deal with problems.'

Organised by FIGS Events on behalf of the Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology (IMarEST), MECSS 2015 also covered issues including cyber-security, emerging technologies, high voltage systems, remote monitoring and hybrid power and propulsion systems.

HEALTH & SAFETY



El Faro's bridge structure was located in the debris field. Picture: NTSB

US may search again for ship's missing VDR

The US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) says it is confident of determining the causes of the loss of the ro-ro containership *El Faro* last October even though investigators have been unable to find the vessel's voyage data recorder.

All 33 crew died when the 31,515gt vessel sank in a hurricane off the Bahamas during a voyage from Florida to Puerto Rico, shortly after the master reported an ingress of water and a 15 degree list.

The search for the VDR was suspended in November following an extended examination of the ship's separated bridge and hull sections. But lead investigator Tom Roth-Roffy said the NTSB is considering a second search for the 'black box'.

However, the NTSB said that it

expects to be able to confirm the cause of the accident even if the VDR is not located. 'Over the years we've completed many investigations without the aid of recorders and other investigative tools,' said chairman Christopher Hart.

Last month, the NTSB released underwater images and video of the vessel, filmed by a remotely operated vehicle at a depth of some 4,570m. This revealed that the navigation bridge structure and the deck below it had separated from the ship. The missing structure included the mast and its base where the VDR was mounted.

Investigators said they have ruled out major structural failure as a cause of the loss, but they are closely examining 'the issue with the detachment of the upper two decks'.

Union gets advice on Zika virus

In response to concerns expressed by members about the risks posed by the spread of the Zika virus, Nautilus has secured advice from the UK Maritime & Coastguard Agency's chief medical advisor.

The rapid spread of the mosquito-borne Zika virus — particularly in Central and South America — has sparked warnings from health officials. The World Health Organisation has issued a travel alert applying to 22 countries, including Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Panama and the US Virgin Islands.

Public Health England confirmed at the weekend that three cases of the Zika virus had been found in the UK, in travellers returning from Colombia, Suriname and Guyana.

Although Zika itself is not particularly dangerous to most people and the condition is usually mild and short-lived, there is growing evidence of a link between the virus in pregnant women and birth defects in their children.

There is currently no vaccine or drug to prevent Zika infection. The advice from the MCA's chief medical advisor is for seafarers to follow the same precautions as for malaria and dengue fever — the 'meticulous avoidance of mosquito bites'.

As the situation is changing, the MCA advises seafarers to check on the Public Health England website or www.travelhealthpro.org.uk. The US-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also has helpful information: www.cdc.gov/zika

Newcastle-based Maersk Training has launched a new advanced first aid course for the offshore wind energy sector, pictured above.

Developed in partnership with the wind turbine manufacturer MHI Vestas Offshore Wind, the course is the first to offer specifically tailored first aid training to personnel working in remote environments.

The course aims to enable rapid intervention in the event of severe or life-threatening trauma or illness by equipping technicians with the skills required to quickly stabilise and monitor a casualty until specialist medical treatment arrives or they can be safely moved to appropriate medical facilities.

Maersk Training MD Stuart Cameron said: 'Delayed response times can prove to be a fatal factor in life-threatening scenarios, which is what we want to tackle with this course. We believe having advanced first aid skills is crucial in this industry.'



VTS action urged in collision probe

Investigators express concern over growing use of AIS for collision avoidance

Calls for improvements in vessel traffic services in the United Arab Emirates port of Jebel Ali have come following an investigation into a collision between a UK-flagged containership and an oil tanker.

The 75,246gt *Ever Smart* and the Marshall Islands-registered oil tanker *Alexandra 1* both suffered major structural damage to their bows as a result of the accident near the entrance to the buoyed approach channel to the port in February 2015.

The accident occurred as the containership was outbound at a speed of 12 knots and the tanker was inbound, moving very slowly ahead while waiting for the pilot from the containership to board.

The UK Marine Accident Investigation Branch said the collision was the result of both masters making incorrect assumptions about the way their vessels would pass each other, and of both ships acting too late to prevent the crash. *Alexandra 1* was unnecessarily close to the channel entrance and the



The damaged bow of the tanker *Alexandra 1* following the collision with the UK-flagged containership *Ever Smart*. Picture: MAIB

tanker's master acted on scanty VHF radio information, it noted, while *Ever Smart*'s bridge team did not keep a proper lookout or monitor the tanker's movement — only realising that the tanker was close ahead seconds before the collision when alerted by the port control.

'However, it is also evident that a lack of an agreed plan and effective communication, coor-

dination and monitoring were significant factors,' the report adds. 'The precautions of pilotage and the port's vessel traffic service, which would normally coordinate and de-conflict the movements of vessels in the port area, were ineffective on this occasion.'

Investigators said it was clear that the VTS officer had not realised the seriousness of the situa-

tion that had developed and did not know how to communicate effectively in an emergency — possibly reflecting a lack of formal training in VTS and a lack of experience in emergency drills.

While Jebel Ali is a very busy port, its VTS did not meet the standards set by the International Association of Lighthouse Authorities — mainly because very few of its VTSOs held IALA V103 qualifications.

The report expresses concern about the increasingly widespread use of AIS for collision avoidance, and it questions why *Alexandra 1*'s AIS was turned off while it was entering such a large commercial port. It was 'surprising' that Jebel Ali port control had not challenged the tanker over its lack of AIS transmissions during this and previous visits, the MAIB added.

The MAIB recommended that DP World UAE Region, the operators of Jebel Ali port, acts to improve the effectiveness of the vessel traffic and pilotage services it provides.

Navy to the rescue as cruiseship loses power off Falklands



British forces and Dutch tugs based in the Falkland Islands prevented a 'human tragedy' by helping to evacuate 357 passengers and crew from a French cruiseship which was at risk of running aground after losing power following an engineroom fire.

Four helicopters, two aircraft, a Royal Navy patrol vessel and two Dutch tugs went to the aid of the 10,944gt *Le Boreal* after it sent a distress call and issued an abandon ship order around three miles north of the Falklands, while en route to South Georgia.

In a major search and rescue operation, helicopters winched 79 people from the deck of the ship and from two liferafts in the water. HMS *Clyde* assisted two further lifeboats with more than 200 people onboard.

All the passengers and crew from *Le Boreal* were taken to the British forces base at Mount Pleasant, and the ship was stabilised and brought alongside by the Dutch tugs, under contract to British Forces in the Falkland Islands.

The Ministry of Defence said a northwesterly gale had placed the drifting ship 'in real danger of grounding' on Cape Dolphin, East Falkland. Commodore Darren Bone, Commander of British Forces in the South Atlantic Islands, said: 'We responded with everything we had to assist in what was an extremely complex and hazardous rescue operation in difficult conditions, but I am delighted that we can report all of the passengers and crew of the vessel are safe and well and the vessel itself in a stable condition.'

Six die in Strait collision

Investigations are being held into the causes of a fatal collision between two ships in the Singapore Strait in December, pictured right.

Six seafarers from the multipurpose cargo ship Thorco Cloud died when the vessel sank after the collision with the 37,438dwt chemical/product tanker Stolt Commitment in the eastbound lane of the traffic separation scheme, some 6nm NW of Batam, Indonesia.

The Mission to Seafarers provided assistance for the surviving crew and Jurong port chaplain Revd Peter Manimuthu said: 'They told me that they had survived by staying afloat with life jackets, but they all thought that they were going to die. One crew mentioned that while in the water, he slipped on every attempt to get on to a floating metal cover as he was covered in bunker oil. It was very frightening for him.'

Picture: Reuters



Officer killed by worn line that parted in port

A shipping company has been urged to improve the guidance it gives to seafarers on withdrawing worn or damaged mooring ropes following an accident in which an officer was killed.

The third mate of the 11,925gt Merito died when he was struck by a mooring rope which parted as he was inspecting the moorings ashore in the port of Algiers during gale force conditions in December 2014.

A Maltese flag state investigation determined that the officer was standing in the snap-back zone of the mooring rope when it parted. The report notes that nine other lines broke that morning and that the vessel managed to remain alongside with the use of the main engine, bow thruster and intermittent tug assistance.

Cargo operations had been suspended because of the prevailing conditions and the officer had gone ashore to check the aft moorings when he was struck on the head by one of the ropes as it parted after the wind caught the vessel's stern.

The report notes that the Merito's mooring deck arrangements meant that most of the mooring ropes had to be led through Panama fairleads and the absence of a sufficient number of roller fairleads resulted in the ropes being routinely subjected to abrasion damage.

