

Melbourne Branch

The Log
The Monthly Newsletter of the Melbourne Branch of
The Company of Master Mariners of Australia Limited

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NEXT MEETING 29th May 2019

**Combined Meeting with MLAANZ
and Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers**

**Panel discussion on the Law relating
to autonomous vessels**

In this issue:

- From the Branch Master
- Membership Fees
- Speakers Summary
- Membership Application
- “Iron Crown”
- Geelong Harbour Master
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Hon. Sec. / Hon. Ed., Alexandra Evered
Email alex@baysideshipping.com
Tel 03 5424 1224



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From the Branch Master

The introduction of autonomous ships will be the greatest change in ships since steam took over from sail.

Rolls Royce and their Northern European partners have been working on the concept of autonomous ships for many years and have now solved most of the technical problems of operating unmanned vessels.

There have been a number of demonstrations of the concept, particularly in Scandinavia, using ferries, tugs and other small vessels. The “Yara Birkeland” project is an example of Norway’s commitment to the scheme. These examples have been in harbours or other confined waters but recently a 12 metre autonomous vessel sailed across the North Sea with a cargo of 5Kgs of oysters. The 22 hour voyage is claimed to be the first commercial crossing of the North Sea by an autonomous vessel.

Interest in autonomous ships is not confined to Europe. There is growing interest around the world not just by ship owners but by port authorities who want their share of the trade.

The Japanese Government selected MOL and their partners to test automated berthing, collision avoidance and remote monitoring systems with the aim of bringing autonomous vessels into service by 2025.

With the shipping industry keen to develop autonomous ships IMO will review regulations pertaining to Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS)

Autonomous ships cannot comply with all the provisions of SOLAS, CollRegs, STCW, MARPOL and the Polar Code so provisions will need to be made to allow autonomous ships to operate.

Apart from these international conventions there are national and local laws such as compulsory pilotage in the Great Barrier Reef to be considered.

Capt. Ian French



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Further complicating the issue is that there will be ships with varying degrees of autonomy. They will range from ships with some functions automated and at times unsupervised but with crew onboard ready to take over to fully autonomous ships with no crew and with operating systems that can make decisions and determine action. It seems that the laws surrounding autonomous ships are just as complex as the technical issues.

On the 29th May we are holding a joint meeting with MLAANZ and The Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers where the law relating to autonomous ships will be the subject of the meeting. The speakers will be Stuart Hetherington a partner with Colin Biggers and Paisley who has made a study of the issue.

Grant Judson the Principal Advisor Navigation with AMSA. Grant represents Australia's interests at the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee Working Group on MASS

Rachel Horne the Senior Advisor Maritime Regulations at AMSA. Rachel is a lawyer and a member of AMSA's Autonomous Vessel Regulatory Working Group.

With such well qualified speakers it promises to be a very informative and interesting meeting and one not to be missed.

Membership Fees

Would those members who have not yet paid their membership fees for this year please do so as soon as possible. The branch has to submit our membership numbers before the end of next month for Federal Levy purposes.

May Speakers Summary



The Speaker at the 1st May meeting was Anthony Bailey who spoke about the development of Pacific Island ports. After a short period with Ellerman Line, Anthony went into Transport Consultancy which led to work for the Asian Development Bank. The Bank provides low interest sovereign guaranteed loans to developing nations. The largest investors in the bank are USA, Japan and China.

Anthony was involved in a survey of SW Pacific ports between Papua New Guinea and Fiji.

The ports in this area were built before containerization and before cruise ships became so popular and many have not been updated in recent years. All the ports have problems that reduce their efficiency and in the longer term will limit the country's development.

Suva for example handles 300 ships per year but due to a poor layout cargo ships have to be moved off the berth when cruise ships arrive. The port has some good equipment but not the technical people to maintain it.

In Papua New Guinea the major ports of Lae and Port Moresby have had some re development but still have some limitations. There is conflict between berths for cruise ships which need to be close to the town but may only be used for half the year and container terminals which need a lot of space and good road transport links.

The smaller ports in the area often have wharves that cannot take heavy loads. They were built to handle general cargo and have narrow wharf aprons due to the positioning of the cargo sheds. They are not suited to container operations.

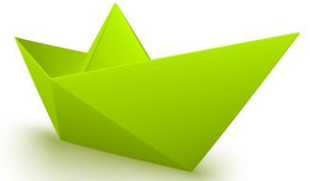
These Pacific Nations do not have the financial resources for major redevelopment and must maximize existing facilities.



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Speakers Summary Cont'd



PORT OF SUVA

Anthony showed how a modest amount of work can increase the efficiency of ports. Improving road access, better container control and removing unused cargo sheds could be done with a small loan that could be serviced by the ports operations and therefore avoid the temptation to take large loans from China that cannot be serviced and result in the country becoming a client state of China.

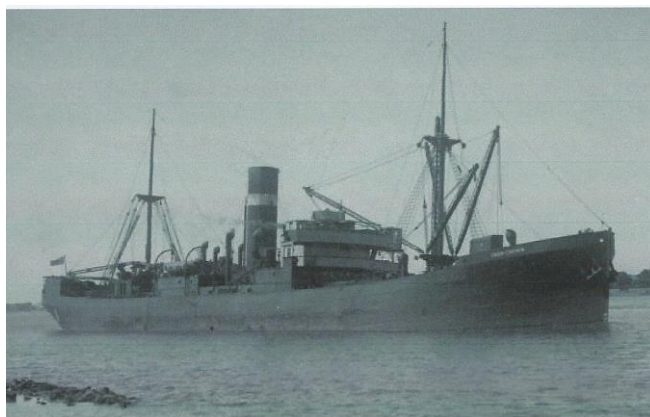
Anthony showed photos of the ports in the area and explained what each port's problems were and possible low cost solutions. It was a very interesting presentation.

New Application

Johnathon Willis has applied for Ordinary Membership of Western Australian Branch. Johnathon is Master on "Siem Thilma"



“Iron Crown”



On the eve of ANZAC Day it was announced that the CSIRO research vessel “Investigator” had located the wreck of the “Iron Crown” which was sunk by the Japanese Submarine I-27 on 4th June 1942.

The ship was loaded with manganese ore and sank within 60 seconds of being torpedoed taking with her 38 of the 43 crew.

Japanese submarines were active on the Australian East Coast and sank a number of ships including two other BHP ships ‘Iron Chieftan” and “Iron Knight”

Geelong Harbour Master

VRCA have announced that on 27th May Captain David Shennan will take over as Marine Manager and Harbour Master of the Port of Geelong. David a former Melbourne Branch Master has previously been Harbour Master of the ports of Melbourne and Portland.



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