



The Porthole

Volume 15 No. 10
October 2015

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

PO Box 1, PORT ADELAIDE, SA 5015



Branch Master's Comments:

This October Branch meeting is the penultimate meeting before our Annual General Meeting in January 2016 and nominations are being sought for the office of Secretary, and of Treasurer.

Those members currently serving as Branch Master, Editor, and Wardens have indicated their willingness to continue in their current roles, for 2016, at least.

Please consider standing for office, especially if you have not previously done so. A blank Nomination Form is attached to this edition of The Porthole.

It is intended that there will be one more meeting of the Federal Court this year and I hope to be able to report on that at the Branch meeting on November 25th.

The North Atlantic and Eastern Pacific tropical storm season is in full swing and this season has seen the loss of the U.S. flag "El Faro", and all its crew, on a voyage from Florida to Puerto Rico. The vessel disappeared after transmitting a report that the ship had lost power to its engines. This tragedy is the largest loss of life in the U.S. Merchant Marine for many years, and, if previous tragedies are an indication, will lead to a major revision of U.S. maritime and, eventually, IMO regulations.

Best wishes,

Paul P.

Branch Master

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Speaker:

To be advised

**The next Branch Meeting will be held at
the Largs Pier Hotel, 198 The Esplanade, Largs Bay,
on Wednesday, 28 October 2015, at 1145 for 1200.**

**Please confirm your attendance at the lunch or register your
apology before 1200 on Monday, 26th October 2015, with**

Ian Dickson (08 8396 1030)

or

Paul Phillips (0407 779 209)



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 September 2015.

Minutes

1. Opening & welcome: Meeting opened at 1200hrs. Branch Master welcomed members.
2. Present:
 - Members: Captains Phillips (Branch Master), Buchanan, Carr, Carter, Dickson, Hehir, Holmes, Kemp, Lydell, Rajagopalan, & Westley.
 - Guest: Chris Purton (guest speaker).
3. Apologies: Sir Eric Neal, Captains Bourne-Jones, Carrington, Fraser, Ganesan, Hammond, Jayasuriya, Marshall, Parsons, Pearson & Pronk, and Mr Hales.
4. Minutes of last business meeting, 26 August 2015: (circulated in the Porthole). Captain Carr proposed that the minutes represented a true and correct record of proceedings. Seconded by Capt. Westley and carried.
5. Business arising from the minutes:
 - a) Speakers:
 - October: To be advised.
 - November: To be advised.
 - Suggestions Mike Carrington: Topic: "Diamond dredging in Namibia" (Mike Carrington).
Speaker from the Australian Maritime & Fisheries Academy (Paul Phillips).
Kate Linley: Topic: Under Keel Clearances. (Howard Pronk?)
Port Adelaide Council CEO.
Metropolitan Traffic Control Centre CEO.
 - Visits:
 - Suggestions: Australian Maritime & Fisheries Academy: bridge & engine room simulators and ship fire-fighting training facility (Paul Phillips).
One & All: Visit: To be arranged (Ian Dickson). If the visit goes ahead, the opportunity will be taken to present the plaque.
Le Fevre High School.
Flinders Adelaide Container Terminal (10 members expressed interest) (Paul Phillips).
 - b) "Master Mariner" journal. More articles required.
 - c) Development of maritime facilities and construction programs: The proposed ACTU seminar never eventuated, so our submission became irrelevant.
 - d) Company Plaques: One was given to the Governor at the June meeting. Presentation of a plaque to the SA Maritime Museum has still to be arranged (Ian Dickson).
 - e) *One & All* Capt. Dickson advised that, with some difficulty, he had arranged a visit to the vessel for 10:00 on 23 September 2015, only to have it cancelled by the Friends of the *One and All* at short notice. It had been hoped to present the plaque during the visit. Capt Dickson also advised that he had endeavoured to arrange for the removal of the bell for re-engraving, so far without success. He will continue attempting to achieve both objectives (Ian Dickson). In the meantime, Capt Carr will also continue monitoring the situation (Eddie Carr). In an effort to obtain approval to remove the bell, Capt Phillips is to seek the assistance of Kevin Jones, of the SA Maritime Museum (Paul Phillips).

6. Treasurer's report: In the absence of the Branch Treasurer, the Branch Secretary submitted Treasurer's report, as follows:

Balance at 18/08/15	2,261.29	Bendigo Bank deposit balance at 18/08/15	2,678.75
Income: Interest.	0.02	Interest added quarterly	0.00
Expenditure: Lunches Governor & staff	<u>-113.00</u>	Bendigo Bank deposit balance at 30/09/15	<u>2,678.75</u>
Balance at 30/09/15	<u>2,148.31</u>		
		Bendigo Bank Term Deposit at 1/02/15	7,051.66
		Re-invested for 9 months from 1/02/15 @ 3.40%	

The Branch Secretary proposed, and Capt. Westley seconded, that the Treasurer's report be accepted; carried.

