A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

Deadlines for the International Pilot tend to act as milestones during the year and somewhat alarming ones at that, for they appear increasingly quickly! I have just returned to the US after a European visit that took in the EMPA 50th anniversary in Malta, a week at IMO for STW44 and I am currently in Brazil supporting CONAPRA in their discussions with Government.

Whilst the weather in Malta was somewhat cooler than might be expected, the welcome was extremely warm and I felt very comfortable to be amongst pilots who think the same things and want to develop the profession same way. (The President’s speech is on the website. Ed) EMPA are to be congratulated on their achievements over the past 50 years and their wisdom in creating IMPA to deal with IMO or ‘IMCO’ as it was all those years ago, should be applauded.

STW44 was the usual mixture of the mundane and the slightly surreal. Our presence there dealt with the protection of our status within the Convention and also the interface with the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 which I am aware is of interest to many of you as it deals with professional qualifications which you want to maintain. The surreal aspect was provided by a paper from Denmark wishing to provide guidance to non-pilots boarding vessels at sea. That this paper was even at STW was very odd and furthermore it revolved around fatality to an engineer who refused to wear a lifejacket and who we later found out was drunk. However terrible this incident is, it did seem strange to spend so much time when it took IMPA 6 years to get the revised boarding arrangements though IMO.

IMO is currently restructuring itself, partly to try and exercise some fiscal restraint and also to deal with dwindling workloads of some committees. These will be dealt with by MSC next month.

I wish you all safe sailing for the rest of the year and assure you that the Executive are maintaining their maximum effort on your behalf.

Warm regards,

Captain Michael Watson
President
IMPA

Mike being interviewed for Malta TV.
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Message from the Secretary General...

As an indication of how quickly the year has passed, a request for me to write a foreword to this edition of the International Pilot indicates pretty well 50% of 2013 has passed and what have we done? Most of what we can use to judge as “progress” takes the form of either outcomes at IMO or matters dealt with and squashed at IMO!

As an example, at STW44 there was a paper about boarding arrangements about persons other than pilots with the clear inference that people expect to be able to use pilot ladders as the norm, whether they have any skills, training or entitlement. Many at IMO seem to think they have knowledge in this area and demonstrably most didn’t. However, it was possible to defend our hard-won improvements in SOLAS. Various other unexpected issues arose too at STW, including an effort by labour organisations such as ITF and IFSMA to take forward the work of Project Horizon, which we saw presented at our conference in London last year. Sadly, despite our efforts, this was not to be but the partnerships we have at IMO show a developing trend of professional exchanges and mutual support. Some of these, as mentioned earlier are to be expected, such as labour bodies with whom we share so much but others, such as our continuing closeness with the shipowners are a source of surprise not just to your own Executive but to others in the Industry. This partnership with the shipowners is based on a near-identical attitude towards E-Navigation, a mutual respect for your safety, and the valuable work that you perform for the shipowners and a clear shared picture that navigation of vessels is a process that is going to stay on the bridges of ships and not take place on a desk ashore.

To conclude my message, I would be failing if I did not recognize the achievements of EMPA in the 50 years of their existence, not the least of which was to create IMPA. The EMPA anniversary meeting in Malta was a very happy occasion, all credit to the hosts and the organisers. There is no water between IMPA and EMPA and a mutual appreciation of what the other does in Brussels and London.

It’s now less than a year to the IMPA conference in Panama and it has to be said our hosts are well ahead with their planning and this will be a truly extraordinary event taking place at an extraordinary time.

Best wishes to you all.

Nick Cutmore
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The managing partner of International Registries, Inc, which administers the Marshall Islands flag, speaking to Maritime CEO from New York, said that many of the leading figures in the industry are not particularly well-versed in what ships, and the people who work in them, are all about.

"Leading shipping executives tend to be finance types, and are poor executives to have in the wheelhouse, particularly when things get bad. We are living in such an era, and we need leaders with more depth of knowledge, and experience," he warned.

One example, he cited, is the inability to judge, and allow for, substantial risk.

"We are seeing this in the extremely expensive misjudgments that have led to major financial losses, and, particularly, massive casualties," he said, mentioning Deepwater Horizon and Costa Concordia as two recent examples.

"There have been many others, and these errors in judgement are penalizing our entire industry. Just watch the cost of insurance go up," he noted.

Warming to the theme, Maitland suggested that there was a crewing crisis currently, and the problem, once again, "is very much of our own making".

"We as an industry have fallen into the clutches of the bean counters, the finance types, who, in the words of an English author, "know the cost of everything, but the value of nothing," Maitland said.

"This is not only reflected in the rising cost of casualties at sea," he continued, "but in the fondness of the finance types for cutting costs, without due regard to the consequences. In the case of crewing, there is a growing tendency to choose a vessel’s flag or registry on the flexibility of that registry’s policy on the issuance of minimum safe manning certificates."

This has led to smaller and smaller officer cadres aboard ships of all types, with the possible exception of passenger vessels.

As a result, Maitland pointed out officers have more and more work to do, and not just whilst on watch.

"The shrinkage in crew sizes that we have seen in recent years," Maitland observed, "is one of the major culprits in contributing to fatigue. Let’s face it: not only has the job of an officer aboard a commercial vessel become hugely burdensome -- it threatens to become overwhelming in many trades."

With fatigue now a leading cause of casualties, and the financial situation of many companies becoming increasingly shaky, Maitland said there is a reluctance on the part of qualified young people to undertake careers at sea. "No wonder!" he said, exasperated.

"In an industry where charter rates often do not cover operating expenses, and where private equity funds increasingly call the tune, I believe that the biggest crisis that we face, in the short and medium terms, is the loss of competent managers, particularly managers of risk. Cost-cutting, not quality, is now king," Maitland suggested.