Although the ship's records showed that the ropes had been inspected on a monthly basis, there was no detailed guidance for those checking their condition and no comprehensive criteria for taking worn ropes out of service.

Ropes inspected after the accident were found to have suffered significant abrasion damage, investigators said, and this would have lowered their designed breaking strength.

The report also stated: 'The danger of a mooring rope parting and causing injuries exists equally onboard and ashore. It does seem, however, that the industry's focus on snap-back zones and the hazards which have to be acknowledged before stepping inside a snap-back zone is skewed towards the risks involved onboard.'



Mooring training centre opens in the Philippines

A leading ship management company has opened a special facility in the Philippines to train seafarers in mooring operations.

Based at Subic Bay, the Bernhard Schulte Shipmanagement (BSM) mooring station training centre, above, has been designed to work in conjunction with an interactive video learning programme and classroom discussions.

Captain Joseph Raluta, director of the BSM Maritime Training Centre in Manila, said the facility contains a complete range of equipment identical to that which the company's seafarers will operate onboard a vessel. 'This provides for a comprehensive training experience of mooring operations and associated safety conditions,' he added.

Concerns raised at lift accidents

Investigations underway after two people die working on vessel elevators

Concerns over the safety of ship lift maintenance operations have been raised in the wake of two fatal accidents over the past month.

Investigations were launched after an Italian electrician onboard the Panama-flagged cruiseship Carnival Ecstasy was killed while working on one of the ship's elevators during a three-day cruise from Miami.

The horrific incident received extensive social media coverage after it was filmed by a passenger on the ship. Carnival said 'appropriate authorities' had been notified and a full investigation into the cause was underway.

Investigations are also taking place in the UK, after a shipyard worker died while working on a lift onboard the Irish Ferries vessel Ulysses. The engineer was reportedly crushed when he became trapped between the lift and the shaft of the ferry during its annual refit at Falmouth docks.

Devon & Cornwall Police are investigating the incident, along with the Health & Safety

Executive, and Nautilus has provided advice to members serving on the ship.

Captain John Rose, maritime director of the Confidential Human Incident Reporting Programme (CHIRP), questioned whether lessons had been learned as a result of investigations into similar fatal accidents during lift maintenance work.

Reports on incidents including the tanker British Mallard and the containership MSC Columbia in 2007, and on the containerships Ever Elite in 2010 and OOCL Montreal in 2003, had highlighted issues such as inadequate instruction manuals, shortcomings in risk assessments and safety management, and knowledge gaps among seafarers, he pointed out.

'Perhaps it is time to ask what mandatory specialist lift maintenance training these maintenance personnel should receive?' Capt Rose added. There is also a need to improve the standard and frequency of reporting hazardous occurrences encour-

tered in machinery spaces and when operating or maintaining machinery, he added.

'Causal factors that go unreported include inadequate or confusing operating and maintenance manuals, training and competence of the staff conducting or overseeing the work, fatigue and the management of rest hours, accurate risk assessments, and the preparation and compliance with permit to work procedures,' he pointed out.

'If crew members are reluctant to report such matters, then they should also be reminded of the potential consequences this can create,' Capt Rose stressed.

'Too often the safety lessons learned arrive too late for some.'

Nautilus senior national secretary Allan Graveson added: 'The continued loss of life during lift maintenance operations needs to be examined, with particular emphasis upon qualifications, specialist training and safety management.'

Warning after fishing death

Ineffective safety management lay behind an accident in which a seafarer died when he fell from his ship's accommodation ladder while fishing during his lunch break, an investigation has ruled.

The bosun onboard the 206,070dwt bulk carrier Cape Splendor fell 2m into the sea when he lost his balance on the ladder while the vessel was at anchor off Port Headland in October 2014.

The bosun was carried away by the current and was unable to reach lifebuoys that were thrown to him. Even though the ship's rescue boat was deployed within 10 minutes and an extensive air-sea search was conducted for three days, he was not found.

A report by the Australian Transport Safety Board (ATSB) notes that the bosun was not

wearing any flotation devices or fall prevention equipment. 'The lack of a lifejacket, wet clothing, and possible entanglement with fishing gear, sea conditions, and the current would have adversely affected the bosun's ability to stay afloat and swim,' it adds.

The investigation also identified that the ship's safety management system procedures for working over the ship's side were not effectively implemented and the crew routinely failed to take safety precautions when working over the side. Investigators said the seafarers had 'differing attitudes to taking safety precautions during work and recreation times as the safety culture on board was not well developed'.

The ATSB warned: 'Any task or activity that involves a person being on a ship's accommodation ladder or other locations over the side of the



ship can result in serious or fatal injury. Therefore, precautions to prevent a person from falling overboard, and to improve survivability in case one does fall into the water, are

critical. It is important to ensure that these precautions are always taken, regardless of whether the person is engaged in work, recreational or other activities.'

HEALTH & SAFETY



Alarm raised as 'mega-ship' grounds in Elbe

Nautilus has warned of the challenges in dealing with accidents involving 'supersized' ships following an incident last month in which the ultra large containership CSCL Indian Ocean grounded in the Elbe river. A loss of steering power has been blamed for the incident, which occurred while the 187,541gt ship was approaching the port of Hamburg after sailing from Felixstowe.

It took six days and three attempts for the Hong Kong-flagged ship to be freed, with 12 tugs with an aggregated 1,085 tons of bollard pull towing it to safety on a spring tide after the failure of two previous attempts. At one stage authorities were considering dredging around the vessel, but local reports said that there were no suitable floating cranes to lighten the cargo. Nautilus senior national secretary Allan Graveson said

the incident highlighted some serious issues — and the problems associated with the limited resources for dealing with ultra-large vessels in particular. Local politicians expressed concern at the economic consequences of the disruption caused by the incident and environmentalists said it showed that ULCs should avoid Hamburg and call at Wilhelmshaven instead. *Picture: Haveriekommando*

Guide aims to cut cargo fumigation risks

Seafarers are being warned of the risks of fumigating cargoes following a series of accidents in North and South American ports over the past five year. The North P&I Club has published a new free-to-download loss prevention briefing highlighting the hazards associated with the fumigation of agricultural products on ships — including an incident in December last year when a bulk carrier suffered extensive structural damage following an explosion of pesticide gases while loading corn at the port of Paranagua, Brazil.

It said failure to disperse fumigant pellets properly had led to self-heating problems — leading to cargo damage, and igniting high concentrations of gases. The club's briefing, which supplements IMO recommendations for safe fumigation of cargo holds, aims to provide crew members with a practical understanding of the process, its risks and how these can be minimised. The guidance covers procedures for fumigating in port and in transit, as well as the safety measures which should be taken before, during and after fumigation.

It also advises shipowners and operators to incorporate a suitable fumigation clause in their charterparties to set out the division of responsibilities regarding fumigation and to ensure that all operations are conducted in accordance with IMO recommendations. Loss prevention deputy director Collin Gillespie commented: 'Fumigation should never be conducted by a ship's crew. However, crew members must be made aware of the hazards of fumigation and the risks it poses to human health. They should fully understand the duties

Fatal fall result of ladder mistake

Safety experts have warned of the need for care on apparently straightforward jobs after an investigation revealed that an officer died when he fell into a rough sea from a rope ladder which had been rigged upside down. The second mate of the Liberian-

flagged bulk carrier Hyundai Dangjin drowned after he lost his grip and fell into the sea while descending the ladder to read the midships draught while the vessel was loading an iron ore cargo at Part Walcott in Western Australia in July last year. An AB who jumped into the water

in an attempt to rescue the officer had to be taken to hospital for treatment to hypothermia. The Australian Transport Safety Board (ATSB) said it was lucky that his 'well-intentioned but impulsive' actions had not led to a second casualty. ATSB investigators found that the

rope ladder had been rigged upside down and, as a result, the folded aluminium steps did not provide a flat surface to stand on comfortably and did not offer good handholds. The report notes that the only precaution taken by the second mate — who was described as 'a large and heavy man' — was to use a life vest, which provided around 7kg to 10kg of buoyancy.

Man overboard measures, such as a lifebuoy with light and line near the ladder, were not in place, it adds. Commenting on the incident, the ATSB stated: 'In many cases, little attention is paid to planning apparently straightforward tasks, such as using a rope ladder. This can lead to important factors and relevant considerations not being taken into account, including the experience and physical ability of

persons undertaking the task.' As a result of the accident, the ship's Japanese managers reviewed the procedures — including permits to work — for checking the draught from a rope ladder and the terminal managers, Rio Tinto Ore, banned the practice of reading draught marks from rope ladders. An alternative method, using a manometer, was put in place.

