



The Porthole

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

PO Box 1, PORT ADELAIDE, SA 5015

Branch Patron: His Excellency the Honorable Hieu Van Le AC



Good Day to all for the first time this year;

Let me kick off by wishing one and all a happy New Year, while fervently hoping it is an improvement on 2020. I, for one, was getting extremely bored with being part of what was being called an "historically significant year" and though our descendants may refer to it as such, to me it was a royal pain in the nether regions....

Since my last communication we have had a Federal Court Meeting by telephone conference call, which was as good as these things can be, and being conducted a couple of days before Christmas, was of relatively brief duration. The main points covered were, firstly, the electronic edition of the 'Master Mariner', which was nearing the end of its gestation and would be ready in computer mode by the end of January, despite the lack of input from our members, to be put into print if well enough received.

Secondly, in response to the suggestion of this Branch at the Federal Court meeting on 18/09/2020, that, due to the curtailing of some meetings and most activities in 2020 because of the COVID, there could be a discount in the Federal Levy, and the Federal Treasurer and Federal Secretary have decided upon a reduction in the capitation levy to \$50 per head, for next financial year only. SA will pass this reduction on to members with the hope that normal service will be resumed as soon as possible.

Thirdly, State Branches have been requested to forward an update of all our Branch Court positions to the Web Master.

Fourthly, we were informed that the Federal Registrar's wife was on the mend.

All the State Branches were understandably quiet this year, though the WA branch reported that they were going to sponsor a cadet to the tune of \$10,000. Good on them!

As you know, this coming Branch meeting is to be followed by our Branch AGM. An important part of the agenda, particularly in this year of inactivity, is voting in the new Branch Court. I would love to see some enthusiastic new blood clamouring to fill positions on the Court, but we all know that that isn't going to happen. However, we are badly in need of a Secretary for the branch at the very least, so if anybody can afford a couple of spare hours a month, would they please consider nominating for the position?

Meanwhile, summer is upon us and the bushfire season is already making itself felt, so please be alert and stay safe. I'm looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Largs Pier Hotel on Wednesday 27th Jan at 1200, for the Branch meeting and the AGM. Until then,

Happy Sailing

Bob W (SABM)

**COVID-19 restrictions permitting, the next Branch meeting will be held
at The Largs Pier Hotel. 198 The Esplanade, Largs Bay,
on Wednesday, 27th January 2021, at 1145 for 1200.**

**Please confirm your attendance at the lunch or register your apology
before 1200 on Monday, 25th January 2021
with Bob Westley (0427 644 947)
or Ian Dickson (0418 807 788)**

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Not getting over it

By Michael Grey

One curious phenomenon of our present pandemic is the frequently expressed hope and desire of well-meaning and invariably self-appointed “influencers”, that when the emergency is over, we should not return to our old ways of doing things, but move on to a better world. This usually introduces a lecture on the flaws in our present way of life and the improvements that can be ours by embracing environmentalism and WFH, preferring seeds and pulses and electric cars to red meat, while eschewing long-haul aviation.

History tends to inform us that such behaviour often may be found amid a catastrophe; in the past usually involving extreme forms of religion - environmentalism might well be the modern equivalent in a secular age. Such records also remind us that once the memory of the terror has receded, the old ways re-establish themselves. People, it might be said, “get over it”.

But in our maritime world, we do not need to channel our inner Thunberg to realise that the past year has indeed shown us some things that really could be done better in the post-Covid future. The undoubted inadequacies of seafarers’ lives, for a start, could be subject to some serious study, with a view to improvement, as their treatment since the Pandemic struck has been little short of disgraceful. They, and the shipping industry in which they serve, have kept the global supply chain operating. Thanks have been taken completely for granted, denied shore leave, treated like pariahs by authorities and expected to operate their ships ad infinitum. The struggle, in the future, will be to persuade the clever people we need to operate sophisticated ships to remain in the business, or indeed to become recruits to a calling where their predecessors have been so abused. It might be suggested that the “old ways” will not be sufficient.

