A Message from the President

Fellow Pilots,

The world relies on “superheroes”! Rest assured, I am not talking about caped vigilantes with supernatural powers! I have in mind “unknown superheroes” – the millions and millions of women and men around the world who simply do their jobs right, diligently, day after day, far from the spotlight.

Their names will never be in the media; and that does not bother them the least – they do not seek that kind of attention. The satisfaction of a job well-done, sometimes in the face of very real risks to their personal safety, the knowledge that they have done their best, that they have truly tried as hard as they could, is all that really matters.

We have all met or seen people like this at some point. It is the “push” of these fundamentally decent, honest people that brings the world forward, against the “pull” of the many unfortunate things we see happening in the world. The real “front” is there.

I like to think that, in our own small way, pilots belong in that group. Our profession is largely invisible to the public. Yet, “90% of everything” goes through our hands at one point or another. Pilots keep the world’s waterways clean and safe. And we do our best to make shipping efficient on those waterways.

I like to think that we help change the world, and make it a better place. There is ample evidence that economic growth is the most powerful instrument for reducing poverty and improving quality of life. Evidence also indicates that international trade is not a zero-sum game and that it generates real collective growth.

In this respect, it is noteworthy that what is possibly the best story in the world today – that the global poverty rate has been cut in half over the last 20 years – has also been happening while the gross domestic product of the 34 countries in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) doubled.

So, growth generates virtuous circles of opportunity. It advances human development which, in turn, leads to further growth. If growth depends on trade, and trade on shipping, then it follows that we have a part to play in all this!

Every day, thousands of pilotage assignments take place around the world. Every minute, pilots go up or down rope and timber ladders precariously spread out on the hull of moving ships. Their names will never be in the media, and that does not bother them the least, the knowledge that they have done their job right, diligently, is all that really matters.

Simon Pelletier

ISSUE NUMBER 42 / JULY 2017

IN THIS ISSUE:
1 A Message from the President
3 Message from the Secretary General
Review of ISO 799 – Pilot Ladder Standard
4 Port Otago Pilot Trip
5 You won’t NAB this Pilot!
8 The Importance of Correct Procedure
10 Houston Pilots Honoured
Pilot Boarding Survey 2017
11 Honorary Membership Awarded
12 Invitation to XXIV IMPA Congress in Dakar, Senegal
14 Risk in Relation to Crewing
16 Walking the Plank
18 Marcia Scholes’ 70 Years of helping the Mission to Seafarers
20 Inboard Performance System Pilot Launches
22 Dangerous Ladders
26 President’s Progress
Message from the Secretary General

Dear Colleagues,

So far, 2017 has passed in a blur of activity! This year I have visited Denmark (twice), Canada, Holland, Belgium, Senegal, Italy, Singapore, Norway and France. There have been in between the usual attendances at IMO to defeat an attempt to cheapen Pilot Ladders, and other nonsenses.

However, not all my work is without some uplifting aspects. A recent design project by students of the Royal College of Art, sponsored by Lloyd’s Register, focusing on Pilot Ladder Innovation, brought forward some breathtaking prototypes. Don’t worry, you will not be confronted tomorrow by some elastic polymer construction in retroreflective dayglo pink, but there were some very refreshing ideas, still based on your pragmatic needs.

Nick Cutmore

As some members may be aware ISO 799:2004 Pilot Ladders is being reviewed.

IMPA recently had the opportunity to address the Plenary meeting of ISO TC8 SC1 in Tokyo represented by Capt. Adam Roberts. The revision of SOLAS V/23 in 2012 has highlighted a number of areas IMPA believes can be addressed through the review of ISO 799:2004.

A number of areas of concern exist within this standard.

The main areas of concern for IMPA were termination of side ropes, proposal to allow knots in timber, use of metal crimp fittings particularly aluminium fittings and so called service extension ropes. As with our Secretary General being at IMO meetings, the importance of being at the table to “stay off the menu” was readily apparent.

In addition to our concerns above IMPA put forward the view that ISO 799 could lead to a higher level of safety for members if the standard:
• Set a higher standard for maintenance of pilot ladders
• Require manufacturers to supply maintenance and inspection guidance for end users.
• Improved the periodic inspection requirements.

The draft will now be sent out for vote. Though IMPA views were not all adopted by the working group I am confident that the draft standard is better than it was before the plenary and convinced it is essential for IMPA to maintain a close relationship with ISO TC8 SC1.

Captain Adam Roberts

Amongst the winners was a device to secure (and indicate) that a ladder was safely attached to the ship.

Another gratifying job I have annually is to judge nominations for IMO’s Award for Outstanding Bravery. These normally exceed 30 and take a great deal of time to consider. However, to read some of the accounts of rescuers’ deeds is very affirming of the goodness of the human spirit, especially in these times when we often seem surrounded by sad events and bad news.

Nick Cutmore
Thoughts on observation trip with Port Otago Pilot by Port Director Tim Gibson

Reproduced from the New Zealand Maritime Pilots’ Association magazine, ‘The Pilot’ with permission of Tim Gibson and NZMPA.

On a beautiful and calm morning, I had the privilege to join Port Otago pilot, Hugh O’Neill on the bridge of the CPO Savannah as he brought her into Port Chalmers.