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Danish seafarers have gone to the courts in a challenge to the income tax rules governing the country's international register. **ANDREW DRAPER** reports on a row that is exposing concerns over the future of the national maritime skills base...

Decision time on DIS tax regime

|| The bill for fighting a landmark tax case has already hit DKK5m (£500,000) — but Denmark's Søfartens Ledere (SL) officers' union says it is willing to pay the price for fighting for 'a fair deal' for its members.

The union is now stepping up its six-year battle over its members' tax liabilities by taking its case to the country's Supreme Court, where another expensive defeat could be looming.

At the heart of the campaign are the laws governing the Danish International Ship Register (DIS). Under the DIS rules, seafarers generally do not pay income tax and are instead paid net salaries, with the aim of giving shipowners an international competitive advantage.



AP Møller-Mærsk is said to take the government's side in the DIS tax row

But SL says seafarers lose out when there are adjustments to general taxation. General secretary Fritz Ganzhorn explains that two main tax reforms in Denmark (in 2010 and 2012) reduced the rate of income tax — causing non income-tax-paying seafarers to miss out.

Worse still, the emphasis of taxation shifted more to 'green' issues, which seafarers have to pay along with the rest of the population.

Mr Ganzhorn said the changes had hit SL members hard, especially as many of them — such as masters — are well paid.

SL initiated its legal campaign in 2010. It lost the first two rounds in the Danish courts, the last of which in January resulted in costs of some £40,000. The union brought its action (comprising two separate cases) against the Danish Ministry of Taxation, ferry company DFDS (which operates some of its fleet under the DIS) and the Danish Shipowners' Association, claiming that its members should have received compensation from the state when income tax was reduced as part of the 2010 tax reform.

The Danish High Court ruled the state was not obliged to ensure that the theoretical and unlevied income tax under DIS must always match the actual tax that would be charged if seafarers were not exempt from income tax.

Although calculations are uncertain, Mr Ganzhorn estimates the tax scheme is worth as much as to DKK1.4bn a year in



Fritz Ganzhorn

state subsidies.

The court case reflects wider union concern over the state of Danish seafaring and the impact of the DIS register. While tonnage under the Danish flag has almost tripled over the past 20 years, the total number of Danish seafarers has dropped to barely 7,600.

Mr Ganzhorn says that while the international register DIS has been good for the Danish maritime sector, he is convinced the tide is turning against it. The Danish unions have long complained that owners have failed to provide jobs and training in return for the state subsidies received under DIS, and instead steadily replaced their Danish workforce with cheaper, foreign labour.

The Danish ratings have all but gone and even officers are a mix of nationalities, he pointed out. Section 10 of the DIS Act prevents Danish unions from negotiating on behalf of foreign



Henrik Berlau

crews working onboard DIS-registered ships — something which has drawn regular and increasing criticism from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), among others.

Mr Ganzhorn believes the union's case is so important that it warrants a hearing in the Supreme Court — even if there is a possibility of losing. 'I'm optimistic that we can get Danish politicians to the point where we have to make demands,' he says. Two of the biggest parties have begun to say there needs to be change as the state support is so substantial.

|| The owners have fiercely resisted concessions — not least because many of their members are feeling the pinch in difficult economic times, unions claim. But the owners see it differently. Owners' association director Anne Windfeldt Trolle said in a reaction to the High Court ruling that the legal



Anne Windfeldt Trolle

position has been clarified. 'We're satisfied that it has been clearly established that wage demands can't be pushed through with the help of the law. The cases have run since 2010 and now we have to move on,' she added.

'Denmark is one of the world's 10 biggest maritime nations and that is precisely because we have a well-functioning net salary system that makes it competitive to have vessels under the Danish flag,' she added. 'The DIS scheme is the background to our having more ships under the Danish flag than ever before, that shipowners maintain their head offices in Denmark with many employees, and that we employ a large number of Danish seafarers.'

Henrik Berlau, national secretary of the 3F union, says his union has made five attempts to bring the DIS law before the courts. 'Every time, the Danish courts have refused to ask the European Court whether it is

compatible with the European treaty,' he adds. 'It's very difficult to win a case against the state, especially when it has the backing of big shipowners such as AP Møller-Mærsk.'

Mr Berlau points out that the ILO — a United Nations agency — and the Council of Europe have also been critical of DIS for the past 25 years. The ILO has urged the Danish government to engage in a tripartite national dialogue with 'the relevant workers' and employers' organisations' — stressing the need to 'ensure full respect of the principles of free and voluntary collective bargaining so that Danish trade unions may freely represent in the collective bargaining process all their members — Danish or equated residents and non-residents — working on ships sailing under the Danish flag, and that collective agreements concluded by Danish trade unions may cover all their members working on ships sailing under the Danish flag, regardless of residence'.

'I think the courts in Denmark are afraid of asking the EU,' Mr Berlau argues. 'We've been unable to pose the question to the competent court, the European Court. There must be a reason why we can't ask.'

3F has announced it will submit representations to the Danish Supreme Court in support of SL's legal action. This has drawn an angry response from the owners, who say 3F should keep out. They are reportedly planning to take 3F to the country's Labour Court system in protest.

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MARITIME RESCUE

Floating an innovative idea

The ongoing migrant and refugee crisis means merchant vessels are increasingly likely to be pressed into service for large-scale rescues — but they don't always have suitable equipment. SARAH ROBINSON hears how a new invention could help to solve an urgent problem...

It's one of the worst things you can encounter as a seafarer: dozens of people in the water near your ship, condemned to drown unless you take immediate action. Whatever you think about how they came to be there, this is not a time to be debating politics, religion, war or economics. These are fellow human beings and they need help now.

But how do you help them? There are so many of them, and some are children and elderly people. Do you even have any suitable lifesaving equipment onboard your vessel?

These were the questions concerning Ben Board of Unique Seaflex last year. Like many others, he had been shocked by the

pictures of the little Syrian boy who had died trying to cross the Mediterranean with his family and washed up on a Greek beach. So when a friend, Nick Davies, suggested that Seaflex could help prevent future deaths, Ben was highly receptive to the idea.

Now part of the Unique Group, Seaflex was founded by Ben's family, and describes itself as a specialist in marine air lift buoyancy bags and water load test weights. In other words, the firm makes floats used to manoeuvre equipment in the subsea and offshore sectors. Floats that could be adapted to save lives.

'Nick came to us in May 2015 to say there was this problem and ask how we could solve it,' recalls Ben. 'My colleague Graham Brad-



The CentiFloat in action during the 6 August 2015 rescue in the Mediterranean, 30 miles from the Libyan coast. Picture: Christophe Strama/MSF

ing and I sat down to think about it and had something basic on paper in a couple of days.'

Their idea was to make a long float that could be quickly inflated and deployed from a merchant vessel or yacht. It would be long enough for a large number of people to hold on and keep

their heads above water until they could be lifted onto a rescue boat, and there would be three grab lines so people could always reach something to grip when the float rolled. One end would have a tow line and the other end would have a drogue — 'like a parachute in the water that acts as a brake'.

Ben had plenty of hands-on seafaring experience to help him judge what would work. Before joining Isle of Wight-based Seaflex, he worked for many years in the yacht sector, initially on superyachts and then focusing on the racing side. He holds the RYA Yachtmaster qualification and was an instructor and examiner. He has also been a sea survival instructor and a volunteer on the RNLI lifeboats.

With all this expertise, allied with the manufacturing knowledge and equipment available at Seaflex, Ben and Graham were able to get their first lifesaving float designed and produced by July 2015, just two months after the project began. They chose the name CentiFloat, because it was originally meant to help up to 100 people at a time, but in the end they went for a somewhat smaller device suitable for 40 to 50 people, because it was more manageable to deploy. They also intro-

duced a way of clipping together two CentiFloats to make a simple raft so that small children and frail adults could be lifted out of the water and placed on top while awaiting rescue.

'That was the easy part done,' says Ben. 'We always knew we'd be able to make it. The challenge was to get the word out and to raise money so we could give the first of our floats to rescue organisations for free.'

The eventual plan was to market the CentiFloat as a commercial product for merchant shipping companies, he explains. But the immediate need by rescue organisations was so great that Seaflex agreed to produce the first floats at cost price, with Ben organising a crowdfunding drive to cover expenses such as materials and shipping.

The appeal was a great success: £21,000 was raised in just a few weeks, and over 20 floats have now been manufactured and distributed in pairs.

So this is where the story moves to the Mediterranean, where one of the first recipients of a CentiFloat was the Malta-based rescue organisation MOAS (Migrant Offshore Aid Station).