Flag states like the Marshall Islands have to take a stand for quality, and halt the race to the bottom, the IRI boss said.

"Safe manning," Maitland explained, "not only speaks to the quality of the individual seafarer, but to hours of work, of rest, and of quality of life aboard ship. We need to get away from 'maximum unsafe manning', and stabilise the drive to cut costs regardless of any other consideration."

The IRI fleet now stands at around 2,800 ships, aggregating roughly 89m gross tonnes.

According to Clarkson Research Services, the Marshall Islands grew by 11.7% in 2012. This rate of growth was only exceeded by that of Hong Kong, which grew by 14.9%, and Singapore, which grew by 12.1%. [29/01/13]

[I might dispute the qualifier “now” in Maitland’s assertion. In an opinion piece that Michael Grey wrote probably 20 years ago he observed that throughout the long history of shipping, the chief driving value has been “cheapness is everything”. Editor]

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New York: One of North America’s most outspoken men in shipping, Clay Maitland, has slammed the encroachment of financial institutions into the industry, something he reckons is damaging the soul and integrity of the sector.

"A rich irony..."
The intolerance of a shipping accident is limitless, while genuine understanding is in short supply

THERE was once a cross-Channel ferry company which maintained a list of all their masters; neatly arranged, not alphabetically as one might think, but in the order of the amount of damage each caused to their ships and the port installations they were using several times each day. At the end of each year, the company would simply sack the two league leaders.

This was undertaken in a fairly brutal and indiscriminating fashion, as it was supposed by the management, who were not mariners but had emerged from the road haulage industry, that it would encourage the others to be rather more careful with the equipment they were using.

An old shipmate of mine once found his name at the head of the list, on account of a control failure which prevented him going astern at a crucial moment as he was approaching the berth. But fortunately for him, he was financially overtaken by a couple of his colleagues who had even more spectacular bashes, before the final auditing took place.

You might think that these days we are rather more circumspect about such summary behaviour, possibly because it would surely provoke energetic legal action at employment tribunals. After all, the cloth-eared hauliers who ran this ferry company treated their truck drivers in exactly the same merciless fashion and could not bend their minds to believe that a large ferry was nothing more than a floating lorry.

They thought there was nothing inconsistent about getting very angry when a master elected to stay safe alongside or at sea when the weather was blowing a hurricane, with their subsequent rage if, in trying to handle the ship in such conditions, dock or ship damage was caused. And indeed, in these more enlightened times, the ferries running on this service are operated with rather more sensitivity, and almost certainly suffer fewer such problems.

I was reminded of this lamentable period of maritime labour relations by a somewhat brief note in the casualty columns of this newspaper, which listed an accident in the Baltic port of Sassnitz the other day, when the passenger ferry from Mukran clouted the ramp of the ferry terminal, causing damage to both ship and shore installations. These things happen, not least in a grim Baltic winter, with ice and howling gales to contend with, you might think. Except that in the report it was said that “a misdemeanour proceeding was launched against the master of the vessel and a security deposit was ordered to be paid by his shipping company”.

Maybe this is a fault in translation, but if indeed this was regarded as a “misdemeanour”, we have come to a pretty pass indeed, if a berthing incident is to see the master of the ship described as a petty criminal, my dictionary noting that such is “a legal offence of less gravity than a felony”.

There again, it would not surprise me in the least if this was the case, in an era in which blame has become infinitely more important than causation and any accident which saw steel bent and fenders squashed will have the authorities alerted to the possibility of applying penalties to the “guilty” shipmaster. We also live in an era in which the intolerance of any accident is limitless, but the people who cast these judgements so freely have no understanding about the operation or handling of ships in tight corners.

Like the truckers who owned my friend’s ferry, there is a belief residing in many shore authorities that a ship handles like a road vehicle, that absolute precision is always possible and that tides, wind, current, the draught of the ship and any other technical considerations are just incidentals.

If you know something about the business of ship handling, you can take great pleasure and be hugely impressed by the way expert pilots and ferry masters will manoeuvre these big ships. But the best of them would never pretend that the unexpected never happens, or that you can programme the movement of a ship in a congested area precisely. A gust of wind will unexpectedly intervene, the tide will cut in faster than anticipated, the trim or draught of the ship will make the ship behave just a little differently than it did on the previous passage.

Then there are the voyages when the master must take calculated risks if his schedule is not to be shot to pieces. When the weather is unpredictable, when storms or poor visibility intrude, the professionalism of the shiphandler will be the difference between a soft landing and bent steel. But everyone makes misjudgements in dynamic situations and the best shiphandler will hopefully be able to wriggle around the unexpected.

However, when the gamble does not come off, because of the wind or tide or some mechanical glitch, we don’t want some clever official, who has never taken a risk in his life, defining the incident as a “misdemeanour”. If you pardon the French, that is just bloody insulting.

by Michael Grey

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UK Transport Committee
Select Committee announcement

Port safety regulations should not be relaxed, warn MPs.

In a report published on 6 March 2013 the UK Transport Committee questions whether the UK Department for Transport is striking the appropriate balance between its role as a regulator of port safety and its aim to promote the commercial attractiveness of UK ports. This follows evidence that most ports fail to confirm to Government that they comply with best practice guidance on port safety and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency has the resources to conduct just four port ‘health checks’ each year.

The Committee also heard how representatives of marine pilots,* who guide ships in and out of ports, lack confidence that the Department for Transport understands their concerns and the requirements of their work and shares their aim of enhancing maritime safety.