Nothing new, you might suggest, about merchant seafarers being taken for granted or even badly treated. Here’s a thought. “The first duty of a government is to protect the lives of its subjects, and to every other class of workmen, excepting sailors, this duty is discharged”. That was from a letter to The Times in December 1869 by the Newcastle ship-owner James Hall, which may be found quoted in Richard Woodman’s History of the British Merchant Navy Vol. 3. Hall was writing about the appalling loss of life in the seafaring workforce in old, overloaded ships and beginning a long process of reform that would culminate in the Load Line Rules and a more diligent maritime regulator, at least in the UK.

What might be done to improve the seafarer’s lot as the 21st century grinds its way back to some sort of normality? If we want bright people to embrace a seafaring career, then a career it ought to be, not an industry that depends for the most part upon casual labour, with little job security. There are good employers who train, maintain and retain their staff. Why must they compete with operators whose *modus operandi* is really little different to that of the late 19th century?

There is a major piece of work to be done on the sheer nonsense of “minimum safe manning”, a scam in which flag states, with an eye on an income, seek a competitive advantage offering a cascade to the very lowest manning they think they can get away with. The figure – I have just been looking at a 13 person “safe” headcount for a 25,000dwt non-UMS bulker, offered by an ambitious Caribbean state to a thrusting owner – which is ridiculous from start to finish. It is all very well saying that the “Safe” manning figure demanded by the flag will be invariably exceeded. It probably will be, but the manning level that counts should surely be one that takes into account the workload of the ship, and if you believe the recent study by the World Maritime University on “adjusted” hours of rest and work, it never is.

And it is not good enough to cite the supposedly long leaves that allegedly compensate for the ridiculous hours of work. We are talking here about health and sanity, along with the provision of “decent” work. If flag states are to be permitted to regulate numbers, (and we might start by questioning this) “safety” can surely be automatically assumed in a crewing level that takes into account the realistic operation of the ship.

If we are to retain and recruit, we must start thinking about what people ashore like to call the work-life balance, and getting some fun and pleasure into seafaring, something that has been eroded utterly, not just during the pandemic but in the years leading up to this current disaster. We won’t “just get over it”, and action is long overdue.

Michael Grey is former editor of Lloyd’s List.

Source: *Maritime Advocate* 769

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Japan promotes ammonia-fuelled shipping



Sam Chambers December 7, 2020

Japan Inc, hitherto one of the greatest proponents of a hydrogen-powered society, has opened the door to far greater use of ammonia.



NYK Line

The Japanese government said today it will introduce ammonia into the fuel mix for thermal power generation, as well as for shipping, from the late 2020s as part of its efforts to achieve carbon neutrality in 2050.

“Ammonia is expected to increase its importance because it does not emit CO₂ when it is burned,” Ryo Minami, director-general of oil, gas and mineral resources at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, told the second fuel ammonia council meeting.

“Ammonia is expected to be introduced as fuels on a commercial basis for thermal power generation and shipping in the late 2020s, and it is expected to be used for a significant amount by around 2030,” Minami said.

Japan will start test burning 20% of ammonia at a coal-fired power plant in central Japan next year as part of a feasibility study run by state-owned

New Energy and the Industrial Technology Development Organization.

In August this year, *Splash* reported Nippon Yusen Kaisha (NYK) was teaming with compatriot yard Japan Marine United and local class society Nippon Kaiji Kyokai (ClassNK) to try and commercialise the use of an ammonia-fuelled ammonia gas carrier as well as an ammonia floating storage and regasification barge.

Japan and neighbour South Korea, who import nearly all their primary energy needs from the Middle East, have released national hydrogen strategies of late. Both nations have repeatedly stressed the significance of hydrogen in addressing energy security concerns. Ammonia is made up of three parts hydrogen to one part nitrogen.

In related news, shipping major Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha (K Line) has joined bluechips such as Toyota and Toshiba in signing up to the Japan Hydrogen Association (JH2A), a new organisation that promotes global collaboration and the formation of a hydrogen supply chain in the field. K Line is involved in a high profile first for shipping, the construction and operation of a liquefied hydrogen carrier, which aims to take the fuel from Australia to Japan.

In aviation, Airbus, the world's largest airplane manufacturer, has given itself five years to develop a commercially viable hydrogen aircraft.

Source: *Splash247 201207*

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26TH NOVEMBER 2020

World-leading Hydrogen Project Launched in SA

This month saw the launch of a world-leading \$240 million hydrogen project in South Australia which would create the largest green ammonia plant in the world. This project,



which will be further supported by a \$37 million upgrade to the Port Bonython jetty, marks a big step forward in South Australia's ambition to create a green hydrogen export industry.