MOAS director Martin Xuereb was on the rescue vessel MY Phoenix when the CentiFloat was first used, on 6 August 2015. 'We heard that there was a boat in distress 10 miles away from our location,' he recalls, 'and we sent drones ahead to check out the incident. We could see we'd need the float — there were just so many people — and it proved vital to the rescue.'

On arrival, the MOAS crew found a wooden boat with a superstructure, probably built to carry 30 or 40 people. Some 500 people were onboard, all crammed onto the top deck. 'It's amazing it didn't flip over,' says Martin, 'but people were obviously expecting it to capsize any minute, because many of them had started jumping into the water.'

This was exactly the kind of situation the CentiFloat was meant for, and it was quickly deployed: 'Knowing those people were safe holding the float allowed us to focus our priorities on the vulnerable people still on the wooden boat.'

To give a sense of the context in which the CentiFloat was being used, Martin explains more about the 6 August rescue and the wider work of MOAS. 'We work in partnership with MSF [Médecins Sans Frontières], and their vessel

Foreland master's sea skills helped save 150 refugees



Capt Nigel Barningham

A Nautilus member whose ship rescued 150 Syrian refugees from a boat sinking in the Mediterranean in stormy conditions was presented with the Merchant Navy Medal for his exceptional seamanship and leadership in difficult circumstances.

Captain Nigel Barningham, master of the 23,235gt Foreland Shipping ro-ro Anvil Point, went to the aid of the stricken fishing vessel some 80 miles ESE of Sicily following a request from the Malta Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre on 28 November 2014.

His ship — which was returning to the UK from the Middle East — was asked to lead the rescue attempts after a coastguard officer at the scene determined that the conditions were too dangerous for his vessel.

'The weather conditions were adverse, with near gale force winds and a heavy swell, and they were deteriorating,' Capt Barningham said. 'On our initial attempt, we only managed to get 13 people off the boat before the mooring line parted.'

'But we managed to make a second approach and secured another line to the boat, and we managed to get the remaining 137 people off — who included an invalid, a paraplegic and a baby inside a holdall.'

The rescue operation lasted around four hours and Capt Barningham said that when it began, the refugees

were standing on the deck of the boat — but by the end, they were on the top of the wheelhouse of the vessel, which sank soon afterwards.

Anvil Point then sailed to Augusta, where the refugees disembarked into the care of the Italian authorities.

The nomination for Capt Barningham paid tribute to his exceptional seamanship and exemplary leadership skills during the incident.

Capt Barningham said he was honoured to receive the award — but described the rescue as a massive team effort. 'There were four lads that really deserve the credit,' he added. 'Third mate Chris Magnusson and ABs Dan Taylor, Steve Wickenden and George Harris were all down at the pilot station pulling 150 people and their bags onboard for four hours solid. They were the ones that rescued them — I was just keeping the ship steady.'

He also praised the work of the Royal Navy, Marines and Army protection force onboard who provided medical care and supervision for the rescued refugees.

Capt Barningham — who has served with companies including Shell, Coe Metcalfe and Merchant Ferries — has worked in the Foreland Shipping fleet for 12 years. He was involved in another rescue mission earlier in his career, when his ship picked up around 20 Vietnamese refugees in the South China Sea.

MCA develops guidance on new SOLAS rescue equipment rule

The UK Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) held a consultation last month on the likely business impact of a new SOLAS regulation requiring all SOLAS ships to have arrangements for the recovery of persons from the water.

Participants were invited to read and comment on a draft Marine Guidance Note (MGN) drawing attention to the new regulation and establishing 'the process through which novel equipment intended for the recovery of persons from the water may be accepted for use on UK ships'.

The MCA pointed out that nothing in the SOLAS amendment or UK policy requires that additional equipment is to be carried on ships; the requirement is only about having a plan and procedure to use equipment. However, given that many companies may be interested in buying devices such as the

CentiFloat and Jason's Cradle, the agency wanted participants to assess the two to five-year business impact of such investments, considering issues such as:

- ▣ trading patterns/time savings
- ▣ fuel costs
- ▣ manning and crew training requirements
- ▣ vessel design and construction

The consultation closed on 18 December 2015, but the draft MGN and the business impact questionnaire may still be available to read in the Consultations section of www.gov.uk — or on request to the MCA. The information gathered will inform the guidance issued in the final draft of the MGN. When the note is issued, this will be reported in the Telegraph, and a summary will be made available in the information pages at the back.

MARITIME RESCUE



A demonstration of the Jason's Cradle in use at sea



John Hamilton and Marco Cauchi of MOAS (left and centre) receiving training last year from Jason's Cradle managing director Garth Matthews (right) Picture: Jason Florio

MOAS welcomes additional gift of retrieval device

The CentiFloat is not the only piece of rescue equipment donated recently by a British company, points out MOAS director Martin Xuereb: 'We had an important and welcome donation of a Jason's Cradle, a device that helps to lift people out of

the water.' Garth Matthews is the managing director of the Jason's Cradle company. 'I had noticed the work of MOAS through social media,' he says, 'and was keen to do something to help them in what appears an unending

and daunting task. So I made contact with them, worked out which of our units would be best suited for their specific requirements and had the units sent over. 'I also visited the vessel MY Phoenix in Malta and trained the crew in the

use of the equipment. To be honest it was really very humbling meeting the people who are going out to sea day in day out, at no insignificant risk to themselves, to help others.' For more about Jason's Cradle, see www.jasons-cradle.co.uk.

“The new CentiFloat kept the people in the water safe so we could focus on those in trouble on the boat”

Bourbon Argos was there with us that day along with an Italian warship. Between us, we had four RIBs to pick up the people and take them to our ships.'

Most of the rescues in the Mediterranean are coordinated by the Italian coastguard, he notes. 'The Italians look at who is closest to the incident, and we are often called upon because we patrol the risk areas every day. Naval ships and merchant vessels are also called to help in various ways — at sea, everyone upholds the tradition of saving lives. I remember a recent example where a Maersk ship sheltered the migrants by

giving them a lee until we could get there. Sometimes merchant vessels are asked to take the rescued people onboard, but in general it's better if we can bring them onto the Phoenix or the Bourbon Argos because we have doctors and clinics there, and supplies such as clothes and blankets.'

The 6 August incident took place around 30 miles from the coast of Libya, he adds, but there was no question of taking the rescued people back to the unstable north African nation. 'Under international law, we must take them to a place of safety, and that usually means Italy. On that day we took 300 people onto the Phoenix and 200 onto the Bourbon Argos, and once we had made sure everyone was OK, they were eventually transferred to a Norwegian ship heading to Italy.'

In 2015, the Italian coastguard coordinated the rescue of over 100,000 people from the waters of the Mediterranean, says Martin, of which some 12,000 were rescued by MOAS. 'We have made it our mission to save lives at sea,' he stresses, 'and we don't believe this should solely be the responsibility of the state. We are an independent charity funded by dona-



A drone returns to the MOAS rescue vessel Phoenix after searching the waters for migrants in distress during a patrol in 2014

tions of money and equipment.' MOAS was established by social entrepreneurs Christopher and Regina Catrambone in response to a humanitarian disaster in October 2013 in which some 400 men, women and children drowned off the Italian island of Lampedusa. It has since grown into a substantial outfit employing a range of professionals including search-and-rescue experts, medical staff, seafarers and security officers.

Having made a significant contribution to the ongoing lifesaving work in the Mediterranean, MOAS now plans to expand to other regions where large numbers of migrants and refugees are at risk on the open seas. 'We need to shine a light on southeast Asia and the plight of people like the Rohingya, fleeing persecution,' says Martin. The intention is for the Phoenix to head to the new patrol location while a second vessel is

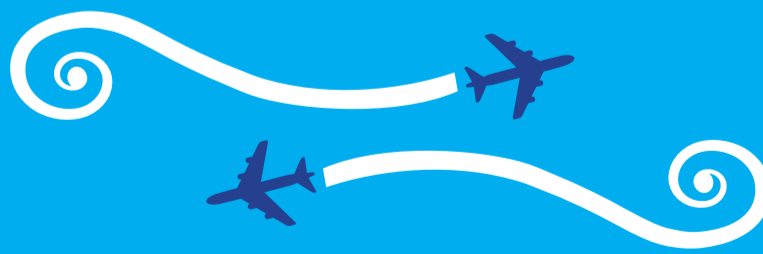
chartered for the Mediterranean. It looks as if there is more need than ever for a rescue aid such as the CentiFloat, and Ben Board and his colleagues at Unique Seaflex say they're ready for the challenge of scaling up production. Acknowledging the part often played by merchant vessels in large-scale rescues, they are moving to the stage of making the CentiFloat commercially available. 'We hope that shipping companies

around the world will buy the float to add to their standard range of emergency equipment carried onboard,' says Ben. 'Yes, we are a business, but we want to help people. We've worked out how to solve a problem for the industry, and together we can save lives at sea.'

