



The Porthole

Volume 14 No. 8
August 2014

The newsletter of the South Australian Branch of the Company of Master Mariners of Australia.

PO Box 1, PORT ADELAIDE, SA 5015



From the Branch Master

The Federal Court has been quiet of late; no further meetings have eventuated since the last issue of this magazine was published, and even e-mail communication has gone quiet. Our Hon. Editor of 'The Porthole' is away for a couple of weeks, and there is a dearth of Maritime Matters to talk about, and so I will diverge a little.

I was sitting on the veranda in the unseasonably warm and sunny weather of last week, enjoying a glass of red and watching some of the sheep meandering along the ridgeline of my property, when it occurred to me that we in Australia are truly blessed with good fortune, that others can only view with admiration and a certain amount of jealousy. Where else in our neck of the woods other than New Zealand, can people be given enough money to survive on if they are unlucky enough, or uninclined, not to participate in the economy? Where the average wages of those in full time employment are many times that of those employed in the so-called third world. In our 'level playing-field' economy, this makes our ships millions of dollars more expensive to run than those of our competitors. This is no secret. Thus, apart from the odd tanker, we have no foreign-going ships left under the Australian flag; and only a few plying the coast, courtesy of the Cabotage Laws. It has been said that Australia is a shipper nation, not a shipping nation.

We as a people may well be 'The Lucky Country', but it has not brought much luck to our maritime industry!

Happy Sailing to all

Bob W (BM)

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This is a very much abridged issue of the Porthole, as the acting Editor ran out of time and has had difficulty in remembering how to use Microsoft Publisher!

Guest Speakers:

August : Jack Wearne, Emergency Doctor, Royal Adelaide Hospital:
Topic: Drugs & Alcohol

September: Kevin Jones, S A Maritime Museum

**The next Branch Meeting will be held at
the Largs Pier Hotel, 198 The Esplanade, Largs Bay,
on Wednesday, 27th August 2014 at 1145 for 1200.**

**Please confirm your attendance at the lunch or register your apology
before 1200 on Monday, 25th August 2014 with either
Ian Dickson (8396 1030) or Robert Westley (8536 4863)**



The Company of Master Mariners of Australia Ltd. is a Company established to promote and further the efficiency of the Sea Service generally, and uphold the Status, Dignity, and Prestige of Master Mariners in particular.

The Company of Master Mariners of Australia Ltd., S.A. Branch.

Branch Meeting at the Largs Pier Hotel, on 30 July 2014, at 1200

Minutes

1. Meeting opened at 1205 hours. Branch Master welcomed members and guests.
2. Members present: Captains Westley (Branch Master), Buchanan, Carrington, Carter, Dickson, Fraser, Hammond, Hehir, Holmes, Kemp, Marshall, Phillips, Pronk, & Rajagopalan and Mr Wynne.
Guests: Rebecca Otte & Frank Boulton (guest speakers), & Owen Sharpe & Julia Dnistrinski (Finlaysons).
Apologies: Sir Eric Neal & Captains Bourne-Jones, Carr, Ganesan, Jayasuriya, Kemp, Parsons, Pearson & Don Sleath.
3. Minutes of last meeting, 25 June 2014: Minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2014 were circulated in the Porthole. Capt Fraser proposed that the minutes be accepted as a true and correct record of proceedings. Seconded by Capt Phillips and carried.
4. Business arising from the minutes:

a) Speakers:

August	Jack Wearne, Emergency Doctor, Royal Adelaide Hospital: Topic: Drugs & Alcohol (Tony Wynne).
September	Kevin Jones, SA Maritime Museum: Topic: To be advised.
October	To be advised
November	To be advised
????	Kate Linley: Topic: Under Keel Clearances.(Bob Westley/Howard Pronk?)
Visits:	Independent Theatre: "Peter & Alice", 19:45 on 22/08/14 at The Space. \$31.73 pp.

b) Other business Nil.