The initial stage of the \$240 million H₂U Eyre Peninsula Gateway Hydrogen Project, which is targeting completion in late 2022, will see the installation of a 75MW electrolyser near Whyalla, capable of producing enough hydrogen to create 40,000 tonnes of

ammonia each year.

Further, Premier Steven Marshall noted that upgrading the jetty will aid in unlocking significant investment and export opportunities for South Australia, with hydrogen driving renewed interest in Port Bonython. “South Australia's ambition to create, use and export green hydrogen is getting global attention, and has great potential to create jobs and sustain long-term investment,” he said.

H₂U CEO Dr. Attilio Pigneri notes that this project will help drive the development of the emerging markets for green hydrogen and green ammonia. He also stated that the project offers the opportunity to export South Australia's abundant solar and wind resources to support deep decarbonisation in the global energy, industrial and shipping sectors.

The projects are a part of the larger goal to hit net-100% renewable energy generation by the year 2030.

Source: *SAFC Freight Log November 2020*

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Memories of Dock Street (The Pool)

All of us who sailed out of this pool will remember the area well

The area was Jack the Ripper's old stomping ground. The area at night was poorly lit with a train viaduct crossing the street at Leman Street. This was like walking under tunnels when walking up to the Commercial Road. At the tunnels was an old horse trough sitting outside a Victorian toilet block near an area known as "Shark Island". Someone had scribbled on the trough "For horses and drunken seamen only".

The Red Ensign Club was the Seaman's Mission, just along the road from the pool. Once when I was looking for a ship, I could not get a berth at the mission, so I went to the Somali café at the viaduct tunnel near Shark Island. Below this café was a night-club. It reminded me of the bar in the Star Wars films where all the aliens were drinking and sizing each other up.

The Somali café did rooms and was handy for the pool, I went in and was given a room.

Room 3 or floor 3, or was it bed 3 floor 2, I have no idea what I was told but the owner pointed upstairs, for breakfast he said bring down your bedding. I went up two sets of stairs and saw room 3, I carried on up to floor 3. I opened the door to room 3, there were five beds squashed in tight with three beds occupied. I went back down to room 3 and opened the door. It had a single bed, the room was all pink and it was stinking of perfume. I thought it had to be better than a room with five blokes in. I turned in, then at 01.30 there was a right ruckus outside the café, obviously a punch up. Then someone came bursting into my room and started shouting, I had no idea what they were saying, and one voice was a woman's. I just acted like I was asleep and ignored the abuse. Next morning, I carried the bedding down as requested, the owner threw a wobbly, and said I was in his daughter's room. I handed him the bedding and left without breakfast. The club and café were renowned for the characters who frequented them,

That weekend I went home and returned on the Monday. The Somali café was closed, a notice on the window said "Gone to a funeral". I thought nothing of it. I went to the pool to check out what ships were on the board and was told that the owner of the café had been shot dead at the weekend!

The pubs in and around the pool were rough; the Brown Bear, Heart of Oak and the Carlisle. The Brown Bear was burned down after a couple of Irish lads had a set to. On the Commercial Road there was the Black Boy frequented by the Kray twins and where Jack the hat McVity was shot. The Whitechapel was a good bar frequented by local hospital medical staff.

One night during winter, I was staying at the Red Ensign Club and a motor bike came into Dock Street revving its engine. It woke everyone up on that side of the mission, and, although requested not to do it, the bike's owner continued to do so on many occasions. Then one night, in the early hours of the morning, there was a huge explosion and some of the windows of the mission were blown in. Someone had blown up the motor bike. After that it was peaceful. We had an idea who had done it: one of the lads from the mission.

Another night, I was staying at the Red Ensign Club, it was January and pouring with rain. It was 23.00 when I decided to go to Tubby Isaac's jellied eel stall on the Commercial Road. The closer I got to Tubby's the more I could see half a dozen local lads and rough sleepers huddled up together under the stall flap, keeping out of the rain. The flap acted as a roof when up and closed off the stall when down. I was standing back from the stall, the rain was heavy and the flap was quite low. I could not get under the flap because the locals were refusing to move. I placed my order, but when Tubby tried to hand it to me over the heads of those hiding under the flap, I had to duck down and stretch over the lads. Just as I got my hands on my Burger and tea, my head touched the stall roof. I saw a bright flash, there was a loud bang and both my legs came up under my chin, my elbows went down colliding with my knees and scalding hot tea went over the lads forcing them to break cover. I never saw the burger again.