I became a director of Port Otago during 2016, and since then have been coming up to speed with the port’s various activities, observing many of these at first-hand. This has been as part of my general induction, but also as a direct result of our Port’s commitment to Health and Safety. As directors, we are all expected to be, and are, closely involved in H&S.

I mentioned my wish to experience “piloting” to Sean Bolt, our General Manager Marine late last year. He and Geoff Plunkett, CEO, were very supportive, so a plan was put in place to arrange a trip to coincide with a Board meeting early in the New Year.

As part of the planning, Sean sent me H&S briefings specific to the pilots, including YouTube clips of pilot ladder boarding. This was very informative, but also had a negative consequence as I then found online videos of bad ladder climbing experiences. Combined with my aversion to heights, and the various things I found showing ladder failures, I was a bit nervous about the prospect of scaling the side of a ship. The positive was that I was motivated to add some additional upper-body routines into my gym programme to try and at least get me in some better shape if I needed it.

The day arrived. I had been in touch to advise that the CPO Savannah would be arriving at Port Chalmers early in the morning of 15th February, a Board meeting day. I arranged to be in Dunedin the night before, so we were set.

I spent the days anxiously checking marine forecasts, and hoping for a fine day. Two days before I had been on a fishing expedition off d’Urville Island and came home in nasty winds and seas, so was not hoping for a repeat off the Otago Peninsula, with me on a bouncing pilot launch trying to access a behemoth in the dark. As I drove out from Dunedin to Port Chalmers the sight of a beautiful, calm, moonlit harbour encouraged me a little.

I arrived at Port Chalmers at 4.15am and met with Pilot Hugh O’Neill who gave me a welcome cup of coffee, introduced me to Dwayne the pilot launch coxswain, who took me through the plans for the trip. This included a thorough briefing on embarkation, how the PPU would be hoisted first, then how I was to climb the ladder. Hugh had decided I would go first, with him second. That way there would be an extra pair of hands on the pilot launch deck in case I fell. We also covered what I could and could not do on the bridge. I was very mindful of being able to learn as much as possible from the trip, but not get in anyone’s way, especially Hugh’s.

We set off for the pilot launch, fitted out in a spare pilot’s jacket, trying to remember what I had just been told about securing the safety clip, and manual inflation if needed. At the wharf, I was introduced to deck-hand Kerry who took me through the launch’s safety briefing, and then Hugh again went through the process for and timing of my embarkation.

On the way out, Kerry and Dwayne talked to me about their work which was very informative. We rendezvoused with the Savannah and moved into position to embark. Although it was a beautiful and still morning, I was still surprised about the amount of movement of our craft relative to the ship as we moved into position. The good sight for me though was that the combination ladder looked like a vertical climb of only 3 metres. We left the calm, hook-oated to the safety railing, and Hugh repeated the instructions about how I was to mount and climb the ladder. Then it was an easy transfer for me, with my mind repeating the mantra of keeping three points of contact as I ascended to the gangway.

On board and on the bridge, and after introductions to the Captain and his team, I took position to the side of the bridge and listened to Hugh’s briefing about the upcoming trip in. After this, Hugh thoughtfully positioned his PPU so I could see what was going on.

The trip in was uneventful, but fascinating. I had never really appreciated how many variables that Hugh and the crew must manage, and this was a good day. I can only imagine what it must be like in poor conditions. I was impressed by the calm way instructions were conveyed to the Captain and helmsman, and how, after these were carried out, Hugh would then frequently provide an explanation. I had the impression that this was regular practice, and not just for my benefit.

We berthed at 6.17am. For me, the highlight was watching and listening to the interaction between the pilot and the tugs as the Savannah was swung to bring the ship stem-first into the berth.

After Hugh and the crew had completed their paperwork and talked through the arrival, we disembarked. Back on shore, Hugh and I had a thorough debrief about what I had seen, and the BRM approach to not only piloting, but also to business management in general.

So why did I do this and what did I learn? My reasons were: a director of a business whose operations are not only piloting, but also to business management in general.

My final reason is more self-indulgent: I have always been fascinated with the port and the master. As a director, I must strive to have as good an understanding as possible of not only the risks, but how we manage them with our team.

The safe arrival and departure of ships is the livelihood of any port, so seeing first-hand how the pilot function works is an important part of my understanding of Port Otago. I was lucky that we had such good conditions for my trip.

My thanks to everyone who made this trip possible.

You won't NAB this Pilot!

By Ian Shields, first published in Chirp Maritime, 28th October 2016, and reproduced with their kind permission.

When the pilot boarded the 200 metres long crude oil carrier, which was inward bound into the Eastern Solent waters, he was more than a little surprised that the passage plan approved by the Master (and clear to see on ECDIS) showed the course passing directly over the Nab Tower, which is clearly marked on the chart.

This is a good example of why some ports have compulsory piloting and shows the benefits of agreeing the passage plan between the pilot and the master.

For more information on ECDIS near misses please read CHIRP Maritime FEEDBACK 44.

There was an apparent failure of the Safety Management System and its implementation on board. Every passage plan should be checked, agreed by the master and then signed off by all of the navigation officers. In this case this clearly did not happen.

Save the Date!