Committee Chair Louise Ellman MP said: “Overall, UK ports have a good safety record but where problems occur there can be terrible consequences in terms of loss of life, pollution and damage to property. We cannot tell to what extent ports follow Government guidance on port safety because most fail to confirm to Government that they comply with the guidance. There are also few publicly available statistics about accidents and near-misses in ports. This has to change.”

The Committee is opposed to a proposal, supported by Government, to relax the rules on the granting of pilotage exemption certificates to more junior navigating officers which could jeopardise safety. If the Government insists on pressing ahead with this change, the Committee recommends that the impact of the change should be monitored.

“Marine pilots play a vital role in keeping our ports safe. The message we received from marine pilots was the same as we have heard from coastguards – they feel that the DfT does not understand what they do, and pursues a ‘light touch’ approach to regulation that undermines vital safety issues. Ministers have a lot of work to do to regain the confidence of marine professionals, such as pilots and coastguards,” adds Ellman.

Other recommendations include that:

- the Maritime and Coastguard Agency should broaden its safety inspection programme so that it undertakes eight inspections per annum
- ports should be required to publish statistics on accidents and near-misses
- the Government should use its influence to persuade harbour authorities to accept national standards as to who can be authorised as a pilot: if national standards are not adopted the case for legislation on this issue will be compelling.

* Don Cockrill spoke for UKMPA and Nick Cutmore explained the International overview.

IMO Secretary General and Panama Ambassador visit SIDMAR Training Centre in Panama

By Captain José Burgos, Panama Canal Pilot

On February 25, 2013 The Honorable Ambassador of the Republic of Panama, Ana Irene Delgado and Secretary General of IMO, Mr Koji Sekimizu visited us at the SIDMAR training center at The Panama Canal. With great pleasure I had the opportunity to demonstrate to them the simulator that we have for the training of the Panama Canal Pilots.

Last September, during our IMPA Congress in London, we met at the IMO Headquarters for the celebration of World Maritime Day. Here, while showing Mr Sekimizu our simulator facility, we had the time to exchange some thoughts on the importance of pilotage in the marine industry. Mr. Sekimizu was visiting Panama to attend as a guest speaker for the Panama Maritime XI Conference.
QASTOR – ECS software for marine professionals

Qastor is Electronic Chart Software (ECS) that enables navigation, piloting and precise docking, as well as several other application such as Oil & Gas FPSO/SPM mooring, patrol vessel and tugboat operations. First introduced in 2000, Qastor has continued to be developed and enhanced, and now includes an wealth of options and features specifically the result of extensive use in canals, ports and riverways around the World. Using wired or wireless methods, Qastor interfaces to most devices outputting NMEA data strings, to AIS units, and to the QPS Qastor Connect Server which is supplying meteorological data, VTS targets and ENC updates to Qastor users.

QASTOR – brings situational awareness

In addition to a minimum information such as speed, heading, course over ground (COG), and rate of turn (ROT) that is shown in the information panels, probably the most important aspect for navigation is the background electronic chart. Qastor uses an ECDIS engine which is built in accordance with the IMO publications S-52, S-57 and S-63 for digital chart presentation, format, publication and security. A number of chart formats are supported, including IHO S-57 Edition 3, C-MAP, Primar, ARCS and DENC charts, and CAD files can also be shown. Qastor operates under Microsoft Windows, but we’ve added the Qastor Move app for the iPhone/iPod/iPad. The Qastor Move app will connect to Qastor and receive the values normally shown in the Qastor instrument panels, allowing the mariner to move even more freely around the bridge, whilst keeping track of the most important navigational information.

QASTOR – facilitates safe navigation

Knowing the ship’s draft value, the required safety margin for under-keel clearance (UKC), and the real-time tide value, Qastor will clearly distinguish between safe and unsafe areas. Of course the quality of the chart and the density of its contours dictate how accurately safe areas can be shown. Some ports now produce and use “high-density” charts with contour intervals as small as 10cm. Routes are fully supported in Qastor, including checking for unsafe areas. Qastor makes available information such as the distance to the next waypoint, off-track distance, wheel over line, and more such as an AIS target closest point of approach. Taking into account vessel’s speed, heading and course of ground and rate of turn, Qastor is able to predict the vessel’s path. Together with a state-of-the-art RTK accurate Portable Pilot Unit (PPU), the path prediction is extremely accurate and is typically used in combination with the “guard zone” and “picture-in-picture” options.

QASTOR – suitable for fleet tracking and route management

It’s not just mariners on vessels using Qastor, a number of harbour masters and most recently fleet operation managers use Qastor and the Connect Server for round the clock monitoring and alerting.
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A new scale model container ship for Warsash’s Ship Handling Centre

Warsash Maritime Academy (WMA), based in the UK, has expanded the fleet at its world-renowned Ship Handling Centre with the introduction of a new container ship model.

WMA’s new 1:25 scaled model is based on a real 13,300 TEU vessel which has an overall length of 365m, propulsion of 108,000 HP, a single propeller and powerful bow thruster. It is representative of all large modern container ships for the provision of specialised ship handling training and assessment for pilots, masters and senior officers.

The new model will be the first container ship to join the fleet. It is 14.62 metres long, weighs 12.5 tonnes, has twin bow and single stern thrusters, operational power anchors, electro-hydraulic steering, bow thrust and main propulsion systems. Water ballast enables it to operate in light or loaded conditions. The deck has the ability to configure with a full or partial container load and meets IMO regulations for visibility in relative terms. The model contains hydraulic steering and engine controls, located in an enclosed bridge structure approximately one third of the way from forward for pilot and captain.