The shock threw me backwards and I fell on the pavement. I jumped up, there was steam coming off my head. Tubby lost the plot as he lost power. He yelled at me, but, as I looked round for his power cables, I discovered that they were connected to a lamp post, and all the other street lights were out. When he knew I had found out, Tubby became very quiet. Tubby Isaac was known all over the world for his jellied eels, I only remembered him for electrocuting me.

As the years went on, we did more flying out to join ships; in fact, we were getting more flying time than sea time! We were nicknamed the Dock Street Airborne Division. The Shipping Federation was good; you went in and looked at the board to see what ships were looking for, picked your ship, took a medical and away you went. From 1965 to 1990 we were still signing two year articles. Seamen's missions were always in upmarket areas!! Looking back though I wouldn't have changed it. Shark Island would have seen some sights over the years. I remember seeing someone sleeping in the trough with a blanket over his head with an empty bottle of Four Bells rum lying nearby.

Happy days

Ken Barrett

Source: *Full Ahead Winter 2020*

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MOL comes clean on how this year's most high profile shipping accident occurred

Sam Chambers December 18, 2020

Japanese shipping major Mitsui OSK Lines (MOL) today came clean on what most in the industry already knew – the reason for this year's most high-profile shipping casualty. Japan's largest shipping line also warned in the unveiling of new safety measures that from now on it would become far more involved in the selection of all senior crew on ships it charters.



Mobilisation Nationale Wakashio

MOL was the charterer of the *Wakashio* newcastlemax, a 300 m long giant of the seas, owned by Nagashiki Shipping and crew managed by Anglo-Eastern. En route to Brazil from Asia, the ship diverted from its course, running aground on pristine coral reefs just off southern Mauritius on July 25. The bulk carrier would go on to spill around 1,000 tonnes of bunker fuel, creating the worst ecological disaster the Indian Ocean republic had experienced. The *Wakashio* then split in two with the front three quarters towed 30 km from the coastline for scuttling and salvage operations to remove the stern ongoing.

In announcing measures to prevent another reoccurrence of a *Wakashio* style disaster today, MOL gave the reason the ship had changed its passage plan from leaving a 22 nautical mile gap between it and the island of Mauritius to just two nautical miles. The reason cited, according to a release, was “to enter an area within the communication range of mobile phones”. Moreover, MOL revealed the crew were using a nautical chart without sufficient scale to confirm the accurate distance from the coast and water depth. In addition, MOL said a crewmember neglected appropriate watch-keeping, both visually and by radar.

MOL's detailing of how the accident happened dovetails with what accident investigators for the ship's flag, Panama, have revealed thus far.

In September Panamanian authorities gave an update into their ongoing *Wakashio* accident investigation, having interviewed most of the crew.

The registry has been able to ascertain that the *Wakashio*'s crew, in the afternoon of July 25, celebrated the birthday of one of the crewmembers.

Furthermore, the ship deviated from its approved navigation plan. The crew have told investigators that the ship came closer to the Mauritian coastline as the captain – now in jail with the first officer – sought a telephone and internet signal in order for the crew to communicate with their families.

“With an appropriate assessment safeguard and with good seamanship practices, that should have generated an analysis which would have allowed [the watch keeper] to carry out the pertinent actions to correct this situation” the Panama Maritime Authority noted in an update.

Like MOL, the Panamanian investigators believe the ship did not have the right chart onboard. Moreover, the wrong chart was used and with the wrong scale as well.

“The lack of supervision and monitoring of the navigation equipment, the distraction generated by the officer of watch, who lost the course of navigation completely, and the excess of confidence during the watch, could be some of the reasons that caused the ship running aground in the beaches of Mauritius” the Panama Maritime Authority stated.

The Panama Maritime Authority had earlier suggested the ship ran into difficulty because of bad weather, although data providers at the time showed there was no inclement weather around southern Mauritius when the bulk carrier entered local waters.