The XXIVth IMPA Conference will take place in Dakar, Senegal, from 23-27 April 2018. For further details see the Conference website, www.impadakar2018.com
"Words Fail Me......!!"
The Importance of Correct Procedure

Malcolm C. Armstrong, FNI; FAIN; Hon Member and former vice president of IMPA, Author of the book Pilot Ladder Safety

The following incident is a true story, but names have been changed and it is not necessary to mention the name of the pilotage district. Capt. Armstrong, retired pilot and master mariner, was engaged as a consultant and expert witness by the law firm acting on behalf of Capt. Smith’s family.

It was a dark and stormy night-time disembarkation with rough seas but not unusually rough for this particular location. Capt. Smith was an experienced seaman and master mariner but he had only been piloting for a little over a year. The majority of transfers in Capt. Smith’s piloting experience had been by helicopter so he had very limited practice at disembarking into a pilot vessel in rough conditions.

Robert had been operator of the pilot vessel (PV) for many years and was considered to be competent at his job; however he had no certificate of competency or licence because it was not required in that jurisdiction when he was first engaged, so he probably had no formal training in the use of radar or GPS or VHF radio procedure. He testified that there were problems with the radar and the GPS on PV on the night of this incident.

As PV approached the ship, Robert was surprised to see the pilot already descending the pilot ladder. The ship was not yet on a suitable course for the pilot transfer. Normally a pilot would wait until the PV was alongside the ship and until some communication or signal indicated that the PV was ready to receive the pilot. This is particularly important on a dark and stormy night with rough sea.

Before PV was firmly in position alongside the ship, Capt. Smith attempted to disembark but he fell into the water between ship and PV. It was a good pilot ladder and properly rigged but it is still possible for a pilot to lose his footing or his hand grip, especially in difficult sea conditions. For some reason that cannot be explained, before stepping onto the ladder, Captain Smith instructed the ship’s crew to switch off the light that was correctly rigged to illuminate the ladder and the pilot vessel.

PV was now occupied searching for and attempting to rescue the man overboard (MOB). This situation affected many people, other ships in the vicinity and the local search and rescue organisation (CG). Robert called the pilot on another outbound ship. The message he sent was “Jack call the coast guard, we have a man in the water.”

This message does not mention the name of the ship being called nor does it mention the name of the ship sending the message (Pilot Vessel), nor does it give the location of the incident. Robert relied upon Jack to recognise his voice. However the message was heard by someone on another ship (not Jack’s ship) and strange as it may seem, it was believed that the MOB was from that other ship and CG were informed of this wrong information and this resulted in a one hour delay before CG arrived at the scene of the real MOB. Robert could have called CG direct on channel 16 with a PANPAN or he could even have transmitted a MAYDAY message then everyone involved would have known what was going on. The ship from which the pilot fell should also have immediately called the local authority on channel 16 but there was no evidence that this was done.

It was a large PV with a crew of two, namely the operator and one deck hand. When the deck hand was looking for the MOB it was not possible for the operator to continuously see the deck hand and when the deck hand went to the wheelhouse to inform the operator that he had spotted the MOB he lost sight of the MOB. A third crew member could have been in a position to relay messages between the other two and may have resulted in a safe rescue of Capt. Smith, but SAFETY COSTS MONEY. Is the extra expense justified for an additional crew member on PV?

Capt. Smith was wearing a life jacket (PFD) that could be inflated by the wearer when in the water, and he had a light attached to him which had to be manually operated, but he did not inflate his PFD or switch on his light.

After more searching, Capt. Smith was spotted again. PV was equipped with a recovery system at the stern. Once again the number of crew members was a factor. Robert was at the controls manoeuvring the PV and the deck hand was unable on his own to rescue MOB in the rough sea. Capt. Smith was still alive but was weakened by a lengthy immersion in cold water. PV crew lost contact with Capt. Smith who subsequently drowned and was not seen again until his body was recovered from the sea the next day.

As a result of this tragedy the pilots on Capt. Smith’s station revised many of their procedures to reduce the likelihood of such an event occurring again.

It only works if you wear it! PFDs are essential.
In February 2017 The US Coast Guard gathered to honour several men who prevented a major disaster in the Houston Ship Channel last year.

In September 2016, a mechanical problem caused the Tanker “Aframax River”’s engine to suddenly race into full speed astern. The ship hit a mooring, which ripped a large gash in her tanks and ignited a massive inferno.

Two Houston Pilots stayed on board the burning ship, navigating it away from other vessels and averting a possible disaster of untold proportions.

Mike McGee, the conning pilot, described the horrific scene and hostile situation that he confronted from the wheelhouse. Surrounded by towering flames and engulfed in thick black smoke and searing heat, he managed to manoeuver the stricken vessel away from surrounding ships and hove to in the middle of the Houston Ship Channel to prevent the flames from spreading to the numerous tank vessels moored nearby. Captain Mike Phillips told how he handled radio communications with the USCG and coordinated firefighting efforts with the tugs and fireboats.

One pilot discovered that his face and hair were singed. The other pilot broke out and charged a firehose and extinguished a fire on the port bridge wing. With disaster seemingly imminent, Phillips turned to McGee and warned, “We are going to die.” The blaze would continue for more than one hour.

The Coast Guard awarded captains Mike Phillips and Mike McGee their highest civilian award, the Meritorious Public Service Award, for their commitment to remain on the burning ship, protecting lives and property in the face of what could have been a major catastrophe.

The Coast Guard also gave the Meritorious Public Service Award to the tug boat captains who remained with the vessel throughout the fire and to Port of Houston firefighters who arrived to battle the blaze.