It puts mariners on a real, albeit scaled, ship, on water and in real environmental conditions. The models handle just like a real ship, giving ship officers the opportunity to see how to handle a large vessel – particularly in restricted spaces, crowded anchorages or through a narrow channel. It also allows for slow speed control for berthing operations.

“With 95% of the world’s trade moved by sea, ships are getting larger and waterways and ports more crowded, scale model training is more important than ever,” says Warsash Maritime Academy’s Director, Andrew Hair.

“The scaled models handle the same way as a real ship, giving pilots, masters and chief officers the opportunity to navigate large vessels in a variety of scenarios in a safe environment.”

Since the opening of the 10-acre lake site at Timsbury in 2011, the Ship Handling Centre has been operating a fleet of seven scaled models, including a Panamax, twin screw ro-ro ferry, very large crude carrier (VLCC), 40,000 dwt product tanker, twin screw shuttle tanker, Suezmax and an ultra large crude carrier (ULCC).

In addition to the new container ship, WMA is undertaking the build of a sister ship to the popular Panamax vessel. Due to be operational this summer, it will increase the fleet to nine models.

To book a course contact:

Jackie Basford, Course Administrator
E. jackie.basford@solent.ac.uk
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For more information about the new container ship and the Ship Handling Centre visit:

www.warsashacademy.co.uk
Ladder horrors!

We continue to have problems with ladders. Often the ladder is not attached to the hull or to the platform, although the new regulations should gradually improve this.

This pilot ladder was rigged on a bulker that arrived Panama in January 2013 and was waiting for transit. Usually, the first people that board the vessels arriving at Canal waters are boarding officers and pilots. In this case it was a boarding officer and the pilot ladder broke as he climbed. He managed to cling on and miraculously made it without falling but sustained shoulder injuries and is still receiving medical treatment and is out of his regular job.

Safe boarding facilities should be a major concern for every pilot around the world and also personnel involved in the marine industry that requires them to board vessel. We as pilots will be required to climb many thousands of ladders during our careers. On a single transit here in the Canal, a vessel can be boarded as close as one hundred times. Panama Canal deckhands, boarding officers, vessels agents, relieving crew and staff etc. If we the pilots are among the firsts ones who will board the vessels, then we have a responsibility if not legal at least moral to the rest of the people using that same pilot ladder including other brother pilots. It is not only your life that depends on a ship’s boarding facility. If you are injured in a boarding accident and can no longer climb, your career as a pilot is over and you must look for another job. It is only logical that we should be familiar with the regulations governing how they should be rigged.

When you first think about it, rigging a pilot ladder seems as something simple, but like most things appearances can be deceiving. Understanding how a ladder should be rigged, where it should be positioned, how it should be constructed and how it should be used are all things of vital interest to anybody who make his living by boarding ships. A safe means of embarking or disembarking from a ship its a right to which any person who uses these facilities is entitled.

By Capt José Burgos, Panama Canal Pilot

Earlier in the year Belgian river pilot, Jean-Pierre Michaux, suffered a hernia when the pilot ladder slid away from the platform of the accommodation ladder. The pilot returned to the job after a surgery in hospital. He is of the opinion that a crew member should always stand-by on the platform of the accommodation ladder.

In Uruguay Captain Gaston Gonzales was boarding the ‘Saga Monal’ close to Montevideo road on a perfect flat sea. Apparently the final stanchion left its position and the pilot fell from about 18 feet above the boat causing Captain Gonzales to fracture his shoulder, a vertebra and his sacrum.
Pilot ladder break aboard the M.T. Rio Daytona 30/1/13

Whilst disembarking the above vessel at approximately 1745 on the 30th January at Point Lynas in WSW 30-40Kt winds in a starboard lee one of the spreader steps collapsed during my descent into the pilot boat.

The spreader was approximately halfway down the ladder which was approximately 3m long with the end 1.5m from the waterline. Thankfully the step collapsed when I had both hands on the sideropes and the vessel had been manoeuvred close inshore to gain a good lee.

Although I arrested myself mainly using my arms the end result was a jarred knee. No photo was taken as I needed to get myself into the cabin to take the weight off the right knee.

The ladder was in generally good condition and looked reasonably new. I consider the step was damaged during handling of ladder by deck crew at some stage and either not seen or ignored. The step failed under little weight. The damage could not have been seen by me or the launch prior to disembarking.

The vessel is now bound for Rotterdam whose pilots have been forewarned.

Regards,
Andy Bissaker
1st Class Liverpool Pilot

Don’t believe everything you see on the screen...

...this display shows a ship going into Redcar Steelworks cross-country! We are assured that the vessel was actually in the channel all the while.
Pilot boat fire - disaster prevented by swift actions

It was the beginning of another normal night shift for the two-man crew of a pilot boat. The twin engines in the single engine room had been recently maintained by the company’s regular contractor and the boat was performing well. The coxswain and his crew man were relaxed. They had just transferred two pilots back onto their pilot boat, and all four were enjoying the fine weather and scenery as they made their way back to the boat’s berth.

All was about to change!

The first sign of trouble was when smoke was seen coming from the engine room’s port and starboard forced exhaust fan ventilation terminals. Although the fire alarm system had not sounded, the coxswain reduced engine power to idle as the crew man and one of the pilots went to the engine room door. Looking through the door’s observation port they saw a fire around the after end of the port main engine. Having reported their findings to the coxswain, the Fire Action Plan was immediately put into effect. The engines were stopped, all fuel supply valves were remotely closed and electrical power isolated. The engine room port and starboard forced exhaust ventilation and natural supply ventilation fire flaps were shut and the engine room’s four pyrogen fixed fire-fighting cylinder activation buttons pressed. At the same time, the coastguard was informed of the emergency. It was soon afterwards that smoke was seen still coming from the starboard forced ventilation terminal despite the fire flap being apparently closed.