5. Treasurer's report: (Tabled).

Balance at 21/05/14	2,557.70	Bendigo Bank deposit balance at 21/05/14	2,722.55
Income: Interest	5.04	Interest added quarterly	0.00
Expenditure: Guest speaker	-32.65	Bendigo Bank deposit balance at 18/06/14	2,722.55
Balance at 18/06/14	2,530.09		
Levy paid subsequently	1,980.00	Bendigo Bank Term Deposit at 18/06/14	6,809.91
Balance at 30/07/14	550.09	Re-invested for 12 months from 02/02/14 @ 3.55%	

Capt. Hammond proposed and Capt Pronk seconded that the Treasurer's report be accepted: carried.

6. Membership:

Applications:

Applicant	Status sought	Branch
Gordon Brian DUNNETT	Associate	Federal
Sarah Faye ROBINSON	Associate	Western Australia
Richard Wolf Lamoral POCOCK	Ordinary	Sydney

Ratifications: Nil

Branch Members:

	Number		
	Financial	Unfinancial	Total
Members	8	0	8
Seagoing members (incl. tug crews & pilots)	3	0	3
Retired members	15	0	15
Associate member	3	0	3
Total paying members	29	0	29
Honorary members	4	0	4
Total Levied Members	33	0	33
Life Members			2
Total Branch Membership			35

7. Correspondence 14/06/14 to 19/07/14: Inwards correspondence was received and outwards correspondence was approved at the Branch Court meeting on 18/06/14 (Summary tabled for members' information).

8 Federal Matters:

- a) "Master Mariner" distribution costs: Some Branches (including this Branch) have responded to the Federal Court's request to have the "MM" distributed electronically, but, for the present, hard copies will be distributed as before. However, the Federal Secretary is enquiring into the feasibility using a direct mailing solution. If this is adopted, Branches would be asked to bear some of the distribution costs (distribution of the most recent issue cost this Branch \$32.65). Joanna, the journal's editor, hopes to attract some advertising, in which case the journal could be expanded to 20 pages, which would, presumably, call for more articles.
- b) Admission of Class 3 Certificate holders: Nothing further to report.
- c) Migration Amendment (Offshore Resources Activity) Repeal Bill: While acknowledging the strong feelings of some Members on this issue, because of the apolitical nature of the company, the Federal Court will not contribute to this debate. However, there is nothing to prevent individual Members from contacting politicians. Capt. Carrington advised that the repeal bill has not been presented to Federal Parliament, because of the Government has received of a large number of communications opposing the change, and has decided to review the Bill before presenting it for debate.

9. General Business:

- a) Shipment of ore delivered to Ardrossan as a slurry: Capt Hammond asked what kind of vessel would be used to export ore which had been delivered to Ardrossan in a slurry. The general consensus of the meeting was that the ore would be dried prior to loading.
- b) Admission of Class 3 Certificate holders: Capt Marshall commented that, while he was Deputy Federal Master in ????, the admission of lower grade certificate holders as Members had been proposed.

10. **Next Branch meeting will be held at 1145 for 1200 on Wednesday, 27th August 2014 at the Largs Pier Hotel when the speaker will be Doctor Jack Wearne, of RAH Emergency Department, whose topic will be "Drugs and Alcohol".**

11. Business meeting closed at 1235 hrs.

After conclusion of the business meeting, Rebecca Otte, of BHP Uranium, and Frank Boulton, formerly of BHP Uranium, gave an interesting talk on the carriage of uranium.

After first reminding the meeting of the importance of uranium as an important fuel for the generation of base-load electricity and the need to transport it safely, Frank briefly described uranium as a very dense, heavy (65% heavier than lead), radioactive, metallic element, which is formed by volcanic activity, and is the main source of heat in the earth's core. It is slightly toxic, non-flammable, non-combustible, non-explosive, non-corrosive and only mildly radioactive. Presently, there are three active mines in Australia, one being Olympic Dam, in South Australia, which accounts for 54% of Australian exports. Destinations are USA, Canada, Europe and China.