7. Correspondence 15/08/15 to 18/09/15: (Summary tabled). Inwards correspondence received & outwards correspondence approved at the Branch Court meeting on 23/09/15.

The Branch Secretary drew attention to the volume of e-mails exchanged in connection with the arranging and eventual cancellation of the visit to the *One and All*.

8. Membership.

Applications:

Applicant	Status sought	Branch	Master's Certificate			Occupation/ Position
			No.	Date	Place	
Slaven ROJE	Ordinary	Fre-mantle	400144372	16/09/2011	Split, Croatia	1 st Officer, STS "Leeuwin II"
Karl Joseph SOARS	Ordinary	Queens-land	2450	1/09/1992	Bombay	Regional General Manager, Inchcape Shipping Services

Ratifications

Name	Status sought	Branch	Roll No.
Andrew HOGAN	Associate	West Australian	2901
Sheldon RODRIGUES	Ordinary	Melbourne	2902
Simon GAMBONI	Associate	Melbourne	2903
Michael DESA	Ordinary	West Australian	2904
Mohamed RAHMAN	Associate	Queensland	2905
Lawrence CRISP	Ordinary	Queensland	2906
Anurodh PRASAD	Ordinary	Sydney	2907
Philip GINZLER	Ordinary	Sydney	2908
Raul PEREIRA	Ordinary	West Australian	2909
Ian SHEA	Ordinary	Federal	2910

Branch Members

Category	Number		
	Financial	Un-financial	Total
Members	7	0	7
Seagoing members (incl. tug crews & pilots)	3	0	3
Retired members	15	0	15
Associate member	3	0	3
Total paying members	28	0	28
Honorary members	4	0	4
Total Levied Members	32	0	32
Life Members			2
Total Branch Membership			34

9. Federal Matters: Federal Court meeting, by phone link, was held on 16 September 2015, and the Branch Master reported, as follows:

- a) Application Fee. The application fee for membership will be increased to \$130 as from 1 October 2015.
- b) Federal Court Account Balances
- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Cheque Account | 8,645.26 |
| ING Direct | 19,340.55 |
| TOTAL | \$27,985.81 |

9. Federal Matters continued on page 4.

9. Federal Matters continued from page 3.
- b) Master Mariner magazine The September edition of the Master Mariner is ready for distribution. To attract more advertisers, the editor would like to increase the circulation from the current 700 copies (500 to Members) to 1000 copies. Accordingly, Branch members are asked to provide names and addresses of future recipients
- c) Submission to Senate No feed-back has been received. This item prompted the question of who is Committee enquiring into the new Minister responsible for Maritime Affairs. As no-one could provide an answer, the Branch Master undertook to ask Senator Birmingham (Paul Phillips) to enquire into the carriage of coastal cargoes by “flags of convenience” vessels.
- d) Anniversary book Contact has been made with the author of “Masters under the Southern Cross” and the Federal Court is hopefully optimistic of seeing a finalisation of the manuscript on the horizon!
- e) Electronic banking. The Federal Court is working towards change from payments by cheques to electronic banking.
- d) Constitution No changes.
10. Motions on Notice: Nil.
11. General Business.
- a) Master Mariner Articles always required.
12. **The next Branch meeting will be held at 1145 for 1200 on Wednesday, 28 October 2015, at the Largs Pier Hotel, Largs Bay. The guest speaker is to be advised.**
13. Closure: Business meeting was closed at 1240 hours and lunch was taken.
- After lunch, Mr Chris Purton, retired meteorologist, gave a talk, entitled “Advances in Weather Forecasting over the Past Forty Years, with Particular Reference to the Great Australian Bight.” A summary of the presentation will be found elsewhere in this issue of The Porthole.

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WRONG-WAY SHIP HAD NO ONE ON THE BRIDGE

Alarm has been voiced about a case last month (August, 2015) in which French maritime safety officials had to send a helicopter and an emergency towing vessel out to a general cargo ship that failed to respond to calls from ashore when it was spotted sailing in the wrong direction in the Channel.

The Gibraltar-registered “Musketier” was taken under French coastguard escort when the French Navy helicopter winched an officer onto the ship after it had sailed for more than an hour in the wrong lane of the traffic separation scheme (TSS).