MOL, which has already spent considerable sums helping in the clean-up and rehabilitation of communities affected by the spill, said today it had earmarked a further Y500m (\$4.82m) in measures to prevent another accident like the *Wakashio*.

Cases of ships heading near shorelines to access wifi are common, especially this year when crew have been stuck at sea for many more months than their contracts stipulate thanks to Covid-19 travel restrictions. As 2020 ends, there are still far too few ships equipped with free wifi for all aboard.

Writing his annual review in his inimitable, wry style yesterday, *Splash* head columnist, Andrew Craig-Bennett, noted: “Another thing that nobody talks about is the near universal practice of ships taking every opportunity to pass within cellphone range of any coast that has a mobile phone system, i.e. anywhere. Wonder why people do that?”

While the *Wakashio* was this year's most high profile casualty there were plenty of other ship write-offs making headlines such as the *Stellar Banner*, a VLOC, which grounded off Brazil in February and was eventually scuttled in June. The most deadly shipping casualty of the year was the *Gulf Livestock 1*, a converted livestock carrier that went down off southern Japan in a typhoon in September with the loss of 41 lives and more than 5,800 cattle.

Plastics at sea tracking initiative launches

Sam Chambers December 7, 2020

Shipping leaders have united in their support of pollution mapping initiative Eyesea which was officially launched today.



Robert Kaufmann/FEMA

Eyesea, a not-for-profit organisation, uses technology and the support of seafarers, shipowners, managers and maritime professionals to collect and process oceanic pollution data.

The data is used to build detailed maps and charts available free of charge to governments, clean-up groups, researchers, local authorities and a range of other stakeholders, enabling them to take targeted clean-up action and make evidence-based policy decisions.

“With the full support of the shipping community we believe Eyesea is a game-changer for global maritime pollution,” said Eyesea founder, Graeme Somerville-Ryan.

Eyesea is a unique opportunity for the shipping industry to be the leader in environmental management and to work with members of the public for the good of the ocean

“Everyone from shipping involved in this project wants to tackle marine pollution in a more systematic and qualitative way than is currently possible. That was our start point. The solution we settled on was to create the first-ever global database of oceanic pollution. By identifying and tracking patterns of pollution over time, stakeholders will also be able to focus resources and policies to improve prevention,” said Somerville-Ryan.

Approximately 60 commercial ships and a number of superyachts are currently preparing for sea trials of the beta version of the Eyesea app.

The Eyesea reporting tool allows seafarers to collect and submit data on marine pollution by simply taking a photo and categorising the pollution type. Images are then automatically GPS-tagged, anonymised, and vetted before being incorporated into a comprehensive database of pollution to enable Eyesea to create detailed oceanic maps and charts.

“When we looked into the problem of blue water and coastal marine pollution, we found there was very little global data on the problem,” said Somerville-Ryan. “There were many assumptions based on small-scale data samples and unicorn-like rumours, but there was very little large scale data backed up by georeferenced points of interest. It occurred to us that solving the pollution problem was going to be impossible if we didn’t know accurately what was going on and where. Eyesea’s data and maps will empower environmental leaders with actionable, empirical evidence.”

Ignace Van Meenen, executive board member at MPC Capital and Eyesea’s inaugural chairman, said: “As an industry, we have so much good to offer when it comes to environmental protection, but up until now, there have been few obvious shipping-backed initiatives to support. Eyesea is a unique opportunity for the shipping industry to be the leader in environmental management and to work with members of the public for the good of the ocean. We’ve not seen anything quite like this before.”

For more information, and how to participate in the project, check out www.eyesea.org.

Source: *Splash247 201207*

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Maersk Extends Partnership to Help Cleanup Plastic Pollution at Sea

Mike Schuler January 14, 2021

Founded in 2013, The Ocean Cleanup’s mission is to develop and advance technologies to cleanup plastic pollution at sea and



Ocean Cleanup Project's System 001 during sea trials off the coast of California with the *Maersk Launcher*.

Photo: Ocean Cleanup Project

also stop the inflow via rivers. Over the last several years the company has been developing a large-scale system that essentially concentrates floating plastic for removal. The company then uses the plastic to create products that help raise funds for its efforts. It now employs a team of 95 engineers and researchers.

