

Melbourne Branch

The Log
The Monthly Newsletter of the Melbourne Branch of
The Company of Master Mariners of Australia Limited
Hon. Secretary Rudy Rietwyk
email Melbourne@mastermariners.org.au



In this issue:

- From the Branch Master
- Branch News
- Barge and freight train collide
- Doctors treating seafarers
- Information wanted
- September speakers summary

Hon. Editor Capt Ian French
Email icfrench@bigpond.com

NEXT MEETING

1830 hrs 26th October 2022

Mail Exchange Hotel

Speaker

Capt. Dick Francis

Restoration of Steam Tug Wattle



From the Branch Master

We have the 112th Seafarers Service on the 23rd October commencing at 1000 at St Pauls Cathedral this month for the first time since the arrival of the COVID pandemic. This is good news given the significance of the event to the maritime community. The CoMMA members as well as Master Mariners in general have been invited to attend the service.

Plans are underway for our Christmas celebration. Details to follow when confirmed. Most likely to be held at the Mail Exchange as we have been happy with their service for the monthly meetings. Members are also happy with the transport that services the location.

Congratulations to our Deputy Branch Master, Francis Castellino on volunteering for the role of Federal Secretary. I was contacted by the Federal Master and was happy to give my support for the nominations. All other State Branch Masters have given their support too.

Fair Winds

Graeme

Branch News

The speaker at the October meeting will be Captain Dick Francis whose subject will be The Restoration of the Steam Tug Wattle.

The Steam Tug Wattle is historically, socially and technologically significant at the national level as the only small; harbour steam tug surviving in Victoria.

Thursday 29th September was World Maritime Day. This year the theme is “New technologies for greener Shipping”.

In supporting the Day AMSA CEO Mick Kinley said that the shipping industry contributes 2% of the world’s carbon emissions and has a vital role in developing new technologies to address climate change. On World Maritime Day landmarks around the world are lit up in blue and green. In Australia the National Maritime Museum, Cape Naturaliste Lighthouse in W.A. and Macquarie Lighthouse in Sydney were lit up



During the September Meeting Aaron Kavanagh was presented with his Membership Certificate by the Branch Master Cmdr. Graeme Furlonger.

The following applications for membership have been received.

Vivek Abraham Mathew has applied for Ordinary Membership of Melbourne Branch. He obtained his Masters Cert in 2010 and is a Pilot with Aus. Pilotage group
Amandeep has applied for Ordinary Membership of W.A. Branch. He holds a Chief Mates Certificate and is employed at sea as 2nd Mate.

Barge and Freight Train Collide



On November 13 2021 the Tug “Baxter Southern” was pushing a string of four empty barges in the Mississippi River when strong winds made it unsafe to continue and it was decided to hold the barges up against the bank until the wind eased. One of the barges was overhanging the railway track and was struck by a coal train. Two locomotives and six coal hopper cars were derailed causing \$1.9 million damage. The barge received only minor damage. The National Transportation Safety Board found that the probable cause was the tow’s Pilot and Captain not correctly identifying a caution area on the electronic chart. The report said ECDIS enables users to obtain information including warnings and other navigation information. Maybe warning like “Watch out for trains” or “Keep clear of tracks” !???



Doctors Treating Seafarers

The September issue of the Medical Journal of Australia contained a paper written by two Doctors who work in the Emergency Department in Port Hedland W.A.

The paper deals with the issues raised by Australian doctors treating seafarers.

They start by pointing out that seafaring involves long hours at times in hazardous working conditions with limited access to primary health care. In 2005-2012 ATSB recorded 245 incidents resulting in seafarers being seriously injured or dying.

Australian ports handle 30,000 commercial vessels annually. Many international crew members are from low income nations and have basic English.

Port stays are frequently less than 24 hour which allows little time for diagnostic procedures and impacts on the continuity of care. Seafarers often depart before diagnosis is complete and it is difficult to contact them with results.

Seafarers may present with infectious diseases not often seen in Australia like tuberculosis and malaria. A list of previous ports visited, medical history, medication and vaccination history is often not provided.

In addition to infections, doctors also have to treat injuries from falls, accidents attempted suicide and substance abuse.