It was then discovered that there was no one on the bridge of the 2,545gt vessel, which was sailing from St Petersburg in Russia to Bermeo in Spain, with a cargo of steel. The “Musketier’s” master was alerted and took the con, with the ship having to be escorted by the ETV Abeille Languedoc until it left the TSS.

Officials at French Coastguard Regional Operational Centre for Surveillance and Rescue (CROSS) said the incident began at around 2040hrs on 6 August when coastguards noticed that the ship had failed to change course at the entrance to the strait of Pas-de-Calais.

Coastguards made repeated attempts to call the “Musketier” by all means available, but the ship failed to respond. Because of ‘the proven danger to navigation, especially in this heavy traffic area of the Pas de Calais’, CROSS Gris Nez and the French Navy Operational Centre (COM) in Cherbourg decided to launch a helicopter to intercept the ship.

The helicopter arrived on the scene at around 2334, and decided to winch someone onto “Musketier” after it failed to respond to further calls and flash lights. After the master took control of the ship, it re-joined the TSS track at 0011hrs. French authorities said they were making a formal complaint to the “Musketier’s” owners, stating that the ship was involved in a near-miss situation and posed a danger to navigation as a result of infringing rules on look-outs, collision

prevention, traffic separation schemes, and mandatory reporting in the Dover Strait.

The Préfecture Maritime said the ship had been 'administratively immobilised' in the Spanish port of Bermeo and its master, officers and crew had been temporarily suspended. It said the Gibraltar flag state had responded quickly and sent an inspector to make a report, which will then go to the Le Havre maritime court. The inquiry will take 'several months', it added.

This was not the first incident involving "Musketier" in the Channel.

In February 2011 the ship ran aground to the south of Calais during a voyage from Spain to Germany. Investigations revealed that the Ukrainian master had fallen asleep at least 80 minutes before the grounding and the report criticised the 'inappropriate' four-on-four-off-eight-on work pattern for the two watch-keepers.

In 2011, "Musketier" was running with just seven crew on-board and the French maritime investigation body BEAMer recommended the owners to 'put in place a complement and bridge organisation consistent with the type of the vessel and her activity'. At the time of the incident last month, the German-owned, Dutch-managed ship was being operated by a crew of eight, three Filipinos, four Russians and one Ukrainian seafarer.

The ship has been described as a 'disaster zone' and said it highlighted long-running safety problems. 'In 2011, the French authorities told the IMO and the European Maritime Safety Agency that the "Musketier's" grounding showed the risk posed by ships operating around European coasts with "obviously under-sized complements". This latest incident shows that nothing has changed and it is only a matter of luck that there has not been a major incident as a result.

'What will it take to get the necessary action?' is a question that has been asked. 'We should not have to wait for a disaster with massive loss of life or environmental pollution before governments finally enforce proper manning levels on ships and end the scourge of seafarer fatigue once and for all.'

(With thanks to the Nautilus Telegraph: www.nautilusint.org)

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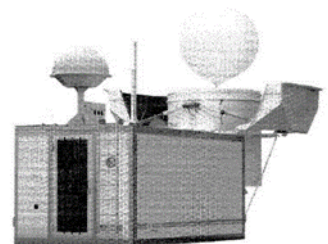
ADVANCES IN WEATHER FORECASTING OVER THE PAST 40 YEARS

A summary of a talk given to the October Branch meeting by Chris Purton FRMetS

Chris Purton's grandfather was the 4th of 5 sons of a UK country Anglican minister, so, because family financial resources for education were limited, he was sent to "HMS Worcester", then to sea as apprentice on the barque "Glen Osmond", 779 tons, owned by Elder Smith & Co., engaged in carrying the company's wool clip from South Australia to London. On completion of his apprenticeship, Grandfather sailed on British India vessels. On one voyage he met, and later married the daughter of a Australian farmer. Grandfather continued seafaring and Chris has happy childhood memories of time spent exploring his grandfather's ships while berthed in Port Adelaide. That gave him an enquiring interest in geography and associated things, such as the climate, which, in turn, led to his applying for a job with the Bureau of Meteorology.

After spending time in Bureau offices around Australia, he settled in the Bureau's Adelaide office as a Duty Forecaster. Commencing his topic, Chris stated that ship reports have been used for scientific purposes for centuries, which he illustrated with a copy of a map, dated 1799, of the Gulf Stream off the North American east coast. He went on to remind listeners that, in Adelaide, the most significant weather influence is the easterly movement of the low pressure systems south of Australia. When Chris started as a Duty Forecaster, there were few land based weather stations west of Adelaide and the vast majority of weather reports were from ships confined to narrow shipping lanes across the Great Australian Bight and the Indian Ocean. Consequently, it was difficult to determine the position, size or speed of weather systems and there was a 40% chance of error in the forecasts.