In 2018, Maersk Supply Service signed on to help support the first deployment of the system the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, the world’s largest accumulation zone of ocean plastics, some 1,200 miles off the coast of California. Later that year the *AHTS Maersk Launcher* towed the system from San Francisco. Although that first deployment revealed some issues with the system, engineers have worked to refine the system and also introduced “Interceptors”, which can be stationed at the mouths of rivers to prevent plastic pollution from entering the sea.

The company continues to aim for the removal of 90% of ocean plastic by 2040.

“As a responsible maritime operator, we are committed to ensuring that the oceans can remain a healthy environment for generations to come,” said Mette Refshauge, VP of Corporate Communications & Sustainability at Maersk. “We are therefore very pleased to not just prolong but broaden the partnership agreement initiated back in 2018.”

Under the new agreement, Maersk will not only support with vessel operations and offshore project management, but also logistics end-to-end handling services, ranging from worldwide shipment from different locations to airfreight, container & special transport, customs clearance and warehouse and storage management.

“We will have a transport & supply chain manager fully embedded in The Ocean Cleanup’s office in Rotterdam. That program manager will serve as the single channel for them to engage with the full range of Maersk’s supply chain and transport services globally and will help The Ocean Cleanup to develop their own supply chain management capacity over time,” adds Mette.

As part of the partnership agreement, Maersk will also assist in deploying scientific sensor technology aboard Maersk’s own fleet to map plastic floating in the oceans in order to provide a better understanding of the issue.

“What better way to map the oceans than to harness one of the world’s largest fleets?” said Robin Townley, Head of Special Project Logistics at Maersk.

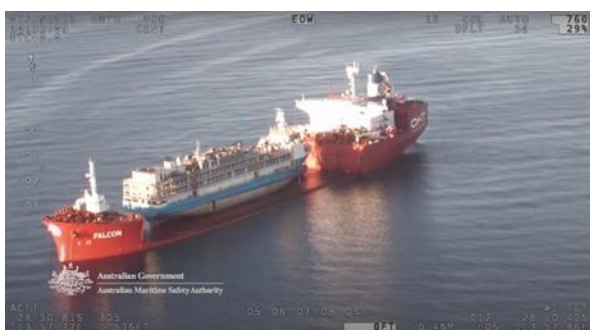
Source: gCaptain 210115

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Australia has Unseaworthy Livestock Carrier Hauled Away along with Two-Year Ban

Mike Schuler January 11, 2021

Maritime authorities in Australia have banned the livestock carrier *Barkly Pearl* from its waters for two years after the ship was discovered in Australian waters with a hole in its hull.



The *Barkly Pearl* is loaded on board the MV Falcon, January 7, 2021. Photo: AMSA

The Marshall Islands-registered vessel was initially spotted on November 3, 2020, traveling through Australia’s northern waters with a noticeable list. No livestock were on board at the time.

After determining that the vessel posed a potential threat of pollution and safety to seafarers, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) issued an intervention order instructing the vessel to the nearest safe harbor at Geraldton, where it arrived safely.

For the past two months, AMSA ship inspectors worked with the vessel owners and operators to develop an appropriate repair solution, leading to the *Barkly Pearl* being loaded onto the semi-submersible heavy lift ship MV *Falcon* to haul the vessel out of Australian waters. The *Barkly*

Pearl was subsequently loaded on January 7.

Before departing, however, the *Barkly Pearl* was issued with a refusal of access direction notice under the Navigation Act 2012, effectively banning the vessel from entering or using Australia ports for 24 months.



Photo: AMSA

“This is a significant decision by AMSA. It’s the first time a vessel has been banned from Australian ports for this length of time and it will certainly affect the vessel’s commercial operations,” said AMSA’s General Manager Operations, Allan Schwartz.

“The owners and operators of the *Barkly Pearl* were negligent in their maintenance of the vessel, put the lives of the seafarers on board at risk and posed an immediate threat to Australia’s marine environment,”

Schwartz added.

The *Barkly Pearl* incident came only a few months after the sinking of the livestock carrier *Gulf Livestock 1* during a typhoon off the coast of Japan in early September 2020. There were only 2 survivors, while 41 crew members and nearly 6,000 cattle lost their lives in the accident. The incident prompted authorities in New Zealand to crack down on livestock carrier shipping, which included suspending live exports as shipping companies implemented new safety measures and pending a review of the trade.