For more on the CentiFloat, go to www.uniquegroup.com/centifloat
The MOAS website is www.moas.eu

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MARITIME TECHNOLOGY

Drone ships setting course



Andree Underthun, operations manager (left) and Stian Braastad, global technical support manager, at the new ABB Integrated Operations Centre in Billingstad, Norway. Picture: Morten Rakke

There's a lot of talk within the shipping industry at present about crewless 'robot-ships' and 'drone vessels'. And now the Swiss-based power and automation technology group ABB has taken a further step to give operators greater control of their ships from the shore.

In November, the company officially opened a new Integrated Operations Centre (IOC) in Billingstad, Norway, which enables expert engineers to remotely monitor and troubleshoot critical shipboard equipment and systems on vessels throughout the world.

ABB describes the facility as the 'next step in the journey to more autonomous shipping operations' — and says its services can be used to prepare planned maintenance work, offering owners savings of up to 50% on dry docking costs for certain equipment.

ABB says the facility's use of satellite links to sensors onboard vessels can enable equipment issues to be identified ashore quicker than by the crew. And the data harvested by the centre can help its engineers to provide solutions to seafarers onboard — in turn, reducing the need to send a shore-based specialist to the ship.

IOC staff can connect to ships fitted with ABB technology and tap in to equipment and performance data from sensors and software onboard. Working in conjunction with shipping company technical managers, the ABB engineers can use the data analytics to make informed decisions about a vessel's performance and maintenance plan.

'We are monitoring the key parameters which will have direct impact on the critical equipment and could lead either to downtime or to a significant loss in efficiency,' explained Richard Windischhofer, vice-president of integrated operations.

'We are proactive in our relationship with our customers and with the new Integrated Operations Centre,' he adds. 'We proactively monitor the critical alarms and inform the crew about issues — sometimes even before they notice them themselves.'

At present, the IOC is monitoring almost 100 ships connected to its Remote Diagnostic Service (RDS) with a further 450 ships using its Advisory software for monitoring, decision-making support and motion and voyage forecasting.

ABB says it hopes that by the end of the decade around 500 vessels will be using the RDS and as many as 2,000 operating the Advisory service, which is run from centres in the Netherlands and Finland.

At present, the services are focussed on LNG

The future for shipping is already here, say experts at a new centre which uses onboard sensors and software to enable remote monitoring and troubleshooting to be carried out ashore. **ANDREW LININGTON** heard how it works...

carriers, heavy lift vessels, drillships and other offshore support vessels. In the second quarter of 2016, the company is planning to open a second IOC in Helsinki — serving the cruise and ice-going sectors.

ABB says the IOC can provide owners with more efficient fleet operations and increased autonomy for ships. It claims to offer a way of working that saves up to 50% on dry docking costs on ABB equipment if monitoring, pre-survey, and project execution are managed in close cooperation between the company and the owner, with data collected from systems being used as input for maintenance work during dry dockings.

'On the vessels where we have a remote

connection, we were able to reduce the call-out of service engineers by 70%,' Mr Windischhofer notes.

The company says the centre ties in to its concept of the 'Internet of Things' Services and People' (IoTSP) — connecting intelligent machines and the data generated from a growing number of electronic sensors to operate machines more safely, with greater efficiency, and with lower environmental impact.

It says the enhanced support capabilities this offers can enable more highly qualified staff to work ashore rather than at sea, with responsibility for whole fleets rather than individual ships. 'Fleet managers will know exactly which vessels are experiencing technical issues, enabling them to focus their improvement actions,' Mr Windischhofer explains. 'This will save our customers a significant amount of time in technical management and maintenance planning, as well as maintenance costs.'

The IOC has a dedicated staff of 12, who work on a rota that ensures that at least one specialist each for propulsion and power systems will always be available. The first person answering customer calls is now a highly-qualified engineer — not a switchboard operator or computerised system — and ABB says this enables calls to be dealt with quickly and efficiently.

The Billingstad facility has received more than 200 phone calls and around 300 email requests each month since opening. The remote connection is handled through the ship's satcom system and while the recommended bandwidth is 512kbits/s, ABB global technical support manager Stian Braastad says the company has RDS and Advisory systems running on vessels with a bandwidth of as little as 64kbits/s.

The integrated operations service is offered as part of the purchase of ABB systems, and Mr Windischhofer says that by including these elements at the design and construction stage the technology architecture onboard can be made simpler and cheaper.

ABB says the centre's services can provide a payback period of less than a year, and that the costs avoided during just one vessel incident would

justify the service fee.

The company points to the case of an LNG carrier losing 50% of its propulsion power in the Indian Ocean as a result of a trip in the starboard power frequency converter during a voyage from Qatar to Japan.

While the ship did not lose any of its safety-critical manoeuvring capability, it had to reduce speed significantly and, in a typical case, such a fault would lead to slow sailing for several days, until a qualified service engineer could reach the destination.

'Here, however, that scenario was avoided, because the ship was equipped with an ABB remote diagnostic system (RDS), connected, in the middle of an ocean, to the IoTSP,' the company said. 'The crew, having recognised a fault, notified an ABB technical support engineer and within 20 minutes he was able to connect online to the RDS onboard. He read the logs, data transients and checked through the events recorded at the exact time of the fault. Together with the chief engineer onboard, he browsed through the event list from the frequency converter and discussed the possible causes of the fault. In this case, the result of their shared investigation, carried out over the "chat" function, indicated a broken semiconductor in one of the phase outputs. The ABB specialists helped the onboard engineer to verify the diagnosis and the component was replaced from spares stored onboard with minimum disruption to the voyage.'

Mr Windischhofer said he believes software and connectivity are already game-changers for the shipping industry, and he predicts that technology will bring 'tremendous changes' to the sector over the next decade.

'I have to say that this is the most exciting time to be in the marine business,' he adds. 'You can find people who say that the shipping industry is very conservative and years behind shore-based sectors, but we don't agree with that view. There really is a fresh wind blowing, and that is mainly due to improved connectivity and software.'

'While we believe that fully autonomous shipping is still quite some way away, and that it will apply only to very limited types of vessels, the way the maritime industry will operate will increasingly move towards the aviation model over the next 10 years,' he says. 'The crew onboard and the staff on shore will be reduced significantly, with many tasks being automated or semi-automated and more tasks being performed by key suppliers that are closely integrated with the vessel operator.'

'The leading operators and suppliers are clearly going this way,' he notes, 'which means the future is already here — it just isn't evenly distributed.'



Richard Windischhofer, vice president of integrated operations, ABB Marine & Ports. Picture: Morten Brakestad

Embrace the new reality!



Frank Coles, chief executive of Transas

A former seafarer who now heads one of the world's biggest marine equipment firms has made an impassioned call for a radical rethink of the role of the shipmaster...

legal responsibility framework.

'While the load can be reduced with technology, automation, alarm management and electronic forms are not the answer alone,' Mr Coles warned. 'The environment and attitude must also change. Essentially the ecosystem must change.'

'Some more progressive shipping companies recognise the ability to help the ship, but they are still forced to work within the same framework. We are in a dynamic where remote management, remote teams and, worse, remote pressure on the ship is more pervasive. This is not to say in some cases the master should not have the final say, but it should be done as an empowered team.'

While some companies are introducing fleet resource management, he argued that many are not doing it in a structured way and do not have the tools or the training to execute it properly. The law will also need to be changed to enable proper shared resource management, he added.

Too often, ships' officers are simply moved into shore management jobs with no formal training to handle the different environment. 'If we are to have a successful transition to the new reality, we should consider how to train the new team — the fleet resource team — and empower the master, but also provide training on working together,' Mr Coles told the conference. 'Without empowering an attitude and introducing team training, the result will not change.'

Legal liability should match everyday operational practices, and day-to-day fleet resource training should replace some of the bridge resource training, he added. 'This does not mean in all circumstances, but those where it is possible to have

“Technology isn't enough to reduce the increasing load on masters”

a joint operational capability. In this picture, it is also possible to have some administrative tasks done ashore. The fleet management ecosystem will reduce the administrative load on the ship.'