Over time, the number of the weather reporting ships gradually diminished, but this was partially off-set by the introduction of aircraft weather reports and the use of radiosondes, battery powered telemetry instruments, which measure altitude, pressure, temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and direction, cosmic radiation and the geographical position, and are carried into the atmosphere by weather balloons. Initially, the radiosonde instruments were large and heavy, each one requiring to be lifted by a 9ft diameter balloon, and needed a 20ft ISO cargo container to carry all the supporting equipment (right). Over time, the instruments have been reduced to the size of a cigarette packet, permitting the use of smaller balloons and small launching units capable of automatically launching up to 20 balloons. Dropsondes, which are radiosondes dropped from aircraft, are also used.



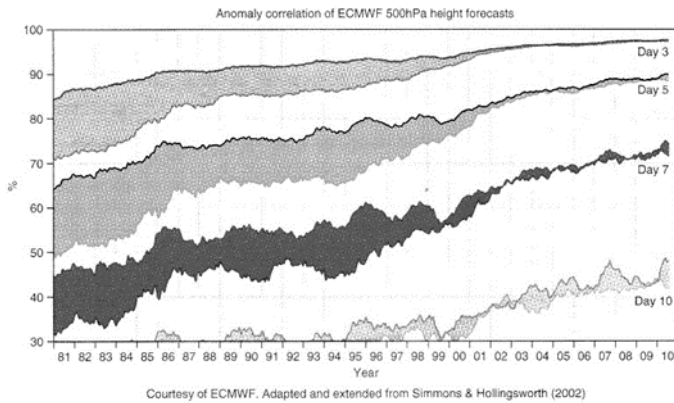


Figure 2. The evolution of forecast skill at ECMWF from 1981 to the present. The steady improvement with time can at least partly be ascribed to the improved use of satellite data and in particular the closing of the gap between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres as more and more satellite data are used in the otherwise data-sparse southern latitudes. For each day, the top of the coloured band represents the forecast skill in the Northern Hemisphere while the bottom represents the forecast skill in the Southern Hemisphere.

More data brings greater complexity, but this can be handled by computers. Using a control weather map, up to 50 forecast incremental changes are made to create a mean forecast map. This does not always provide certainty, as the maps (right) of the predicted paths of tropical cyclones show. Unfortunately, the actual track of Megi across the South China Sea is not known, so a comparison with the final and predicted paths is not possible.

Finally, there is the question of which forecast to accept, as they can be “tailored” for different purposes. A forecast for a surfer would need to have different emphases from one for a skier or a wheat farmer. The final table (below) indicates the range of forecasts that were available for Reading, Berkshire, UK, on 27 August 2009. Sometimes it’s helpful to look out of the window!

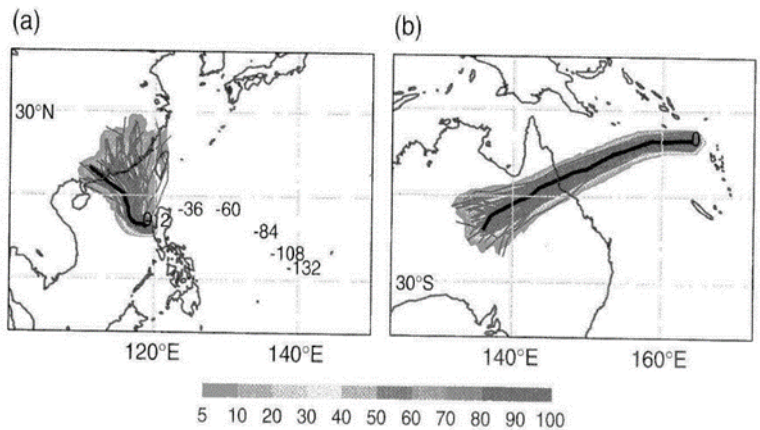


Figure 9. Contrasting predictability for tropical cyclones Megi and Yasi. (a) The EPS from 00 UTC on 19 October 2010 shows considerable uncertainty in the forecast track for Megi. (b) The EPS from 00 UTC on 31 January 2011 shows much greater certainty in the track of Yasi. Black line shows the track from the high resolution forecast, blue lines show the tracks of EPS members, shading indicates strike probability.

Table 1

24-hour forecasts for Reading, valid for 27 August 2009, showing the range of forecasts even for an inland UK site in summer under a weather regime that was expected to vary little over neighbouring regions. Times are BST.