The coxswain then gave instructions for the anchor to be dropped and for the liferafts to be prepared in case the boat had to be abandoned. Soon afterwards, the RNLI’s local inshore and all weather lifeboats arrived and quickly established boundary cooling around the engine room. The boat was then taken under tow. The crew and pilots were evacuated and a lifeboat fire-fighting team transferred to the pilot boat. Once alongside, the local fire and rescue service attended, confirmed the fire had been extinguished and then ventilated the engine room.

Investigations quickly identified the cause of the fire to be a loose fuel rail “banjo” bolt fitted to the port main engine (Figure 1) - these bolt connections had been prone to previous leakage. This allowed high pressure, atomised fuel to spray onto the hot port engine and turbocharger, which then ignited (Figure 2). This caused extensive wiring damage, including that supplying the fire detection and suppression systems, and also damage to many of the plastic fittings and deckhead lining (Figures 3 and 4).

It was also found that only one of the pyrogen fire suppression cylinders had activated because the electrical cables which triggered the system had suffered an open circuit during the early stages of the fire. In addition, all of the fire detectors were of the smoke detection type - there were no flame or heat detectors fitted.

The engine room ventilation terminals had been modified to incorporate sea spray/mist eliminators, which included a fixed fresh water washing system. It was found that the washing system pipework had worked loose, which prevented the starboard forced ventilation terminal fire flap from fully closing.
The Lessons

The port authority operating the pilot boat was diligent in insisting that its vessel’s equipment, including main engines and fire detection and suppression systems, was properly maintained by competent contractors. Crews were regularly exercised in emergency procedures, including fire drills, and could refer to the vessel’s comprehensive Fire Action Drill checklists.

The fire detection and fixed suppression system suffered early damage in the fire, which prevented its operation. It was therefore even more important that those on board reacted in an instinctive and efficient manner. There is no doubt that their swift actions in stopping the engines and isolating the fuel and air supplies to the engine room contributed significantly to extinguishing the fire.

1. “Banjo” bolts should be fitted with a sealing washer on either side of the connection. Where any system, especially one carrying flammable liquids, has shown signs of leakage, it should be regularly checked. Where the leakage is persistent, consideration should be given to changing the type of fitting. It is often helpful to consult with the equipment manufacturer for advice in this event.

2. Equipment overhaul/maintenance routines can sometimes introduce self-induced defects. It is all too easy to forget to fully tighten fastenings during reassembly. During test runs do check the integrity of pipe connections and make a habit of regularly doing so while a vessel is in service. These can loosen over time, especially when fitted to reciprocating machinery.

3. While the current regulations do not specify the type of fire detectors to be fitted in machinery spaces, the MCA’s Instructions to Surveyors strongly recommends a mix of heat and smoke detectors. This mix improves the chances of identifying a problem as early as possible.

4. Be very wary when modifying equipment. Modifications are generally intended to improve performance or safety, but can catch you out by introducing other problems. Check that the functionality of the equipment is not impaired by the changes.

5. If fire suppression systems are fitted within the engine room, do check that any associated electrical cabling is afforded the best protection. This may be by considering using a fire-resistant/armoured type cable or routeing it outside the engine room so far as this is reasonable.

6. The importance of realistic fire drills and the operation of all isolation devices during drills cannot be over-emphasised, as this accident clearly demonstrates. It is only by doing so that reactions become instinctive and equipment is proven to function correctly.

PRACTISE REGULARLY - YOUR LIFE AND THOSE OF OTHERS MAY DEPEND ON IT!
Switched on, switched off

An e-Loran station has been switched on at the Port of Dover in the UK, but the prospect of a similar development on the other side of the Atlantic remains as slim as ever.

Ships in the Port of Dover, its approaches and part of the Dover Strait can now use e-Loran radio navigation technology as a backup to satnav systems like GPS and Galileo, the General Lighthouse Authorities of the UK and Ireland (GLA) has announced.

The ground based e-Loran system provides alternative position and timing signals to conventional GPS. The Dover area, the world’s busiest shipping lane, is the first in the world to achieve this initial operational capability for shipping companies operating both passenger and cargo services.

The Dover installation is the first of up to seven to be implemented along the UK’s East Coast. The Thames Estuary and approaches up to Tilbury, the Humber Estuary and approaches, and the ports of Middlesbrough, Grangemouth and Aberdeen will all benefit from new installations, and the prototype service at Harwich and Felixstowe will be upgraded.

Although primarily intended as a maritime aid to navigation, e-Loran could become a cost effective backup for a wide range of applications that are becoming increasingly reliant on the position and timing information provided by satellite systems.

‘Our primary concern at the GLA is for the safety of Mariners,’ says Ian McNaught, Chief-Exec at Trinity House. ‘But signals from e-Loran transmitters could also provide essential backup to telecommunications, smart grid and high frequency trading systems vulnerable to jamming by natural or deliberate means. We encourage Nand Mariners to assess e-Loran in this region and provide feedback to the GLA on its performance.’

Reference station

The installation at Dover comprises a differential-Loran (d-Loran) Reference Station. This is said to be a cost-effective unmanned installation, easily accommodated within existing infrastructure and monitored remotely along with the GLA routine 24/7 monitoring of Aids-to-Navigation.

The reference station determines local navigation corrections and monitors local service integrity for e-Loran. The corrections and integrity status are made available on the e-Loran Data Channel as an integral part of the e-Loran broadcast signal. These can be used by the ship’s receiving equipment to improve the accuracy of positioning and to alert the Mariner in the unlikely event that the position cannot be trusted for navigation.