IMPA has also nominated Captains Phillips and McGee for the IMO Exceptional Bravery at Sea Award 2017.

In February 2017 The US Coast Guard gathered to honour several men who prevented a major disaster in the Houston Ship Channel last year.

In September 2016, a mechanical problem caused the Tanker “Aframax River”’s engine to suddenly race into full speed astern. The ship hit a mooring, which ripped a large gash in her tanks and ignited a massive inferno.

Two Houston Pilots stayed on board the burning ship, navigating it away from other vessels and averting a possible disaster of untold proportions.

Mike McGee, the conning pilot, described the horrific scene and hostile situation that he confronted from the wheelhouse. Surrounded by towering flames and engulfed in thick black smoke and searing heat, he managed to manoeuver the stricken vessel away from surrounding ships and hove to in the middle of the Houston Ship Channel to prevent the flames from spreading to the numerous tank vessels moored nearby. Captain Mike Phillips told how he handled radio communications with the USCG and coordinated firefighting efforts with the tugs and fireboats.

One pilot discovered that his face and hair were singed. The other pilot broke out and charged a firehose and extinguished a fire on the port bridge wing. With disaster seemingly imminent, Phillips turned to McGee and warned, “We are going to die.” The blaze would continue for more than one hour.

The Coast Guard awarded captains Mike Phillips and Mike McGee their highest civilian award, the Meritorious Public Service Award, for their commitment to remain on the burning ship, protecting lives and property in the face of what could have been a major catastrophe.

The Coast Guard also gave the Meritorious Public Service Award to the tug boat captains who remained with the vessel throughout the fire and to Port of Houston firefighters who arrived to battle the blaze.

IMPA has also nominated Captains Phillips and McGee for the IMO Exceptional Bravery at Sea Award 2017.

Pilot Boarding Survey 2017

Once again the annual IMPA pilot ladder survey will be held in the first two weeks of October.

Whilst it remains a cause for concern that levels of non-compliance remain steady, what is encouraging is that the survey has ensured that pilot ladder safety is high on the agenda (for example: https://www.chirpmaritime.org/the-hazards-of-pilot-boarding-1 http://maritime-executive.com/article/chirp-reports-on-pilot-safety-concerns). This is entirely due to the results of the IMPA ladder survey being widely promulgated at IMO and amongst other stakeholders.

IMPA have been in discussion with ISO to ensure that ISO 799 works in line with SOLAS V/23 and A1045. Adam Roberts (Australia) has recently presented IMPA’s case in Japan to ISO (see page 3), and we look forward to working towards ironing out any discrepancies.

Your continued support for the survey is very important as the statistics help support IMPA arguments for improved standards and levels of safety within the industry. Full details on how to contribute will be sent out in due course. Thanks in anticipation for your continued participation.

Honary IMPA Membership Awarded

Captain Julio César Longa of COPRAC was awarded Honorary Lifelong Membership of IMPA in recognition of his staunch support and tireless work on behalf of Pilots in Argentina and Latin America.
Invitation to the XXIV International Maritime Pilots’ Association Congress
22-28 April 2018, Dakar, Senegal
www.impadakar2018.com

Dear Fellow Pilots

On behalf of the International Maritime Pilots’ Association (IMPA) Executive, I would like to extend a personal invitation to join with pilots from around the world for the IMPA 2018 Congress which will be held in the historic city of Dakar, Senegal.

The Congress programme will be inspiring and thought-provoking and will include distinguished presenters who will cover a range of topics of great interest to pilots, encompassing the latest technical developments, training, new trends and challenges, and much more. Delegates can also look forward to four days experiencing some of the latest products and services available through commercial exhibitors, vendors and sponsors from maritime companies around the world.

The Conference Hosts, the Senegal Pilots’ Association, have developed an impressive social programme and the Gala Dinner and Excursions will allow you to mix business with pleasure in convivial surroundings. An accompanying Persons Program offers a fabulous treat for our partners and guests.

I look forward to personally welcoming you to the 2018 IMPA Congress in Senegal.

Best Regards,

Captain Simon Pelletier
President
International Maritime Pilots’ Association
My name is David Appleton and I am Professional and Technical Officer at Nautilus International.

Today I’m going to be speaking about risk in relation to crewing, which considering that approximately 90% of all accidents are attributed to human error, is probably one of, if not the most important factor when looking at risk mitigation. However, in many instances it seems that there is a higher tolerance of risk when it comes to training and competence of crew, than there would be in other areas.

Far and away the biggest challenge today is ensuring that the BIMCO/ICS report by 2025 depending on the growth in demand is a well-known issue but not one that is going away anytime soon. According to the latest BIMCO/ICS manpower report there is currently a shortage of some 16,500 officers which is predicted to rise to 92,000 by 2020 and 147,500 by 2025. Additionally, the UK Seafarer Projections report which was published by Oxford Economics last week suggested that demand could be up to 90,000 higher than that predicted in the BIMCO/ICS report by 2025 depending on the growth in world trade.

Increase in demand and the effects of an aging work force will, as with every other, is one based on compromise, there being some positives and some negatives and if the positives on the whole outweigh the negatives, then most people will be reasonably happy. In days gone by the hardships of life at sea were countered by the opportunity for exotic travel, days if not weeks in port and an active social life onboard. In many instances this cannot be said to be the case anymore.