Reading forecasts

	Max temp (°C)	Min temp (°C)	Wind direction and speed (mph)	Weather
BBC Weather	21	16	SW 12	Sunny intervals, 57% relative humidity
Met Office	19*	16*	SW 7–15*	Cloudy until 1000h, then sunny intervals
Meteox	18	11	W 24	24% chance of rain, 0.1mm
Europe-cities.com	22	12	SW 12	73% relative humidity, fog
Weather.co.uk	22	12		Fog am, sunshine pm, 20% chance of rain
Holiday-weather.com	21		SSW 16	Clear and sunny
Intellicast.com	22	12	SW 10–15	Foggy early then partly cloudy
accuweather.com	22	14	SW 12–20	Partly sunny until 1700h

* Based on 3-hourly forecasts (0100–1900h).

STEAM TUG WATTLE RETURNS TO THE WATER.



Historic Steam Tug Wattle returned to the water last month after six years of restoration in Docklands.

As Docklands News went to print on September 30, the 82-year-old boat was being relaunched into the Yarra River by two of Melbourne's largest mobile cranes.

The two cranes lifted the 132 tonne tugboat from its restoration site at 19 South Wharf and placed it onto a special mobile platform.

The boat was then transported under the Bolte Bridge to a nearby stable wharf at 24 South Wharf, where the boat was gradually

lowered in to the Yarra River, while Bay Steamer Maritime Museum volunteers checked that the restored hull was watertight.

The historic ship is returning to operation and is one of the last compound steam engine tugboats in the world.

Launched in Sydney in 1933, during the great depression, the Wattle is the first tugboat to have been completely designed and made in Australia.

Steam Tug Wattle served with the Royal Australian Navy until she was decommissioned in the 1960s and retired from towing duties in 1970. She was then converted to steam charter and tourism duties, and the Bay Steamers Maritime Museum brought her to Melbourne in 1978.

Since 2009 the Wattle has been under restoration in Docklands by a team of volunteers from the Bay Steamers Maritime Museum.

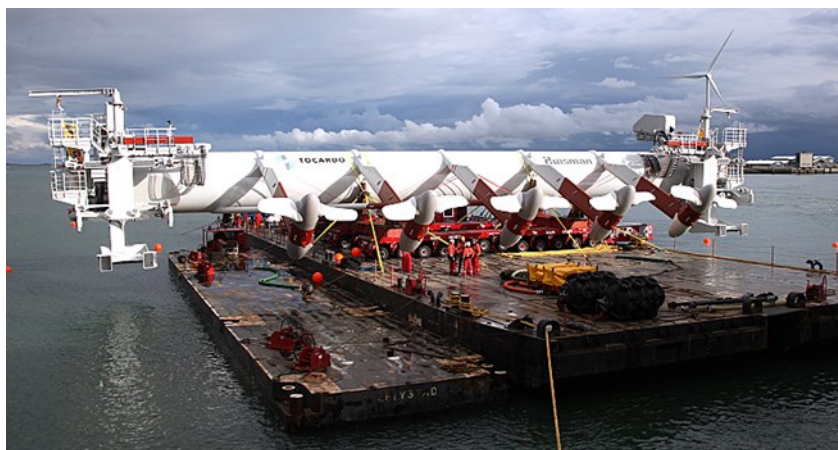
The restoration was funded by Sorrento Steam, a group of businessmen interested in preserving Australian maritime history, along with individuals and businesses that donated materials and equipment.

Source: Docklands News, 30 September 2015

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World's largest 5-turbine tidal array installed in the Oosterschelde barrier, The Netherlands

By Gregory B. Poindexter



The Netherlands' Den Oever-based Tocado Tidal Turbines has installed its commercial demonstrator 1.2-MW tidal array of five T2 turbines in the Eastern Scheldt storm surge barrier (Oosterschelde barrier) in the Netherlands. At a cost around US\$12.4 million, Tocado said this installation is the largest tidal energy project in the Netherlands as well as the world's largest commercial tidal installation of five turbines in an array. Measuring nearly 8 km in length, the Oosterschelde barrier is a special dam that connects the Zeeland Islands of Schouwen

Duiveland and Noord-Beveland.