Mr Coles said ships and seafarers are becoming increasingly connected with the wider world. 'Cheaper and faster communications, with the explosion of social media have all added to change of life onboard,' he said. 'The maritime reaction to it in some cases, is that we have to control access. Connectivity is a right, and it opens doors to the future and we should embrace it. However, it does lead to more data, more access to the ship and more of everything.'

Transas is aiming to address these issues with its Harmonised Eco System of Integrated Solutions (THESIS) — a system that aims to take seafarer training to the next level, Mr Coles said. It has been designed to help ship operators embrace fleet resource management, and to bring in stakeholders such as the ship operations office, training centres, and 'a properly created ship traffic control environment' in a system that allows them all to work together.

'As we move forwards in the industry, especially

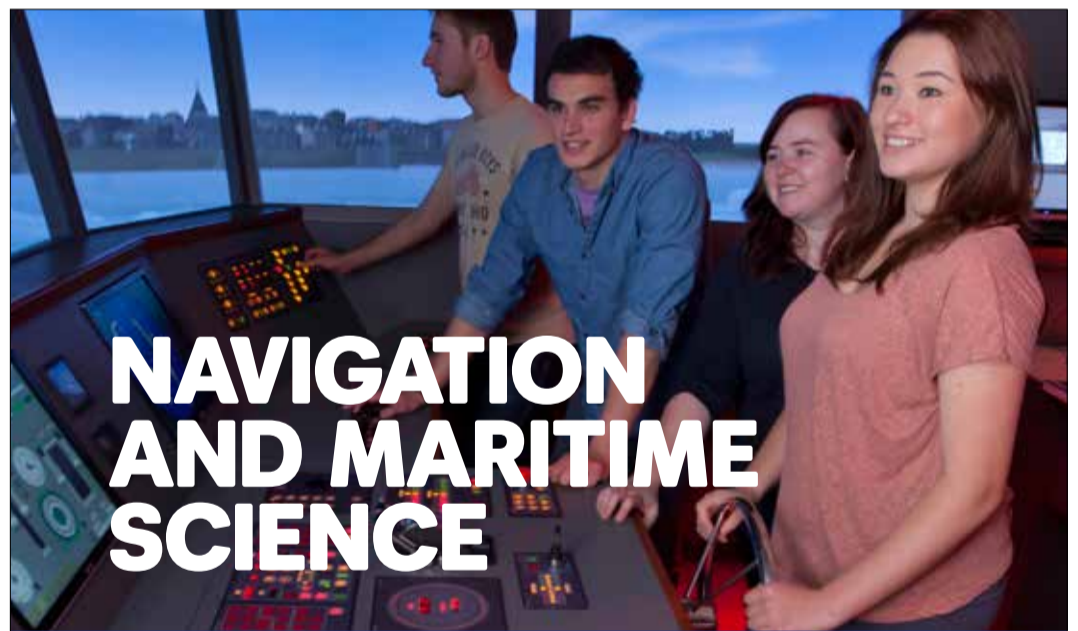


On the bridge

with change, training is core for an effective navigation, safety and operations environment, with competent staff, both on the ship and ashore, he added.

'The core competence of the future operators will include appreciating the interaction, and fleet resource team management, with the office and with the traffic control.'

It is no longer enough for seafarers to come ashore without some form of skills training, and attitude adjustment, he concluded. 'The attitude adjustment is both in the individual but also in the industry towards the role of the operators. A sea-going certificate will not qualify one for the new environment and multi-discipline training should be arranged.'



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NAUTILUS AT WORK

shortreports

AUSTRALIAN BAN: an Indonesian-flagged general cargoship has been banned from Australian waters for the second time in a year. The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) said it had taken the action against the 2,542gt Noah Satu for repeatedly failing to meet regulatory requirements — including breaches of the Maritime Labour Convention. 'The performance of this vessel is completely unacceptable,' said AMSA chief executive Mick Kinley.

FLAG APPEAL: French seafaring unions are calling for Brittany Ferries to transfer a chartered ship to the country's main register. The company is using the 12,076gt Pelican on a service between Poole and Bilbao and unions say they are concerned about the conditions of the crew under the French second register, RIF.



Princess livery

Princess Cruises has unveiled a new livery for its ships — revealing the paint job on the Majestic Princess, pictured right, the first ship built and designed specifically for the China market. The design will roll out fleet-wide over the next few years.

Due to come into service next year, the 143,00gt vessel passed a significant construction milestone last month, being floated out at the Fincantieri shipyard in Monfalcone, Italy.

Capable of carrying 3,560 passengers, Majestic Princess will home port year-round in Shanghai. Its master will be Captain Dino Sagani, who has served with the company since 1995 and Craig Street will serve as relief captain.



Pictured right is Holland America Line's newbuild Koningsdam during a series of successful sea trials off the Italian coast. The 99,500gt vessel is the largest ever built for HAL and is being constructed by Fincantieri. Due to be named in Rotterdam on 20 May this year, the ship will carry up to 2,650 passengers and 1,025 crew.

'Koningsdam is a new class of ship for Holland America Line, so everyone was eager to get the ship out in the open water for the first time on sea trials,' said HAL president Orlando Ashford. 'Koningsdam delivered a strong performance and is now back at the ship yard for the final phase of work in anticipation of the early April delivery.'

Global guide to beat the bullies

International initiative developed in response to cadet's death on UK ship

→ Nautilus has welcomed the launch of new global guidance to combat bullying and harassment at sea.

The 16-page document has been developed by the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and was published in advance of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) meeting on the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) in Geneva last month.

Under the MLC, governments are required to satisfy themselves that their laws and regulations respect the fundamental right of seafarers not to be discriminated against during their employment onboard ships.

The ITF/ICS guidance sets out what shipping companies, seafar-

ers and their unions can do to help prevent bullying and harassment from becoming a serious problem. It explains what bullying is and describes the procedures that should be used for dealing with complaints and grievances.

As well as providing advice on company policies, the guidance addresses the responsibilities of seafarers and their employers to use these procedures appropriately and for being aware of any harassment or bullying that might occur within the maritime workplace. This includes any instances of cyber-bullying.

Nautilus general secretary Mark Dickinson commented: 'We're delighted to see this document being launched. The global guidance has been developed from the work that we did in the

UK and in Europe, with a pretty thorough overhaul to ensure it is fit for the international dimension, and we hope that the ILO meeting will agree an amendment to the MLC to incorporate the ITF/ICS guidelines.

'It is important to remember that our renewed drive not only to have guidelines but also to ensure that they are properly implemented was driven by the death of the cadet Akhona Geveza, onboard a UK-flagged ship in 2010,' he added. 'It is a fitting tribute to her memory that the guidelines have now been taken to the global level.'

ITF general secretary Steve Cotton said bullying and harassment was a 'particular horror at sea, where those affected may be isolated and alone, hundreds of miles from home', and

he described the document as a 'practical, common-sense guide'.

ICS secretary general Peter Hinchliffe added: 'Shipowners fully accept the need to develop policies and plans to eliminate harassment and bullying as a matter of good employment practice. Bullying has serious consequences for the physical and emotional health of seafarers and can also compromise teamwork, with negative consequences for the safety of the ship and its crew. The fact that ICS and ITF have collaborated to produce this new guidance is therefore a very positive development.'

The guidelines are being distributed throughout the global shipping industry and can be downloaded from the ICS and ITF websites.

Tug operators to join forces

→ Two of Europe's leading tug operators, Boskalis and Kotug Interational, have reached agreement to form a joint venture which will include the harbour towage operations of Smit

in Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK, and of Kotug in Germany, the Netherlands and the UK. The new operation will be called Kotug Smit Towage and will serve 11 ports, with a total fleet of

65 tugs. Boskalis CEO Peter Berdowski said the deal would boost operational efficiency. Nautilus has been informed that the merger will not have an impact on members.

Beware of social media mis-use

Disciplinary cases prompt warning from Nautilus over company policies

→ Nautilus is urging members to be careful not to breach their employers' social media policies following a recent spate of cases in which seafarers have been disciplined for unwise use of the internet.

National ferry officer Micky Smyth said he has represented members in several cases brought after they had been accused of irresponsible use of social media in contravention of their companies' procedures.

'Most employers now have policies in place which govern the way that staff use social media — including networking websites, blogs and tweets,' he pointed out. 'It is really important that members are aware of the procedures applied in their workplace and take appropriate care in their online activities.'

In a case in the Netherlands recently, a Dutch shipmaster was disciplined after posting a video on YouTube which showed that he was in command of a container ship as it was being illegally beached before demolition near Alang, India.