The Maritime Labour Convention only requires shipowners to pay for medical treatment rendering seafarers fit for travel. The authors believe that a seafarers safety net could assist in covering the cost of treatment facilitating access to optimal care.

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in an increase in mental health presentations due to longer periods without shore leave and extended contracts. Clinicians can access "Hunterlink" which provides support for international seafarer's mental health and aims to provide ongoing care in the seafarer's home country. Charities such as The Mission to Seafarers provide support for seafarers in hospital but these services are not usually available in smaller regional hospitals.

Doctors treating seafarers have to deal with linguistic barriers, fragmented en-route health care, limited medical documentation, delayed presentations and the impact of isolation and lack of psychological support.

There is a lack of advice for doctors on how to approach the treatment, logistics and ethical limitations surrounding these patients.

The authors have made a number of suggestions to improve the quality of treatment for seafarers including:

Shipping Companies should maintain electronic medical records for all crew members that include all relevant data that can be translated and provided to the doctor when the patient presents.

Expand help line services to provide advice for acute health conditions for incoming vessels.

Establish an industry funded safety net to cover cost of treatment beyond the cost employers are obliged to pay.

Increase industry awareness of issues faced by seafarers

Health care workers should be educated on the issues faced by seafarers and the available resources to aid in their care.

Information Wanted



We have received a request for information on what happened to the ferry “Lady Stelfox” which was built in 1982 and operated as a tourist ferry on the Tamar River for many years before being barged to Melbourne. Did it operate in Melbourne or was it abandoned? Any information can be sent to the Branch Secretary Rudy Rietwyk email melbourne@mastermariners.org.au

September Speakers Summary

The speaker at the September meeting was Captain Antonio Di Lieto who appeared via video presentation from The Netherlands. Antonio Di Lieto is the author of “Diligent Pilotage – Lessons learned from the Jolly Nero”



The incident occurred on 7th May 2013 and involved the Italian Container ship “Jolly Nero” (Gross tonnage 40600 Length 240m Single screw motor ship) which backed into the 50 metre tall Genoa Port Control Tower which collapsed resulting in the deaths of 9 people.



The “Jolly Nero” departed its berth and with the assistance of a pilot and two tugs proceeded down the Sampieroarena Channel stern first. The main engine rev indicator on the bridge was not working and some arrangement was made with the engine room to inform the bridge of any engine problems. It has been estimated that the ship’s speed was 3.5 kts when it entered the swing basin.

Dead Slow Ahead was ordered on the telegraph but the engine did not start. A number of attempts to start the engine failed. Orders were given to the tugs to swing the ship clear and at the last minute the starboard anchor was let go. The ship's stern struck the Control Tower. The case went to a criminal trial and the Captain was sentenced to 10 years, the 1st Officer 8 years, the Chief Engineer 7 years and the Pilot 4 years but he was acquitted on appeal.



In explaining how the Court reached its decision Antonio discussed the issues of due diligence, negligent cooperation and the principle of reliance.

The Judge found that the general idea of the manoeuvre was well known and both the Captain and Pilot had executed it many times. When compared to what occurred on other ships the engine order to slow the ship down was given too late. The safety margin needed to be greater to allow for intervention. The Pilot should have realized that the speed was too high and that the margin for safety was too small.

Antonio discussed the lessons learned and started with the passage plan. The speed entering the swing basin should have been 1.5 to 2 kts not the actual 3.5 kts. More detail was needed on clearance distances. The Court did not use the term Bridge Resource Management but it can be seen as an operational philosophy whose ultimate aim is to facilitate timely intervention.

Under Italian law the Master is responsible for the conduct of navigation and the Pilot is only an advisor. The ships owners were cleared of any causal responsibility for the accident.

Antonio discussed the Rasmussen Diagram of safety management which Ravi Nigger said should be part of the Masters Syllabus

The difference between civil and criminal liability was discussed. To be found guilty of negligence the following must be answered in the affirmative. Was there foreseeability, causality, preventability and reasonableness.

Antonio ended his presentation with a Q and A session.

The presentation caused a lot of discussion which continued well after the link with The Netherlands had closed.