It is essentially a long collection of very large valves that can be closed against storm surges. The Oosterschelde barrier is part of the Delta Works series of dams and storm surge barriers designed to protect the Netherlands from flooding caused by the North Sea. The barrier was built to protect the Zeeland region from the sea after the North Sea Flood in 1953. The T2 turbines are fitted with bi-directional rotor blades, and the turbines generate electricity by harnessing energy from the ebb and flow of the North Sea through the storm surge barrier. The turbines consist of a permanent magnet direct drive generator and patented bi-directional reversible rotor blades design, developed, manufactured and installed in close cooperation with major industry partners. The 50 metre long by 20 meter wide tidal power plant was placed on a floating pontoon designed and built by Netherlands-based Huisman, a company that

manufactures heavy equipment for offshore applications. The array was combined with lifters and installed between pillars in place under the Oosterschelde barrier. Strukton has also been actively involved in the project planning from the outset, and will be responsible for project management during installation. Another partner in the installation project is Mammoet, while Zeeland companies Istimewa Elektrotechniek, Van der Straaten and Hillebrand also play an important role in terms of the electro-technical installation and steel structures. Now that the Tocardo T2 installation is complete, the location is a combination of water defences and hydroelectric power. "This project marks an important step in the development of tidal energy. Tidal technology is innovative and could grow into a significant Dutch export product. The export expectation of tidal energy is more than 200 GW," said Tocardo's Chief Executive Officer Hans van Breugel. "With our turbines in the Eastern Scheldt storm surge barrier, we can now show the world what tidal energy is all about: providing a clean and reliable source of energy that could fulfil 10-20% of the world's electricity needs." The province of Zeeland provided a significant financial contribution to the project. Provincial Rep. Ben de Reu said, "Zeeland is surrounded by water. We are the only province with land in the sea, which is why tidal energy is such a good match for us." This project also received funding from the European Regional Development Fund, the Dutch government and the province of Zeeland

Source: hydroworld

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On The SS Robin

October 8, 2015

by the gentle author

Sitting on a pontoon before the Millennium Mills in Royal Victoria Dock, with her proud crimson breast evoking the bird that is her namesake, SS Robin is the oldest complete steam coaster in the world. Constructed just a few miles away by Mackenzie, MacAlpine & Co at Orchard Yard, Bow, in 1890 alongside her sister ship SS Rook, she was fitted out in East India Dock and equipped with an engine in Dundee. There were once fifteen hundred of these vessels chugging up and down the coastline of the British Isles, competing with the railway to deliver bulk cargoes such as grain, coal, iron ore and china clay – but today only SS Robin survives to tell the story of this lost maritime endeavour.

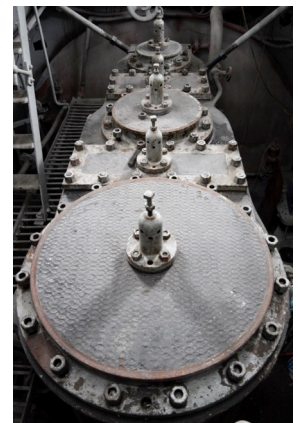


Beneath an occluded sky with rain blowing in the wind, I visited SS Robin yesterday within the shadow of Spiler's derelict Millennium Mills, like some great cliff looming overhead. Repair to the hull of the steam coaster reveals the damage that time has wrought, yet lines of sturdy nineteenth century rivets, once heated and thrown by children, remain visible alongside modern repairs. Of squat design and robust workmanship, these ships were only designed to withstand ten years of use, and SS Robin was sold off to a Spanish owner in 1900 but continued to work the Atlantic coastal route from Bilbao for a further seventy-four years, under the guise of 'Maria.'

"She is as significant a vessel as Cutty Sark," Matt Friday, who works for the trust set up to care for SS Robin, assured me, "She is just twenty years younger and the last of her class." SS Robin was due to be broken up in September 1974, but instead, once her final cargo was unloaded in Bilbao in May of that year, she was purchased by the Maritime Trust and steamed back up the English Channel and the Thames to London in June, where she was moored at St Katharine Dock.

In spite of major restoration, SS Robin fell into neglect and, by 1991, had been moved down river to East India Dock. Sold for the sum of just one pound, she was used as a floating gallery for several years until, as this century dawned, it became clear more restoration work was required and the old vessel was no longer seaworthy. 80% of her steelwork would need to be replaced to make her shipshape again, and so SS Robin was transferred permanently to a pontoon which permits retention of the original fabric.

When I visited yesterday, a thick layer of asphalt was being removed from the deck – formerly installed as a waterproofing agent, it had become a medium for water to enter the structure. Walking around the





pontoon, the elegant sculptural form of the hull was magnificent to behold, while down below, the original cylinders and pistons of the triple expansion engine remain. In spite of its modest origin, this is a vessel of distinguished design and sitting in the vast emptiness of Royal Victoria Dock, once the largest working dock in the world, SS Robin – the last of the ‘dirty British coasters’ – provides the necessary catalyst to evoke the history and meaning of this extraordinary place.