The Dutch disciplinary committee for the shipping industry used the video evidence to find the master guilty of being in serious breach of his duties by taking the ship to SE India for disposal in contravention of national and European law. It noted that, because the master had not made a statement, it could not know on whose order he had beached the vessel. But the sight of the coastline in the YouTube video made it clear that the master should have understood that it would be left there for demolition.

The disciplinary committee ruled that the master be suspended for a period of six months — deferred for a two-year probationary period.

Thomas van Hövell, from the law firm AKD, noted that is the first decision from the disciplinary committee suspending a master on these grounds. 'It clearly demonstrates that the beaching for subsequent demolition of ships moved from the European Union to SE India places the master of such ships at risk of suspension if the physical breach of national and European law has been performed under the authority of such master,' he added.

'Posting a recording of the beaching of such vessels on YouTube clearly increases the risk of detection and suspension.'

Nautilus is also urging mem-

bers to take note of a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights last month that employers can read workers' private email messages while they are at work.

Commenting on the judgement, TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said: 'People should have a right to privacy in the workplace. Big Brother bosses do not get the best out of employees. Staff who are being snooped on are less productive and less healthy.'

'It is essential that employers have clear policies on internet use so that people are not caught out,' she added.

'British workers put in billions worth of unpaid overtime every year. They shouldn't be punished for occasionally checking private emails and going on social media,' Ms O'Grady said.



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MARINE RESEARCH



Left: The Japanese skeleton shrimp has been introduced to British waters through ballast water or as a fouling organism on ships' hulls and is an aggressive and highly competitive species, out-competing the native UK shrimp species

Right: Wireweed is an invasive species from the Pacific, reducing the diversity of native seaweeds

Far right: The Chinese mitten crab is thought to have come to the UK in ships' ballast water and has made significant progress from the sea and into rivers

All pictures: Thomson Ecology



What lies beneath the surface?

It's been well over a decade since the International Maritime Organisation agreed the terms of the Ballast Water Management (BWM) Convention. But the wait for it to enter into force continues after it was revealed last month that the treaty has failed to pass the 35% world fleet tonnage threshold — being 0.65% short of the level required. However, the IMO remains hopeful that the convention will be able to take effect some time next year, with moves by countries including Panama, Argentina, Indonesia, Belgium, Finland and the Philippines to progress their ratification process. The convention was drawn up to address the serious ecological, economic and health problems posed by invasive species carried in ships' ballast water. When a species becomes invasive, it out-competes native species and multiplies into pest proportions.

Long-awaited global measures for ballast water management remain at least a year from introduction. But research in a UK port is looking at ways to minimise the risks posed by marine invasive species carried by ships. **STEVEN KENNEDY** reports...

Invasive species problems have affected many parts of the UK coast — threatening some indigenous forms of marine life. Now the Harwich Haven Port Authority (HPA) is taking the initiative to find out what unknown species occupy its 150 square miles of waters, working in partnership with the specialist firm Thomson Ecology.

HPA harbour engineer John Brien says he hopes the project will put the authority in the best possible position to protect its waters before the convention comes into effect.

‘There is growing interest in monitoring the non-native species in our waters, and legislation has been introduced to identify the species that pose a particular threat, and to introduce measures to control their spread — if possible,’ he explains. ‘The Authority is carrying out the first stage of what may become a wider scale study in collaboration with other regulators and conservation bodies in the area.’

‘Until the convention comes into force, there are IMO guidelines for the management of ballast water to minimise the risk of transfer,’ he points out. ‘The Harbour Authority requires vessels to manage ballast water operations in such a way as to minimise these risks and prohibits vessels from discharging ballast water into the harbour without the permission of the harbour master.’

One of the researchers involved in the initial study was Thomson Ecology marine consultant Sarah Marjoram, who says this research will provide a useful benchmark for the authority to use to protect the environment and prosperity of the Harwich Haven area.

‘We’ve been doing sampling work with Harwich Haven since 2008,’ she explains. ‘Harwich Haven asked us to look through the previous surveys we’ve done for them and particularly look for invasive species so they have a baseline understanding of what is already in their harbour area.’

‘The majority of the ones we’ve found within Harwich Haven’s waters have been found on British shores for a while; some of them since the 1600s. Fortunately for Harwich Haven they don’t have any of the ones that could pose a threat to biodiversity and also don’t have any invasive species that could impact on their port, both commercially and economically. It’s always good, however, to have a baseline knowledge of what’s there and you can put in other surveying to stay informed of what’s going on,’ she adds.

The research is providing the port with a vital insight into its natural health. From the survey data recorded so far, fewer than 10 invasive species were identified as being present in Harwich Haven’s port. The threat they pose varies — with some being fairly harmless, whilst others can destroy existing ecosystems and, in turn, can have a devastating impact on industries such as fishing and tourism.

Once species that would cause concern if a report identifies its presence is Chinese mitten crabs. This species that is thought to have come to the UK in ships’ ballast water, and it can be extremely destructive to both the environment and fishing nets.

So while the survey will have limited impact on containing species already integrated in the ecosystems of the port, it can help identify

measures needing to be taken in the future to stop other species disrupting local ecosystems.

‘It can be a bit too late in some cases,’ Sarah admits. ‘The majority of these species don’t pose an immediate threat to biodiversity, or nature, but there are a few that do. Sometimes these species are already in the area and not getting picked up in the surveys. It’s quite hard to manage as it’s been going on for so many decades. It’s only when these species become a pest, or a problem, and has an impact on economics that they really start getting noticed.’

‘The knowledge that a port has them is great, but the truth is there is only so much you can do once you’ve got them as well,’ she adds.

UK ports want to avoid cases of complete takeover by an invasive species. In some parts of the world the influx of a particular type of organism has been so destructive to the local ecosystems that they cause major changes in the waters surrounding those areas.



Thomson Ecology marine consultant Sarah Marjoram has been investigating invasive species in Harwich Haven Authority’s waters

‘There are examples from different places in Europe,’ Sarah points out. ‘There is a comb jelly which was introduced to the Black Sea which is a good example of what can happen when an invasive species gets out of control and starts affecting local communities. This type of comb jelly is a voracious predator of zooplankton. The loss of zooplankton caused the collapse of zooplankton-eating fish, which caused the collapse of predatory fish and led to the collapse of the Black Sea fishery.’

‘Lionfish in Florida are another example,’ she adds. ‘People were releasing them from their private aquariums into the open water and they thrived. They now hold annual derby-like competitions in the area for who can kill the most lionfish, just as an attempt to reduce their numbers.’

Lionfish are now established along the entire US East Coast from Florida through to Massachusetts, east to Bermuda and throughout the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico. They eat native species of juvenile fish and cause damage to the balance of the fragile coral reef ecosystem.

This scale of invasion may seem unlikely in UK waters, but it is not impossible — and we need the kind of studies undertaken by Harwich Haven and Thomson Ecology to assess the risk so we can be prepared.

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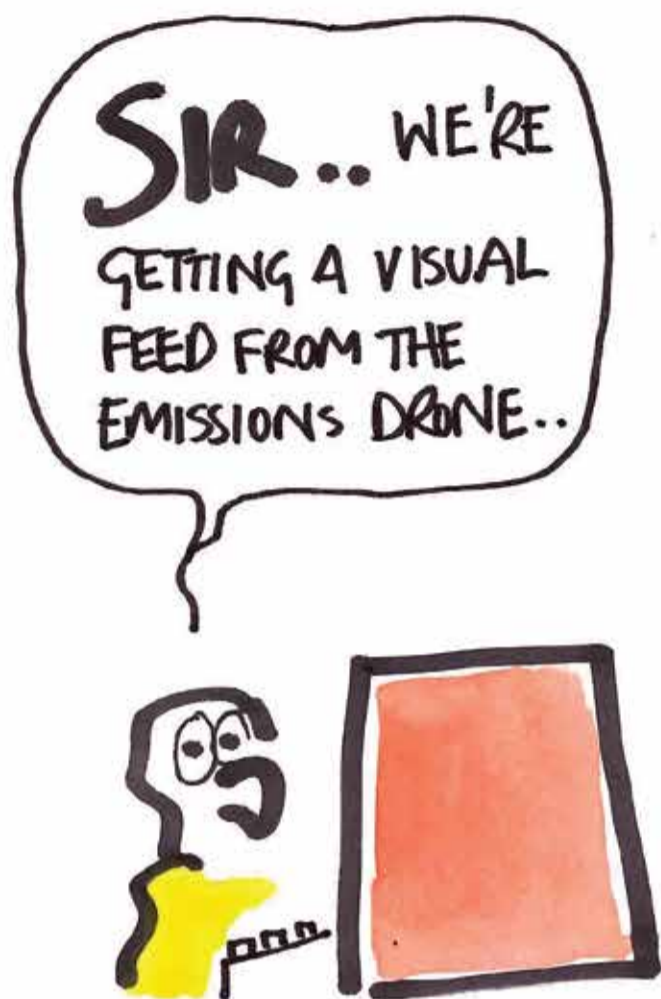
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Our work, then and now

There's a well-known saying which runs: 'If we do not learn from the mistakes of history, we are doomed to repeat them'. There is a lot to be gained from understanding our past — as **JO STANLEY** reports from the maritime section of the first European Labour History Network conference...