P&O Ferries has installed an e-Loran receiver on its new vessel Spirit of Britain. She will be based at Dover and is one of the largest passenger ships the busy Dover/Calais route has ever seen. Captain
Simon Richardson, Head of Safety Management at P&O Ferries says: ‘Accurate real-time positional information is essential for the safe navigation of ships with modern electronic charts. Satellite navigation systems are vulnerable to degradation of signal strength and our ships have experienced occasional loss of signal. We welcome the development of a robust alternative to provide redundancy in real-time positional information.’

Atlantic rift

Meanwhile across the Atlantic, it has been reported the US is to take down another Loran mast. The 625ft Loran C tower at Hobe Sound, Florida, has been in the news because its obstruction lights – mandatory on all structures over 200ft – keep failing. But it has emerged that the US Coast Guard (USCG) is studying whether it needs to retain the tower and associated buildings at all.

For several years now, there has been a rift in opinion on the requirement for land-based radio positioning systems, like e-Loran. The UK’s GLA is a strong advocate of the technology, while authorities on the other side of the mid-Atlantic Ridge are more ambivalent.

In 2010, the US Coast Guard (USCG) announced the termination of Loran-C transmissions and the phased decommissioning of 24 stations. ‘As a result of technological advancements in the last 20 years, [Loran-C] became an antiquated system no longer required by the armed forces, the transportation sector or the nation’s security interests,’ it noted in its official announcement.

Since then, wider realisation of the vulnerabilities of GPS has prompted renewed interest in the use of e-Loran as a failsafe. But it remains unclear whether in these austerity times, the US administration will allocate funding to deploying the technology, particularly since it would negate the budgetary savings made in shutting down Loran-C.

In any case, it appears from a US perspective ‘Loran’ has become a ‘toxic brand’, bogged down by political in-fighting. If it is to make come back it could well return under another name.

It is worth noting that Russia’s Glonass or the EU’s Galileo system – which is finally getting off the ground – are not deemed to be adequate redundancy options, since they too are susceptible to the same jamming techniques as the US-funded GPS.

Timely reminder

Shortly after the Dover e-Loran station was switched on, Trinity House (the lighthouse authority for England, Wales, the Channel Islands and Gibraltar) decided the time was right to issue a notice to Mariners alerting them of the potential limitations of differential GPS, and the impact these could have on safe navigation.

Political motives aside, they message is that no single positioning technology should be considered infallible and that position readings should always be cross-referenced by a secondary means.

DGPS is provided as a year round service with overlapping signal coverage up to 50 nautical miles around the coasts of the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland. The differential signals are transmitted using a terrestrial network of medium frequency marine radio-beacons in the 283.5-315 kHz band.

For Mariners equipped with a suitable receiver the signal provides both real time integrity monitoring of GPS derived positions and the capability of fixing their positions to better than 5m (95% probability) in moving applications. Greater accuracy can be achieved in stationary applications.
Navigating the Human Element
An introduction to Human Factors for Professional Mariner

By Timothy Crowch

For several decades the importance of the Human Element has become an increasingly integral part of all aspects of professional maritime training. However, those wishing to learn more than the information imparted to them during resource management training courses have generally had to read erudite and expert information contained within books written for the Human Factors specialist student or the Aviation and other high risk industries, often needing to interpret the contents to relate to maritime situations.

Navigating the Human Element is specifically written for the mariner. Although described as “an introduction” its content and style make it a suitable reference not only for the Human Factors novice but also more experienced ships’ personnel who already have knowledge of this vast subject. Ideal as a book to refer to when returning on board after a period of leave.

It is written in a personal manner, as a (obviously one way) conversation between the author and reader. Its language is clear and concise with minimal use of specialist terminology. It will therefore possibly suit those for whom English is not their first language.

Content wise, it starts with a basic introduction of the concept of Human Error and other Human Factor elements. The following 10 chapters go on to deal with various practical aspects of daily shipboard duties with particular emphasis on communications, relationships, personal health and fatigue management. The final chapter gives simple, valuable advice as to how to proceed to further enhance one’s skills in managing the human element issues on board ship.

The Author is highly experienced in Human factors with an extensive aeronautical background as both pilot and accident investigator. He works with P&I clubs, ship owners and ship managers globally assisting in the establishment and maintenance of effective and productive open safety cultures, educating and training corporate management, staff and ships personnel in safety awareness and strategies.

Although primarily aimed at ships officers (and crews), the book is also very relevant to Marine Pilots at every level of experience and is a suitable companion to other works on the subject.

Don Cockrill
Chairman UKMPA

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The recent tragic death of an American Pilot as a result of a fall from a pilot ladder serves to highlight the dangers of pilot transfers between the cutter and ship. Pilot ladders are now included as part of a vessel’s safety equipment but with the relevant information being held in different documents it is not surprising that pilots are still frequently confronted with non-compliant boarding arrangements so Malcolm Armstrong’s book, which collates all the requirements into a handy booklet should be an essential part of every ship’s ( and naval architect’s) library.

I was therefore surprised when receiving Pilot Ladder Safety for review to note that this is the 6th edition of the book, since I cannot recall ever having seen it before either in pilot libraries or on board ship. This is a pity because the book provides a concise and clear guide to both the SOLAS Chapter V regulations and IMO Resolution A.1045 which cover the requirements for pilot ladder construction, location and rigging. The 15 chapters explain the key requirements by means of clear text and diagrams and the full SOLAS & IMO documents are included as annexes in the book.