Those that the industry will look to recruit in the future will be less willing to accept the compromises that their predecessors were. For many of the previous generation, months away at a time with little contact with the outside world may even be part of the attraction. This is not so for the so-called “millennials”.

As we enter 2017, the youngest of those leaving school and embarking on their careers at sea will have been born in 2001! These young men and women literally do not know a world without the smartphone, Facebook, Twitter or Snapchat. These people are not only used to being connected 24/7 but they demand it.

A recent survey by Nautilus found that only around 50% of seafarers have access to the internet onboard and when they do it is often poor quality and they often have to pay through the nose for it.

For many millennials, this combined with the other negative factors of a life at sea will likely be a compromise too far.

So what does this mean?

Returning to last week’s UK seafarers projections report, I noticed a very interesting comment from one of the respondents which, when referring to officer shortages, said “You don’t have a ship not going to sea because of staff – all ships sail… although you may have an owner complaining that the skillset is not as high as they like.”

From the sounds of this it would appear that this is an issue that is already common place when we have a supressed officer shortage of 16,500 - what is it going to be like when we are pushing 150,000 or even more?

This is the crux of the issue here, it is not that ships will not sail, or that crew will be able to demand higher wages, it is that standards will fall across the board and therefore risk will be greatly increased.

This is happening at a time when ensuring the competence of crew at sea is and will continue to become more and more difficult regardless of any offsite shortage.

As Mark alluded to in his opening remarks this morning, the IMO is excruciatingly slow in bringing about necessary changes to the training and certification of seafarers. When these changes do eventually come about, all too often because of political wrangling and various compromises along the way, they fall short of what is actually required.

To give an example, the IMO first approved an ECDIS in 1995. On the first of January this year it became compulsory for Deck Officers serving on a ship fitted with an ECDIS to have had some form of ECDIS training although, as flag states had only had seven years to implement this, Port State Control Officers have been advised to take a “practical and pragmatic approach” until the 1st of July this year.

It has taken nigh on 22 years for 22 years for it to be made mandatory that a navigate officer has had some kind of training in the use of what is in most instances, regardless of whether it is nominated as such, the primary means of navigation.

As usual, the changes only came about as a result of numerous accidents attributed to the incorrect use of the equipment as had happened with ARPA before and continues to happen with AIS.

What will be the next ECDIS, ARPA or AIS? And can the industry afford to wait another 22 years for the regulator to mandate training?

The uptake of new technology in shipping has always been relatively conservative with the uptake of new technology but there are signs that this is changing.

The subject of ‘autonomous’ or ‘smart’ shipping has gained significant traction in recent years. For some this may seem like the obvious solutions for any crewing related problems – get rid of them altogether.

As tempting as it may sound, there are a number of regulatory, political, technical and most importantly financial obstacles that must be overcome before we see the fully autonomous ship operating with no crew.

With the exception of one or two trailblazers, the decision to adopt any new technology will always be a business one and it still seems a long way off before the financial case is fully made for autonomous shipping. If and when this does become a reality it will still be limited to types of ship and trade.

What is a much more likely is the concept of the “smart” or semi-automated ship where over a number of years certain menial tasks are gradually replaced by technology. Whether through a process of evolution or revolution, the pace of change is almost certain to increase.

Faster technological development combined with increasing environmental regulation will result in numerous new systems and pieces of equipment which seafarers must be able to use safely and effectively whilst fully understanding their limitations.

Whichever way it goes, the new ships of 10-15 years time and the way of work onboard is likely to be very different from how it is now. There may be fewer seafarers per vessel but the skills and expertise required by those seafarers is likely to be at a significantly higher level than it is today.

Considering the time gap between the introduction of new technology and the corresponding amendments to STCW, it is already very difficult to say with any confidence that somebody is competent to operate a modern complex ship simply because they are in possession of an STCW CoC. In future years it will surely become almost impossible.

So what are the solutions to these problems?

There are no easy quick fix answers but one thing is for sure – as the operation of modern ships bear less and less resemblance to that of their predecessors 30 or 40 years ago so too will the recruitment, education and onboard working conditions of the seafarers that are employed on them.

It will become necessary that the recruitment of seafarers will be based on the skillset they possess, much of which will be far outside of STCW, rather than considerations of cost. Training will need to be seen as more of a holistic continual process where knowledge is kept continually up to date rather than waiting for mandated requirements and working conditions will need to change to ensure that the career remains attractive to future generations.
Walking the Plank

The Southampton Pilot declined to board and the rating asked “why”?!?!

Ship under Pilotage leaving Ayr, Scotland

Used with the kind permission of Marie-Claire Jenkins.

Port Ash

REAL FEEL
REAL WORLD

SHIP HANDLING
TRAINING AND
RESEARCH CENTRE

Port Ash utilises manned ship models to provide real feel, real world training on its purpose built 2 Ha (5 acre) lake, and employs experienced Marine Pilots to provide world class training.

Providing specialised training for:

- Masters
- Officers
- Marine Pilots
- Naval Officers

+61 (0)2 4987 0029  TRAINING@PORTASH.COM.AU

PORTASH.COM.AU
Brisbane, Australia – 11 May 2017 – AAL, one of the world’s leading breakbulk, project cargo and heavy lift shipping operators, was pleased to recently host the Mission To Seafarers and Australia’s Channel 9 aboard the AAL Shanghai to celebrate volunteer Marcia Scholes’s 70 years of helping seafarers in the Port of Brisbane.