Source: *Spitalfields Life* 8 October 2015

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Cargoes

Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir,
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
With a cargo of ivory,
And apes and peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

Stately Spanish galleon coming from the Isthmus,
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-green shores,
With a cargo of diamonds,
Emeralds, amethysts,
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores.

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke stack,
Butting through the Channel in the mad March days,
With a cargo of Tyne coal,
Road-rails, pig-lead,
Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

John Masfield

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Speaking the language

AMERICAN humorist Robert Benchley once said that examining words was one of the easiest methods of acquiring insanity. He wrote, "Just examine a word you have written, and then call up Dr Jessup and tell him to come and get you. Tell him to wear just what he has on."

One wonders what Benchley would have made of the maritime lexicon, which in truth hasn't changed very much in the 62 years since his death. Take a word like 'demurrage', for instance. Please. Can there really be such a word? And don't mention 'deadfreight', which even the American spell-checker doesn't recognise.

Some people, especially all of them, believe that the maritime lexicon was written and developed by lawyers, so that they could decide what it meant, when it suited them. This is nonsense. Lawyers are not that clever. The maritime language has developed through the thoughts and exigencies of generations of seafarers, and any attempt to interfere with it is not likely to succeed.

Some years ago, somebody invented a language called 'Seaspeak', but its failure to catch on may lie in the pursuit of too much simplification. For example, Clause 4 of the Asbatankvoy charter, which reads, "The Charterer shall name the loading port or ports at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the Vessel's readiness to sail from the last previous port of discharge, or from bunkering port for the voyage, or upon signing this Charter if the Vessel has already sailed," is rendered in Seaspeak simply as, 'Whatever'.

This is not to say that Seaspeak is dead. But it is, at best, resting. Shipping, like other industries, should stick to its knitting. It has its own language, and its own lawyers and arbitrators to sort out what it means, if anything. Similarly, people should stick to their own industries.

It was always a bad idea for P&I clubs to insure architects, and an even worse idea for anybody to allow European dentists to become shipowners. At the height of the latter craze, a root canal specialist in Odense, boasting to a charterer sitting in his surgery that he was part-owner of a fleet of twenty tankers, was mortified to be told, "That's a lot of bottoms."

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NTSB Provides New Details from El Faro Investigation

October 20, 2015 by Mike Schuler



The National Transportation Safety Board on Tuesday issued an update on its continuing investigation into the sinking of the *El Faro* cargo ship in the Atlantic Ocean near the Bahamas.

Below is the factual information that has been developed by the NTSB thus far:

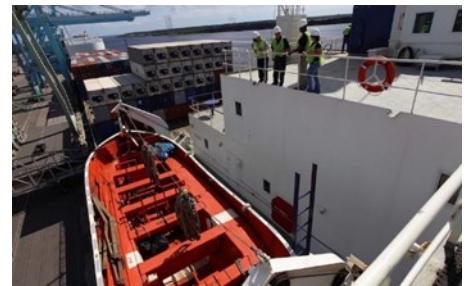
Safety and Maintenance

On February 13, 2015, El Faro successfully completed the American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) class and statutory surveys, meeting all rules and regulations as applicable. All deficiencies identified were rectified prior to completion of the surveys. None of the deficiencies were associated with El Faro's main propulsion systems.

The annual inspection of El Faro, required by the United States Coast Guard (USCG), was completed by qualified USCG inspectors in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on March 6, 2015.

In June 2015, a qualified ABS surveyor examined and tested the main, auxiliary and emergency systems as part of the continuous machinery survey program and found them to be satisfactory.

TOTE Services, the vessel's managers, told investigators that El Faro was scheduled to be removed from the route between Jacksonville and San Juan and redeployed to the U.S. West Coast where it would operate between Washington State and Alaska. In August, in order to prepare for this operational change, TOTE began to make modifications to the vessel while underway under the supervision of an additional chief engineer. Work on these modifications was performed by welders and machinists over many voyages, including during the accident voyage.



NTSB investigators inspect an open-top lifeboat onboard El Faro's sister ship, El Yunque, while docked at Jacksonville.
Photo: NTSB

Steam Propulsion

On September 11, 2015, TOTE received permission from the Coast Guard to shut down one of the ship's two boilers so that it could be inspected by an independent boiler service company during a voyage between San Juan and Jacksonville. As a result of the inspection, the boiler service company recommended service to both boilers during an upcoming drydock period that had already been scheduled for November 6, 2015. The boiler was returned to service following the inspection.

Safety Drills and Lifeboats

Interviews of relief crew and company management indicated that onboard safety drills were consistently conducted on a weekly basis. These included lifeboat drills for all crewmembers to ensure that all on board understood their responsibilities in an emergency.