What's love got to do with it? sings Tina Turner. Equally, it might be demanded what have academic historians got to do with it — 'it' being the mega-issues of maritime life today, such as understaffing, de-regulation, and new technology.

Can backward-surveying intellectuals be any use at all? If so, how? That question was raised by labour historians at their first international networking conference, held in December 2015 in an unseasonably golden Turin, the former home of Fiat and the birthplace of Nutella.

Like their colleagues who focus on other kinds of work — including mining, railways and care work — maritime labour historians are not doddering old professors focused on the minutiae of Nelsonia or of marlin spike design. Nor are they 'rivet-counters' — the dismissive term used for vessel-obsessed maritime antiquarians.

Usually maritime labour historians are red and green activists in their workplaces and neighbourhoods. They know that people and their working conditions matter — and that to

understand the organisation of working life is to understand our wider society too.

If an amateur maritime labour historian was on your ship today they would be the person most likely to be surfing the IMO website for information about how to handle an inequitable practice that occurred this morning. But he or she would also be Googling for the event's counterpart in 1970, 1870 or even 1770.

That historic data might have been unearthed and uploaded by a professional maritime labour historian. They'd do so not least because they are trying to make themselves look employable or because, as knowledge workers, they are under pressure to meet their own employers' demands that they produce high-profile accessible products.

In a plenary speech Marcel van der Linden, research director of the International Institute of Social History — one of the founding organisations for the event, along with the International Conference of Labour and Social History in Vienna (ITLH) — explained that there are two concepts of labour history. There's the narrow one of labour movements. And there's the wider one of the history of the working class.

Those two elements have been studied for at least 35 years at maritime labour history conferences (see panel) and since the 1970s in the wider world of labour history.

This conference, at Turin University's Campus Einaudi, was designed precisely to enable better communication between people working on labour history. They include those who don't recognise that what they're doing is labour history — for example oral historians or sociologists.

Some of the conference was about sharing connections, together. Over the two days 20 interest groups met separately to discuss their particular fields — ranging from textile workers to maritime life.

Within the maritime labour history strand were at least 20 historians from the US, Scandinavia, and Europe; another eight are interested, but couldn't come.

Most are academics. When we were asked to put up our hands if we'd ever worked at sea, no one did. But a more telling question might have been, 'Are you doing this because you've got seafaring connections or live in a port?' Then there'd have been a number of yeses.

Two professors from Barcelona University, Jordi Ibarz and Enric Garcia, have coordinated the group so far. They chaired the 15 presentations, which spanned at least six centuries, and covered port workers as well as seafarers.

Three speakers specifically looked at the history of unions. Brendan J Von Briesen devoted his attention to guilds in Barcelona between 1760 and 1840. Donald Weber especially focused on the changes in Belgium between 1914 and 2014. And 'Wobblies' expert Peter Cole compared dockworkers in the San Francisco Bay and Durban from the 1960s to today.

Seafarers were discussed by Arnaud Lemarchand, whose interest is the now-global



A tinted postcard showing women carrying coal to steamships in Jamaica, featured in Jo Stanley's presentation on female dock workers

maritime labour market and its new rules. In an important foregrounding of race, Justine Cousin investigated foreign seafarers, especially Lascars, on British ships. Enric Garcia reported on discipline and resistance in the Spanish merchant fleet between 1802 and 1909. And I spoke about the progress being made by UK women deck and engineering officers.

Gender was not high on the agenda. But Tapio Bergholm re-investigated his old ideas about whether maritime workers can truly be said to have a freewheeling heterosexual bachelor culture. I spoke about women in dock labour forces and the way females doing such heavy 'immoral' work were admitted differently in different countries and periods.

Other speakers dealt with dockers' history — particularly the way they worked together with ships' crews. Seafarers were sometimes induced to unload; workers had to unite to ensure employers respected skill demarcations.

But the point was not just to share information with each other and to uphold the new ethos of doing global, not just local, labour history. This conference was precisely about networking. Future steps have to include thinking about how maritime labour historians can work with the wider world of museums, maritime training boards, trade unions and other organisations.

Why bother? Because there's a need that maritime labour historians can fulfil. They can tell people about the past in order to change the future.

For example, modern women stevedores in the US have trouble with male colleagues because it's imagined that women have never loaded before. Knowledge can help smooth relations with colleagues and make the challenging of discriminatory practices less fraught.

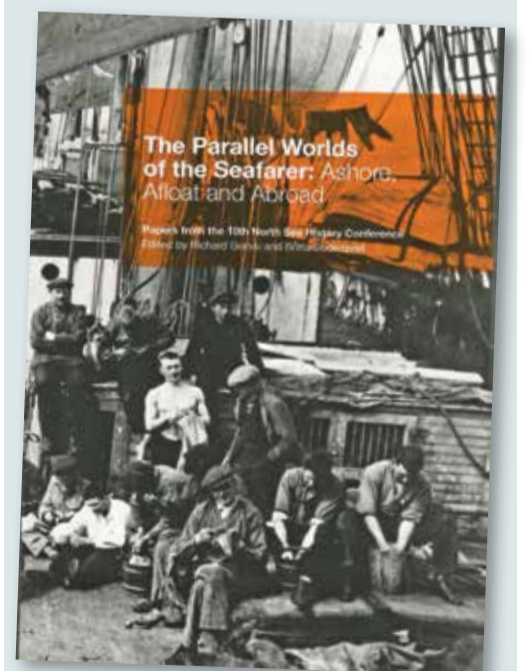
Maritime museums tend to be woefully lacking in information about the people working in maritime life, and connecting the past with the present. What, it might well be asked, is the modern regulatory equivalent of that cat o' nine tails on display? An emailed warning that you'll be fired for industrial misconduct?

Organisations such as the ITF, IMO and Nautilus International, which are involved in protecting maritime workers' rights, can gain from historians' knowledge of what worked before — in case it's

applicable again. The book list below offers a start in this process.

In turn, maritime labour historians can gain from networking with the real practitioners of maritime life. This includes getting help in contacting seafarers who can tell them about life on ships today; accessing union archives; and having wide-ranging discussions that help everyone see how the past can help future maritime workers' labour conditions.

Top books on maritime labour history with some focus on the UK



- **Working Men Who Got Wet**, eds Rosemary Ommer and Gerald Panting, Museum University of Newfoundland, 1980
- **The North Sea: Twelve Essays on Social History of Maritime Labour**, ed Lewis R. Fischer, Stavanger Maritime Museum, 1992
- **Maritime Labour: Contributions to the History of Work at Sea, 1500-2000**, ed Richard Gorski, Amsterdam University Press, 2007.
- **Maritime People: The 9th North Sea History Conference**, eds Jeoen ter Brugge, Arthur Credland and Harald Hamre, Stavanger, 2011.
- **The Parallel Worlds of the Seafarer: Ashore, Afloat and Abroad**, papers from the 10th North Sea History Conference, eds Richard Gorski and Britta Söderqvist, Goteborg, 2012.



Barcelona university professors Jordi Ibarz (left) and Enric Garcia coordinate the maritime labour historians group



Donald Weber with an image of the Belgian dockers' union banner, founded in 1907



Peter Cole dedicated his talk to the US dockers' union activist Leo Robinson

Key gatherings exploring maritime labour history

- **1980: Working Men Who Got Wet**, the 4th Conference of the Atlantic Canada Shipping Project, Newfoundland
- **1989: Social History of Maritime Labour**, the 1st North Sea History Conference, Stavanger
- **2008: Maritime People**, the 9th North Sea History Conference, Goteberg (www.northernseas.eu — go to the Publications tab and select 2003-)
- **2011: The Parallel Worlds of the Seafarer: Ashore, Afloat and Abroad**, The 10th North Sea History Conference, Goteborg (also at www.northernseas.eu)
- **2013: Working Lives between the Deck and the Dock: Comparative Perspectives on Sailors as International Labourers (16th-18th centuries)**, University of Exeter (www.exeter.ac.uk — search for working lives)