Frank Mueller, General Manager of AAL’s Liner Operations in Australia, commented, “We’re delighted to help with this recognition of Marcia’s amazing achievements. Seafaring is a fulfilling career, but it often comes with emotional and physical challenges that many land-based staff do not have to face. The Mission To Seafarers plays a huge role in providing the practical and pastoral support to seafarers and ports around the world and we’re grateful for everything they do.”

The Mission To Seafarers works in more than 200 ports in 50 countries caring for seafarers of all ranks, nationalities and beliefs – over 1.5 million people. Through its global network of chaplains, staff and volunteers it offers practical, emotional and spiritual support to seafarers through ship visits, drop-in seafarers’ centres and a range of welfare and emergency support services.

Ross Nicholls, Secretary at Mission to Seafarers, and Brisbane Marine Pilots, commented, “Seafarers carry out one of the most demanding jobs in the world, and the work of Mission To Seafarers’ dedicated volunteers has a direct impact upon the quality of lives they lead, and their families’ welfare. While the ships have changed over the years, the values of compassion, inclusion, and teamwork that are central to our mission remain constant. Marcia Scholes has embodied these ideals for more than 70 years, and both we and the sailors who’ve visited the Port of Brisbane are enormously grateful for her service.”

Marcia Scholes on the bridge of the AAL Shanghai with (Right to Left), Captain Stojanovic, Chief Officer Johannes Hapke and 3rd Officer Rex Aljohn Ranoa.
IPS-Powered Pilot Boat

By Captains A. Buongarzone and S. Mecca.

The Messina Strait Pilots Corporation is composed of 20 pilots operating in the ports of Messina, Reggio Calabria, Gioia Tauro and in the Strait of Messina. The Pilot Corporation is a self-employed Association and has 25 employers.

There are at least 8,500 vessels transiting through the Straits of Messina every year with a pilot on board. This means an average of one vessel every hour. The piloting service is performed by 4 pilots on duty plus 1 pilot on a 24-hour call.

In recent years the “Corporazione Piloti Stretto di Messina e Porti di Messina, Reggio Calabria e Gioia Tauro” have built two new pilot boats in the Belcraft shipyard in Viareggio (Tuscany), which have introduced new technical innovations for the Italian pilot boats.

The first pilot boat is called “K10” and one of the most successful innovations that has been introduced to this boat is the fendering system. It has a custom made all-around fender made by reinforced polyurethane coating filled with Polyethylene foam: this system acts as a shock absorber during pilot transfer operations and increases energy dissipation efficiency. The benefits provided by this system have convinced us to install the same on our most recent pilot boat built called “K1”. Furthermore for the new construction we used the same material for the lower small bumpers that in the past were bolted and are now glued, with a great weight advantage resulting and without any extra holes in the GRP hull.

While the “K10” was built taking into consideration heavy weather conditions, the new “K1” pilot boat has been built focusing on the following criteria: exceptional maneuverability especially at average boarding speed, lighter weight, lower fuel consumption and therefore more environmental friendly. In order to achieve these goals the new Volvo Penta IPS450 system was chosen, with the pilot boat redesigned to accommodate the forward-facing counter rotating propellers, matched with the D6 engines.

If we want to compare only the engines of the K1 and K10, the IPS engines are 25% lighter, 34% bhp less and 4% consumption value g/kWh less, meaning that at maximum power ratio we can have a potential of 37% less fuel consumption, as well as improved performance.

Due to the fact there is only one pilot boat driver on the boat, a joystick system has been added on the aft of the boat which can be easily operated by the driver whilst recovering the pilot in case the pilot was to fall overboard, and this remote control may also be used for fine docking operations.

The IPS system has been joined to a DP system which has been found to be very useful for many purposes, when it is necessary to maintain the boats position, also when pilots need to assist cable layer or other off-shore vessels working in the Messina Strait.

The K1 is fitted with active control of trim interceptors that give automatic roll and pitch stabilization. The greatest benefits are efficient roll and pitch damping at semi-planning and planning speeds, improving comfort, safety and operability with reduced motions but without added drag and weight.

The cabin in the pilot boat has been moved forward to permit an easy access to the engine room and to improve the forward visibility while the boat is planing.

The pilot boat driver’s seat has been moved to the centre of the boat cabin in order to have less blind spots and to be able to assist the pilot better while boarding the ship.

The floor is made of shock absorbing material that, together with the mechanical suspension of the seats, give greater comfort by reducing vibration and shocks.

To increase pilot boarding act safety, the new K1 pilot boat has been provided with steps and a platform from where the pilot can reach the ship’s ladder more easily. This equipment has been designed and developed exactly for our needs and the type of work done in our area.

The pilot boat’s external and internal light system has been completely modified using all LED approved lights to improve the pilot’s visibility during the pilot transfer between ship/pilot boat and to minimize electrical consumption.

In the Messina Strait Pilot Association the following colleagues, Captains, Costa, Mecca and Raffa under the supervision of the chief pilot Captain Donato, are working constantly to research improvements on new buildings and existing boats, often travelling abroad to see the various systems used in other countries, and try to apply the best ideas to our pilot boats.

The service we perform in the Straits of Messina is very different to the service performed in the ports because we normally board the vessels at a high speed. The maximum speed of the most recent pilot boat “K1” is 34 knots and we board the vessels at around 18 knots, often we need to transfer pilots between pilot stations and offices in fast, safe and a comfortable way.