My only criticisms are that the small size (A6) of the booklet precludes the inclusion of the IMPA poster and from a practical point of view also means that it might easily become lost amongst all the other books on board ship. I also feel that the testing, certification and inspection requirements included in the ISO 799 standard should have been included, although I’m aware that ISO have very strict rules restricting publication / reproduction of their Standards documentation!

In conclusion, given that so many vessels still fail to provide a pilot ladder located and rigged in accordance with regulations, this is an excellent guide.

John Clandillon-Baker
Editor: The Pilot
www.pilotmag.co.uk

Available from BS&F Ltd

Pilot Ladder Safety
By Malcolm C. Armstrong

£15.00 ISBN: 978-1-84927-046-5

from Brown, Son & Ferguson http://www.skipper.co.uk/catalogue/item/pilot-ladder-safety

Radar and AIS for Watchkeeping Officers
By Daire Brunicardi

It is difficult to believe that the old Radar Observers Handbook dating from 1957 remained the primary radar reference work for watch keepers until 2008 because, although updated through 9 editions, the last major re-write of the book was in 1998. Since then, there have been many changes to on-board radar such as the digitisation of raw radar onto computer displays, AIS overlay functions and the introduction of the New Technology radar . These changes have been accompanied by additional radar menu features which require enhanced comprehension of the systems to enable them to be used to their full effect. In 2008, the Nautical institute commissioned Dr. Andy Norris to write a 2 volume reference work on Integrated Bridge Systems where Volume 1, dedicated to Radar and AIS provided a good updated overall user guide but, being aimed at watchkeepers who already have a reasonable understanding of the principles and use of radar, Dr Norris’ book doesn’t provide the in depth detail required to replace the Radar Observer’s Handbook for exam candidates and those who require a deeper understanding of the underlying principles of radar. Daire Brunicardi’s Radar and AIS for Watchkeeping Officers successfully fills the gap. With over 400 pages, the book covers all aspects of radar principles and operation from the basics for beginners to advanced functionality. However, far from being a traditional dry text book the book is packed with diagrams and photographs which compliment the well written text and clearly explain the increasingly complex elements of a modern radar and, most importantly, how the user should interpret the information presented on the display and make the best use of the integrated functions to enhance vessel safety. For the student, there are over 30 pages of “traditional” plotting exercises along with a copy of the COLREGS, guide to symbology, a comprehensive glossary of terms and MCA guidance notes covering radar & AIS usage.

The findings from investigations into collisions in pilotage waters in reduced visibility have sometimes revealed poor interpretation of radar information by pilots as a contributory cause so although this book is, as the title indicates, primarily aimed at watchkeepers, Radar & AIS for Watchkeepers is also a valuable reference work for pilots and it is therefore a book that should be found in pilots’ ready rooms as well as college libraries and on the ship’s bridge.

John Clandillon-Baker
Editor: The Pilot
www.pilotmag.co.uk

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Make weather data work for you

Expensive delays can be avoided with the right meteo and hydro information, says retired pilot Nigel Allen

Consider the following scenario between a shoreside vessel traffic system (VTS) operator and pilot at sea as the two exchange information in order to safely and efficiently bring a vessel in alongside.

**VTS:** The ship on your berth has gone back half an hour and the two tugs from that vessel will come to you.

**Pilot:** My tidal window closes at 0950 hrs and the weather forecast is not looking very helpful either!

**VTS:** OK, the last low water was 0.2m above prediction and the current trend is 0.25m above prediction and the barometer is still dropping. If we skip the swing and go straight alongside port side to, how does that extend your tidal window?

**Pilot:** I’ll get back to you.

This conversation will be familiar to pilots and masters alike, as it is a scenario often repeated in many of the world’s ports, large and small. Operational changes that affect planned shipping movements can be disruptive and costly; accidents even more so. Ships are increasing in size but many ports are not and, as a consequence, the margins for error have increased. Typically, a large container ship can cost more than €100m, the value of the cargo many times more, and daily running costs of these vessels are huge, with delays creating complications and rescheduling likely to be expensive.

Everybody in the chain is under pressure to perform. If your customers have such expensive assets sailing in and out of your port it makes sense to offer the best service you can. As the above scenario highlights, hydrological (hydro) and meteorological (meteo) information – the state of the sea and weather conditions – can have an impact on operations during a vessel’s approach to port, manoeuvring alongside and even its cargo handling operations.

A ship’s arrival is planned days in advance and changes to that plan are updated frequently. It is in the interests of everybody involved that things run to schedule and, at the sharp end, decisions need to be made that produce a safe outcome. A successful plan has many inputs, including the weather. This is one of the most changeable factors and so it is important that this information is up-to-date and used to its best advantage.

The methods of providing reliable and accurate hydrological/meteorological information based on both actual and predicted conditions have improved and can be more easily shared with relevant parties. These will include harbor authorities, masters, pilots, and other shore-based and ship-based users. It was for this reason that, in December last year, a PIANC (the World Association for Waterborne Transport Infrastructure) working group (WG 117) published its report Use of Hydro/Meteo Information for Port Access and Operations.

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The group of 13 experts met eight times over the course of four years and were asked to pay special attention to access windows for channels subject to tidal restrictions.

Time is one of the most important factors when considering an up-to-date forecasting system. With the new and more robust monitoring and data communications techniques that are available today, a port should aim to develop a system that can make a forecast and deliver that information to the end users in real time. In this way weather conditions can be pre-empted and operations adjusted to suit these conditions.

A port’s requirements should be at the centre of developments for forecast systems. Each has its own specific conditions but in all cases accurate, timely and reliable data is of crucial importance. Hydro/Meteo information across the globe is ample and easily obtainable from meteorological institutes running a network of monitoring locations. This information often is in the public domain and can be input into a port’s forecast system.