After mining, the ore is crushed and either calcined (in the case of Olympic Dam material) or dried. The resultant powder is uranium oxide concentrate (UOC); the calcined product is U_3O_8 and the dried product is UO_2 . This powder is drummed and packed into 20' ISO shipping containers for transport to enrichment plants where it is made into fuel rods for nuclear reactors.

Frank described the protracted and complex negotiations that had been necessary to overcome the bureaucratic barriers that existed in the many countries through which the UOC could pass *en route* to its destination. He then detailed the drumming, packing and securing procedures, and the safety precautions taken when handling the drums and the shipping containers.

Finally, Rebecca took us through the supporting voluminous paper work necessary to permit UOC to be carried to its final destination.

Capt Buchanan proposed a vote of thanks for an interesting insight into the complexities of the transport of uranium. It was passed by acclamation.

Insurers warn over lost ships' records

Marine insurers have warned that safety is being threatened by the loss of vital information about maintenance and survey histories when ships are sold.

The International Union of Marine Insurance (IUMI) says it is seeking improvements in the International Safety Management (ISM) Code to ensure that maintenance records and service histories follow the ship throughout its life.

Helle Hammer, chairman of the IUMI political forum, commented: 'When a ship changes ownership, it is commonplace that the outgoing technical manager removes the planned maintenance system (PMS) data which contains all maintenance and service records from the vessel. 'Consequently, there will be no fluid takeover of the vessel by the new crew, no maintenance records left onboard, and no list of short and long term maintenance to be carried out,' he added. 'This increases the risks of required maintenance being overlooked, of incorrect handling of equipment, and of serious breakdowns due to pure lack of knowledge of the ship's service history.'

While classification survey records will always be available to a new owner once permission is given from the seller to the classification society, the separate continuous machinery survey (CMS) records, carried out by the chief engineer, are stored in the onboard PMS. When the PMS data is removed, this means that the CMS records are lost to the new owner and the classification society, Mr Hammer pointed out.

As well as changes to the ISM Code, IUMI suggests additional clauses may also be included in the sale and purchase agreement requiring maintenance records, operating reports and spares inventory to be part of the permanent service history of the ship.

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Officer killed by cable

An investigation into a fatal accident onboard a Norwegian ferry has called for seafarers to be given better guidance on passing under high voltage electric cables.

The chief officer of the 2,053gt ferry Røst died when he received an electric shock and fell from the ship's foremast while trying to check the ship's safe clearance under three high-voltage power cables a few weeks after the vessel was switched to a new route linking Svolvær, Skutvik and Skrova.

The crew had been given a verbal instruction from the ferry company Torghatten Nord not to sail through Fyrsundet sound until further notice, as the aft mast was assumed to be too high for Røst to safely pass under the cables. The master and chief mate had calculated that their vessel would have a clearance of 90cm at the highest astronomical tide and 2.8m at prevailing tide levels, so they decided to take it through the sound at slow speed while they checked the distance between the aft mast and the cables. Nautical charts showed a

safe vertical clearance of 20m, while the signs ashore showed 22m and the shipboard management had measured the vessel's air draught to be 20.7m from the waterline to the top of the aft mast.

As Røst passed through the sound, the chief mate climbed into the foremast to observe the passage and to check the margin between the mast and the cables using a fishing rod.

However, as the vessel passed under the last of the three cables, the rod touched it and the officer fell almost 10m from the mast to the deck.

In a report on the incident, the Accident Investigation Board of Norway (AIBN) said uncertainty about the ferry's actual air draft, coupled with 'equivocal' information about the safe clearance had contributed to the crew's decision to carry out the test.

The AIBN report notes that while national nautical guidelines urge seafarers to exercise caution when navigating near power lines, they contain no information about the safety margin that is taken into consideration for the safe vertical clearances shown in the charts and on signs ashore when high voltage is involved.

The report says there was 'justified uncertainty' about the safe clearance in the sound, with differing figures shown in the charts and on signs ashore.

Recommendations in the report include a call for the International Chamber of Shipping to incorporate 'practical and relevant advice on height limitations in general, about the safety margin and the safe vertical clearance under power cables that carry high voltage' into its Bridge Procedures Guide.

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