In the work-boat world it is not easy to find a compromise between the various nautical qualities of reliability, economy and innovation and abandoning well-known and familiar systems used. For as much as one can study and evaluate, there is often a question mark. Over the years, Messina pilots have shown the courage to invest in innovative solutions while maintaining tradition and high standards of safety and reliability. Our goal is to maintain high safety, operational and environmental standards with a program for renewal of old boats and upgrading outdated systems.

The Messina Strait Pilot Association has recently cooperated with the colleagues of Bonifacio Strait Pilots which has been formed between North Sardinia and South Corse Pilots, suggesting the more suitable pilot boats required for the rough seas in their area and to work safely to achieve good performance. This new group is composed of Italian and French pilots after the IMO resolution which recommends pilotage for all the vessels transiting in the Bonifacio Strait.

From COAT to 170N LIFEJACKET in less than 5 seconds!

THE PILOT’S NO.1 CHOICE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD!

Don’t just take our word for it...
Dangerous Ladders

Marine pilot boarding accidents continue to occur with alarming regularity. Richard Halfhide looks at how a seemingly routine operation is being undermined by a variety of safety factors.

“The article first appeared in the February 2017 edition of Safety at Sea and is reproduced with their kind permission.”

On the face of it the issues concerning pilot transfer should not be difficult to resolve. SOLAS Chapter V, Regulation 23, addresses pilot transfer and details the specific requirements for the equipment. The IMO consolidated this in 2011 with the publication of Resolution A.1045(27) – Recommendation of Pilot Transfer Arrangements, which addressed such matters as the position and construction of pilot ladders, rope, and the winch positioning of the winch reel. This is supplemented by ISO 799, covering ship and marine technology, which sets out the specific requirements for prototype testing of pilot ladders for approval.

If the SOLAS rules were followed in the spirit in which they were written then the embellishment and dissection of pilot boards would be a safe, straightforward process. “The rules laid out are very simple and there should not be any doubt as to what is required,” explained Kevin Vallance, vice-chairman of the UK Marine Pilots’ Association technical and training committee and author of An illustrated pilot ladder manual, due to be published this year.

But safety surveys conducted by the International Marine Pilots Association (IMPA) at the behest of the IMO have consistently shown that 20% of pilot ladders checked are non-compliant. Moreover, an IMPA safety campaign conducted in 2015 revealed that 59% of non-compliant ladders were not secured properly.

Operational issues

When one considers that pilot services are used in ports across the world every day of the year, it’s surprising to learn that working instructions for ladder securing and pilot transfer operations do not need to be detailed in a vessel’s safety management system (SMS) and many ship managers do not specify training for the crew. Frequently, the pilot’s boarding is not even overseen by a supervising deck officer and there may be no contact with the bridge. While there have been preliminary discussions about a suitable standard of training, it remains a long way from becoming mandatory.

Because pilot transfer is often relegated to a peripheral task, the maintenance of pilot boarding equipment is often neglected and mishandled. Defective ladders that have been poorly constructed or incorrectly rigged are a common occurrence.

“Although inspection of pilot transfer arrangements is now theoretically subject to inspection as part of the Safety Equipment Certificate, it is difficult to accept this is being seriously conducted from the number of non-compliant ladders and arrangements being encountered,” said Vallance.

Another common issue is the combination gangway being offered at less than 5 m above sea level, or not sufficiently adjustable, creating dangerous conditions for boarding. “Often the height can be less than 3 m, making the combination arrangement dangerous with only a little swell,” said Ignacio Chofré, a pilot boat coxswain based in Valencia, Spain, who has been instrumental in the #dangerousladders campaign, which has been raising awareness of the issue on social media.

Chofré admitted that one of the problems in raising awareness has been the difficulty of deciding on what constitutes a dangerous situation for pilot boarding because so much depends on variables such as the weather. “What we can say is that any noncompliance [with the SOLAS regulations] enhances the risks of such an inherently hazardous operation.”

He added that the pilots’ own understanding and attitudes were also to blame. “I suspect pilotage companies, in general, do not provide the education about international regulations and there could be a lack of awareness even among pilots and pilot crews.”

Another factor is excessive self-confidence on that part of the pilots. “Unfortunately it is widely acknowledged that many pilots are their own worst enemy and willingly accept any means of access they are offered. Often it can appear that there is almost a degree of bravado on their part,” said Vallance. He added, “Where individual pilots have refused to use a particular arrangement because of concerns for personal safety they have not been supported by employers or, on occasions, by colleagues.”

Design flaws

Non-compliance with SOLAS boarding arrangements can also be a result of design-related issues. These can include obstructions and trip hazards in the pilot boarding area or no reel for the pilot ladder. Sponsons, rubbing bands or belts, and discharge outlets all represent potential hazards to the pilot and the pilot boat when it is alongside and, while no longer technically permissible for new vessels, ‘grandfathering’ exemptions remain prevalent.

In addition, problems arise when the pilot embarkation point is not situated along a parallel section of the vessel’s hull. “Too far aft boarding positions could become a serious issue depending on a vessel’s draught and/or in the event of the vessel swinging, because

Key Points

- Deficient equipment and a casual attitude among deck officers often contribute to boarding accidents.
- There is a degree of bravado among pilots, despite the risks.