In most cases, however, a port will need more specific information in addition to this, so it may be necessary to add a dedicated monitoring location in the vicinity of the port. Further data specific to the port, such as waves and currents, may also be needed and, as this is only relevant to that individual port, a dedicated monitoring programme would be required, information from which would be input into the forecast system.

Bringing together all these forms of data – water level, wind speed and direction, wave height, current velocity, and visibility – from the various sources, be they public or bespoke, is the first step towards a comprehensive picture of the hydro and meteo conditions in any port.

A quick search on the internet will reveal the existence of an array of easy-to-understand port websites displaying hydro/meteo information. Take Port of Rotterdam’s Internet Amethyst website, for example, which is periodically fed with data from the monitoring networks in the port area. I can even download free weather information on my iPhone that can be superimposed on to my chart data using an app called Pocketgrib.

There is now a level of information out there that simply wasn’t available before. And if I can get up-to-date information on my iPhone, think of the possibilities for a port.

The relative costs of setting up or updating a forecasting system in a port, compared with the value of the assets at risk, are quite small, but vital if a port wants to remain competitive in terms of being efficient and effective.

So, back to our delayed ship:

**Pilot:** With the tide running 0.25m over prediction that extends my tidal window by 18 minutes and, as we’re not swinging, that reduces the time required to berth by 15 minutes, so despite the delayed vessel sailing we can still safely proceed.

The master has also advised that he can move some ballast around, which will reduce the maximum draught by 20cm, which will further increase our safety margin by extending my tidal window by another 15 minutes. Further, looking at various ‘live’ websites, it would appear that the wind will now shift to the northwest a little earlier than originally expected, which will also be helpful while berthing.

**VTS:** That’s great. I’ll advise the terminal that you’ll now berth port side alongside, so they can make the necessary cargo adjustments.

The two tugs ordered have just called in and are now confirmed as available. The pass with the outbound ship is scheduled for 0835hrs at the junction buoy. I’ve just spoken to the meteorological centre and they confirm a wind shift to the northwest around 0900hrs. Presently we have 250° at 27kt, gusting to 33kt, trend steady. PH

The PIANC report is available at: www.pianc.org/technicalreportsbrowseall.php

Price €90.00

This article first appeared in Ports & Harbors, the journal of the International Association of Ports & Harbors in its May/June edition.
Mike Watson presents Malta Pilots President Jesmond Misfud (Right) and John Dalli (Centre) with a picture of the Fabled Tanker “Ohio” to mark their 10th Anniversary as a group.

Stig Thomsen (Left) and new EMPA President Stein Inge Dahn.

Mike Watson presents retiring EMPA President Jacques Sauban with an illuminated address to mark EMPA’s 50th Birthday.

Captain Hassan Ezzahali, of Morocco and President of the African Pilots addresses EMPA member.

Alvaro Moreno gave EMPA a trans-Atlantic view of Canal Pilotage.

Two Presidents.

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Shipping’s electronic technology is vulnerable to sabotage and accidental disruption

MODERN vessels rely increasingly on electronic navigation systems, most of which have a strong reliance on global navigation satellite systems.

Trials are beginning next month on how a back-up system, e-loran, can be integrated into bridge systems to improve reliability, given how easy it is to jam a GNSS signal.

GNSS includes the best-known system, Global Satellite Positioning, and the high-profile European Galileo programme and the Russian Glonass.

India, Japan and China also have their own systems that are either operational or in the making.

For a number of years the General Lighthouse Authority and the Royal Institute of Navigation has been warning of the ease with which vessels can have their navigational satellite signals disrupted by handy, cheap and easy-to-acquire jammers.

Things have hardly changed. Although, as there are increased commercial interests ashore that have also become reliant on GPS for both timings and positions, the problem of over-reliance remains serious, particularly in the maritime world.

David Last, former president of the Royal Institute of Navigation, says the maritime world has not thought through the implications of GPS failure on vessels and has certainly not incorporated this into its training and procedures.

Shipping is going through a process where all commercial vessels are required to have electronic chart display and information system installed. If a vessel has two Ecdis, it can become a paperless vessel, meaning it can navigate without the traditional paper charts.

The problem has been the navigation officers’ increased reliance on the technology and not on traditional navigational skills.

Supportive of the development of modern navigation technology, Professor Last says there remains a strong need for the industry to have back-up for GPS signals.

GLA has for many years been trying out a land-based long-range radio signal transmission, e-loran. The system is now up and running in Dover and will be trialled on board the new ferry Spirit of Britain.

GLA will also conduct a failure of signal exercise on one of its vessels in February. Galatea will again have its GPS signal deliberately jammed to test whether inbuilt e-loran signal receivers will seamlessly take over.

Prof Last was surprised to see which systems failed when the GLA undertook earlier exercises to disrupt a GPS signal. He warns that often the GPS signal disruption is not detected, leading navigation equipment to give incorrect yet plausible information that may not be easily noticed.

The failures were not limited to the Ecdis; a host of other systems were disrupted that have GPS receivers inbuilt, such as automatic identification signal transmission, radar, gyro and satellite communication systems, even ships’ clocks, dynamic positioning systems and helipad stabilisation systems.

There is always the risk of malicious disruption targeting a vessel’s GPS but also — and this is being seen more frequently — small GPS jammers installed in stolen luxury cars being shipped out of the UK in a container.

That jammer can then disrupt the GPS signals of surrounding vessels. Also seen abroad is deliberate military jamming, with North Korea occasionally jamming GPS signals in South Korea, causing maritime disruption. South Korea is reported to be considering e-loran as a back up to counter this.

by Craig Eason

(See also article on Page 18)

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