Source: gCaptain 2113

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Requiem for British Airways' iconic "Queen of the Skies"

Most of us will have flown on Boeing 747s, an aircraft that been with us since 1969 and was partially responsible for the demise of the passenger liner. This was the inevitable price of progress and long-haul overseas holidays suddenly became affordable. The world had a plane that could carry upwards of 500 passengers, almost half-way around the globe, non-stop, in less than 12 hours. Who among us has not looked on in awe as we wait in passenger lounges to board these megaliths of the air? How many of us even, after seeing the enormous Rolls Royce RB211 engines, wondered how such a giant could ever get off the ground?



If you are an aviation buff (and shipping buff) like me, you may well have been saddened to hear that, due to impact of Covid on the airline industry, British Airways and almost all other airlines, has retired their 747 fleet, with immediate effect – almost four years earlier than planned. In the past, almost all civil aircraft were flown to desert

boneyards in the USA. There they were stripped of all reusable items and cut up for scrap. Now we have our own boneyards, the largest of which is the former RAF base of Kemble in Gloucestershire – now known as Cotswold Airport. In late October, between lockdowns, I decided to make a visit and was not disappointed. Access onto the airfield is easy and, from the viewing area, around 17 of these giants can be seen. Most are ex BA but others, include one KLM, two Icelandic and one Corsair. Alongside the A433 main road, is a line around six BA 747s nose to tail.

The first Jumbos went into service with Pan Am in January 1970 and by June this year 1,556 had been built. Over the years a number of variants have been introduced, most with improved capacity, range and economy, latterly with a flight deck crew of only two – long gone are navigators and flight engineers. Even now a small order book, for 15 freighter versions, remains but, after that, the production line in Boeing's Everett plant in Washington State will close.

The iconic design with its hump towards the front of the aircraft was to allow a military cargo version with an uninhibited opening nose. For whatever reason this was never put into production and the even larger Lockheed Galaxy C5 took on this role. Two 747 are, however, used as Air Force One for the US President, whilst others are used for aerial command posts. Two were modified to "piggyback" the NASA Space Shuttle and some older aircraft are now being used as fire-fighting tankers. On the passenger versions the "hump" usually provides first class seating, a pilots rest area and sometimes even a bar.

For now, a few airlines continue to operate passenger versions including Lufthansa, Air India and Korean Air but inevitably their remaining lifespan will be short. Several others continue to operate them as freighters and with the 15 still on the production line, these will continue do so for many years to come. Sadly though, they have already become a rare site in UK skies. One of the Kemble 747s is earmarked for preservation and will be open to the public, whilst another will be preserved at Dunsfold airfield in Surrey.

The reason for their demise, even before Covid, is that most-newer long-haul aircraft have only two very powerful engines, making them much more economical and environmentally friendly. Add to that, the Covid impact means the overall numbers of airliners required for the foreseeable future is likely to be very much smaller. I even wonder if Business Class will largely disappear as the world has now become familiar with on-line meetings, negating much of the need for business travel.

So it is the beginning of a farewell to the Queen of the Skies at a time when, sadly like cars, most other airliners all look much the same. Dare I say this also applies to so many ships!

David Parsons, National Secretary, Merchant Navy Association

Source: *The Pulse* 201124

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Drunk Man Arrested After Coast Guard Locates Stolen Tiki Hut Bar in Florida Keys



Mike Schuler

January 14, 2021

A U.S. Coast Guard crew from Station Key West have recovered a floating tiki hut bar that was reported stolen in the Florida Keys

Unsurprisingly, the person aboard showed signs of intoxication and he was taken into custody by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Officials said the vessel was located near Hawk's Channel.

Local reports say the man was found slumped over the wheel of the charter tiki hut at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, giving you an indication of how rough his night was.

The boat is owned by Cruisin' Tiki Key West, which offers the boats up for charter for

BYOB booze cruises.

"A little tiki excitement today which was slightly more eventful than your typical tiki cruise," the company wrote in a Facebook post. Thankfully *The Squeaky Tiki* was returned with only minimal damage.

Source: *gCaptain* 210115

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