Continued on page 24
it will affect pilot boat performance dangerously,” said Chofré. As outlined in IMPA’s Guidance for naval architects and shipyards on the provision of pilot boarding arrangements, operating in the low-pressure area of a ship’s quarter leaves the pilot boat liable to be sucked in for a hard landing against the hull or even drawn under the counter.

However, commercial pressures are leading some shipowners to attempt to forgo pilot services. In late 2016, the ship operating division of Port of Tallinn took delivery of its new passenger ferry Leider. Because the vessel will working on a domestic route – and is therefore exempt from SOLAS rules – the owners had declared it would not be using pilot services and, therefore, no provision was made during its construction. This decision was immediately called into question when the vessel had to call at multiple ports where pilotage was required during its delivery voyage from Turkey.

“It is complete disregard for the safety of the pilot,” argued Vallance. “Because the pilot has used a non-compliant ladder, his insurance policy would be invalidated. The cost of providing for pilot embarkation would be minimal but they’ve taken the easy option.”

Educational resource
Inspired in part by Chofré’s #dangerousladders campaign, representatives from pilot associations including IMPA, the UK Marine Pilots’ Association, Gibraltar Pilots, and the Trinidad and Tobago Pilots Association, are contributing to a project that aims to develop an educational resource and raise awareness of the hazards of transfer arrangements.

“There is widespread disregard throughout the industry for the application of the regulations and it is questionable to what degree this is due to ignorance or deliberate choice,” said Chris Young, executive producer at Fidra Films, which is leading the project.

The aim is to reach not only ship crews and pilots, but also naval architects, class societies, shipyards, vessel operators, and port authorities, using a variety of media and content platforms.

Young said the non-profit project presented a number of challenges. “Put bluntly, many pilots don’t (and won’t) see the need for it. This assertion is based on the testimony of a number of people I’ve spoken to who have been rebuked to various degrees for ‘interfering’ when they have offered advice or suggested reporting noncompliant arrangements.”

There is also reluctance for commercial reasons. “A port authority that adopted a ‘zero-tolerance’ approach to non-compliance with the regulations would risk putting itself at a commercial disadvantage. Vessel operators that had the choice would simply transfer operations to another port.”

Youngs added that while his research into pilot safety had focused on ladders, it’s by no means the only problem. “In many areas it is the norm to operate the pilot boat with just a coxswain and no deckhand or other assistance …. How is the cox supposed to rescue the pilot, attend to his medical needs, report the incident to initiate an SAR [search and rescue] operation, and keep control of the pilot boat? To me, this is such a ridiculous working practice as to be almost unbelievable, but it is very common.”
IMPA President Simon Pelletier continued his odyssey...

...to visit as many members as possible and in one week (13–17 March) fitted in visits to the French Federation; the Netherlands’ Association and the Danish Association!

He has also visited Italy for the Fedepiloti 70th Anniversary meeting, attended the EMPA General Meeting in Bergen, Norway, the French Federation Annual General Meeting and the Spanish Pilots’ Conference in Tenerife.

Moreover, he is still on the roster on the St Lawrence River!
SPECIALIST PILOT BOAT MANUFACTURERS. We have an extensive range of GRP pilot boats from 11.7m to 18m. This makes us the first choice for many Ports, with 34 pilot vessels supplied worldwide. Our experience means we know exactly what will and will not survive, and we know how to successfully engineer a pilot vessel to operate safely and efficiently, in one of the toughest marine jobs.

The Pilot Boat Specialists!

Ports supplied with our Interceptor Pilots

1/ Conna More, Cork, Ireland
2/ Carrac, Dublin, Ireland
3/ Culverwell, Portland UK
4/ Liffey, Dublin, Ireland
5/ La Chevaire, St Malo, France
6/ Echo 1, Valletta, Malta
7/ Atlantida Azul, Shire, Portugal
8/ Rockwell, Portland UK
9/ Spitfire, Southampton, UK
10/ Yuris, Bayonne, France
11/ Pathfinder, Southampton, UK
12/ Cabo Mondego, Figueria, Portugal
13/ Espinheiro, Aveiro, Portugal
14/ Quinca, Bordeaux, France
15/ Interceptor, Venice, Italy
16/ Ursula, Ribe, Denmark
17/ Skua, Liverpool, UK
18/ Ica vase corte real, Horta, Azores
19/ Foxbrot, Valletta, Malta
20/ Alhure do ornelas, Horta, Azores
21/ Ficker, Cork, Ireland
22/ Getares, Algeceras, Spain
23/ Khareef Aden, Port of Aden, Yemen
24/ Diogo de Teive, Azores
25/ Jesse Van Hurtefe, Azores
26/ Turrafon, Liverpool, UK
27/ P&O Maritime, Mozambique
28/ Oxler, Port of Sohar, Oman
29/ Chittagong, Bangladesh
30/ Setubal, Portugal
31/ P&O Maritime, Cyprus
32/ P&O Maritime, Maputo
33/ Algeciras, Spain
34/ Poole, UK

www.safehavenmarine.com

Builders of the renowned INTERCEPTOR range of Pilot boats

When you demand Strength & Seakeeping

Contact: Safehaven Marine, Ashgrove, Cobh, Co Cork, Ireland. Phone 00353 86 8064692. e-mail: info@safehavenmarine.com