Investigators interviewed two pilots that had guided El Faro in and out of the Port of Jacksonville; both reported that the vessel handled similarly to other vessels of its size and type.

The Ill-Fated Voyage

The vessel's terminal manager reported that El Faro met stability criteria when it left Jacksonville.

The company's procedures called for some cargo on the ship to be "double lashed" regardless of the weather expected to be encountered during the voyage. The vessel stevedores reported that prior to El Faro's departure on the accident voyage, the cargo was secured in accordance with those procedures.

Before El Faro departed Jacksonville, Tropical Storm Joaquin was predicted to become a hurricane and a marine hurricane warning was issued by the National Hurricane Center's Advisory #8 at 5:00 pm EDT on Sept. 29.

At about 8:15 pm EDT on Sept. 29, El Faro departed Jacksonville, Fla., for San Juan, Puerto Rico.

At 1:12 pm EDT on Sept. 30, the captain emailed a company safety official that he intended to take a route south of the predicted path of the hurricane and would pass about 65 miles from its center.

In an advisory issued at 2:00 am EDT on Oct. 1, the National Hurricane Center predicted seas of 30 feet with sustained winds of 64 knots (74 mph), increasing to 105 knots (121 mph) as the El Faro approached the wall of the eye of the hurricane.

The Last Communication

In a recorded satellite phone call to the company's emergency call center at 7:00 am EDT, the captain told the call center operator that he had a marine emergency. He reported that there was a hull breach, a scuttle had blown open, and that there was water in hold number 3. He also said that the ship had lost its main propulsion unit and the engineers could not get it going. The operator then connected the captain with the Designated Person Ashore (DPA). The DPA told investigators that the captain had communicated similar information to him that was provided to the call center operator, and also that the captain had estimated the height of the seas that El Faro was encountering to be 10 to 12 feet.

The USCG received electronic distress alerts from three separate sources on El Faro: the Ship's Security Alert System (SSAS), the Inmarsat-C Alert, and the Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB).

According to electronic alert system data sent by the vessel at 7:17 am EDT on Oct. 1, its last reported position was about 20 miles from the edge of the eye of the hurricane.

The USCG did not have direct voice communications with El Faro, only electronic distress alerts.

The NTSB Investigation and Search for Wreckage

The NTSB investigators that traveled to Florida have returned to continue work on the investigation from NTSB headquarters in Washington.

The NTSB contracted with the U.S. Navy to locate the ship, document the wreckage on the sea floor and recover the voyage data recorder.

The USNS Apache, a fleet ocean tug, was outfitted with specialized equipment for this mission, and departed Little Creek, Virginia, at about 4:30 pm EDT on October 19. In addition to the Navy crew, the NTSB investigator-in-Charge, Tom Roth-Roffy, is on Apache with representatives from the USCG, TOTE and ABS, all parties to the NTSB investigation.

The Apache is estimated to arrive at the last known position of El Faro on Saturday, October 24, to begin the search for the ship and to recover the voyage data recorder. Once the search operation begins, it is expected to take at least two weeks.

The length of the operation will depend on the circumstances encountered.

Updates on the search for the vessel and the accident investigation will be issued as circumstances warrant.

Source: gCaptain

—oo0000oo—

Don't wait

Branch AGM

27 January 2016 at 12:00

Largs Pier Hotel, Largs Bay

Nominate!

**THE COMPANY OF MASTER MARINERS OF AUSTRALIA LIMITED
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH**

ELECTION OF OFFICERS - 2016

The Branch Annual General Meeting will be held at 1200 on Wednesday, 27 January, 2016, at the Largs Pier Hotel, Largs Bay.

As usual, all positions on the Branch Court will be declared vacant, and nominations for the various positions are eagerly sought. The current Officers have served for many years, and the Court needs new blood and fresh vision. In particular, nominations for the positions of Deputy Branch Master and Deputy Branch Secretary would be most welcome. The positions on the Court are as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Branch Master | Deputy Branch Master |
| Branch Treasurer | Branch Mariner Warden |
| Branch Editor | Branch Sea-going Warden |
| Branch Secretary | Branch Sea-going Warden |
| Deputy Branch Secretary | |

It is not necessary to wait until you are invited to stand; volunteers will be very welcome.

Ian Dickson.
Branch Secretary.

.....

NOMINATION FORM FOR BRANCH COURT, 2016.

I, (Name in full, in blockletters)

Roll No. Signature:

Hereby nominate (block letters)

For the position of

Seconded by (block letters)

Roll No.Signature:

ACCEPTANCE

I, (block letters) Roll No.

accept the nomination for the position of

Signature: Date: