



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



Branch Master's Comments

Good Day to all my fellow members,

Here we are again, and it's time for the May edition already!

With COVID precautions still in place, SA seems to be weathering the disease storm well, even if they are a nuisance, and while our vaccination program seems to be stuck on "Slow Ahead", it will eventually lead to the goal of herd immunity, and more importantly, allow our international borders to open once more, though the Powers That Be are careful not to mention dates when this can be expected, except to say 'not until the middle of next year'. In this climate of slow and careful progress, we, as a Company, are keeping a weather eye on the general situation, and in the meantime bringing our Constitution up to date. On the subject of our Constitution, we will be voting on the adoption of the various amendments soon, and I will keep you informed as to the Federal Court's decisions as they make them.

Meanwhile, back on the farm, we are still waiting for some decent rain to break this very dry start to Winter - my dam levels, while not alarming, could certainly try harder. What grass there is is green and tasty, and the sheep are having to share with a mob of hungry 'Roos, which is amusing as they deliberately ignore each other.

Anyway, we would love to have you join us at the Largs Pier Hotel on Wednesday 26th May at 1200. Unfortunately, we will not be having an official after luncheon speaker for the duration of this pandemic.

Happy Sailing!

BobW (SABM)

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**COVID-19 restrictions permitting, the next Branch meeting will be held
at The Largs Pier Hotel. 198 The Esplanade, Largs Bay,
on Wednesday, 26th May 2021, at 1145 for 1200.**

**Please confirm your attendance at the lunch or register your apology
before 1200 on Monday, 24th May 2021
with Bob Westley (0427 644 947)
or Ian Dickson (0418 807 788)**



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.

Keeping pilots safe

By Michael Grey

There were some astonishing pictures in the press last week of a Royal Marine employing a jetpack to launch himself from an RIB to land on the deck of a ship with extraordinary precision. It is unimaginable that it would be a feasible to equip pilots with such a device, but it did cross my mind after reading a horrible catalogue of disgraceful seamanship and poor design exhibited in what ought to be the simple matter of keeping pilots safe as they board and leave ships.

These awful examples formed a sizeable section in the Annual Digest of the Confidential Human factors Incident Reporting Programme – CHIRP Maritime – which is well worth closer examination. If you are even slightly concerned with maritime safety, and the interface between people and ships, then this publication (www.chirpmaritime.org) ought to be compulsory reading.

It ought not to be rocket science (sorry, that jetpack intruded again) to be able to provide safe access to and from ships at sea, but sadly a combination of idiotic short cuts, sloppy seamanship and people designing ships without the foggiest notion of the need for safe pilot access, has combined to make this a problem which just will not go away. Pilots are being killed and injured and frightened half to death on their way to and from work, which is pretty disgraceful when you think about it.

There is no shortage of regulations governing the use of pilot ladders, but the CHIRP articles provide terrible examples of either ignorance of them, or their wilful neglect. There are instances of ladders being damaged, affixed to the ship in all sorts of daft and dangerous ways, and allowed to deteriorate to such a stage that they will simply give way. Perhaps worse still, there are examples of obviously illegal and non-compliant arrangements that have not been put in place by stupid crew but designed into a ship from new in such a fashion. There are, for instance, “impossible” arrangements on ships where there are bulges or belting, which, as well as making boarding jolly dangerous to the pilot, could damage a pilot boat if the ship rolls when the boat is alongside.

Curiously, some of the worst cases seem to involve big, high-sided vessels where a combination of pilot ladder and accommodation ladder must be used, and the pilot must safely switch from one to the other on the ascent or descent. CHIRP reports on some notably cack-handed arrangements involving trapdoors in the gangway platform, such as pilot ladders being suspended from the bottom of the accommodation ladder rather than the ship itself. Several seem to assume that the pilot will have the characteristics of an Olympic gymnast as he swarms up the side.

The pity is that for some years now, there has been a concerted campaign to inform owners and managers, ship operators and seafarers about the “rights and wrongs” of pilot boarding arrangements, with information, posters and advice. Pilots themselves have been encouraged to make it clear that they will not take ships that have unsafe arrangements, and good employers are backing them all the way. So, there are serious cost implications for the non-compliant if the pilot declines to take the ship.

One of the real problems is that the pilot meeting a ship at sea has to actually get on the ladder before it is realised that the arrangements are fundamentally unsafe. On one “near miss” reported, he had managed three steps only, before the rotten ropes gave way. One of the more gratuitous examples of poor seamanship illustrated by CHIRP was when the pilot reached the top of the ladder, to find it had been “secured” by two very heavy sailors on the side ropes. The master of the ship was outraged, but sadly, not at his dim sailors, but at the pilot, for complaining.

You might argue that those ports where there are helicopters employed to ship and land the pilots value their safety rather more, although there is no reason why properly secured and compliant traditional arrangements are not adequate. If you are looking for a rather special system you might consider what they do in the Gulf of Bothnia during winter, where the icebreakers, employed as rather posh pilot boats, use a “cherry picker” mounted on the bow to safely transport the pilot between ships. Jet packs are for the future.

Michael Grey is former editor of Lloyd's List.

Source: *Maritime Advocate* 777

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What's past is prologue

By Eiichiro Tokumoto

Translated by Mark Schreiber

Trading legend

The following article appeared in the British Chamber of Commerce Journal and is a translated excerpt of an article, written by Tokyo-based author and journalist Eiichiro Tokumoto, in Japan's magazine *Acumen*, and is an excerpt of an article originally published in the 12th and 19th November 2020 issues of the weekly news magazine, *Shukan Shincho*. It relates how, in 1859, the arrival in Yokohama of Scottish merchant, William Keswick, aboard a small ship, the schooner *Troas*, changed the course of history. The voyage was to be the start of a relationship with Japan by Jardine Matheson.

On 3 July 2019, at a house in a quiet residential area in the City of Westminster, close to the Houses of Parliament, the elderly man looked back nostalgically on the past. As bright sunlight streamed into the window, in a quiet, carpeted room, time seemed to stand still. Seated on a sofa, with his back toward the window and holding a cane to his side, he began speaking in a modulated tone. He resembled the classic image of a good old man.



Sir Henry Keswick: *“Our policy is to do long-term, right decision”.*

Photo: Eiichiro Tokumoto

“When Chinese burned the opium, we asked the British government to send gunboats to destroy and punish them,” he said. “And the reparation treaty and Hong Kong—we don’t justify or pretend that it didn’t happen. It’s unfortunate history, and, at that time, the standard was quite different”.

His name was Sir Henry Keswick, and he was 80 years old. One of the wealthiest individuals in Britain, he held the title of chairman emeritus in the multinational conglomerate Jardine Matheson. For many years, he had been a “good friend” enjoying close ties with Taro Aso, the deputy prime minister and minister of finance in the cabinets of Japan’s two most recent prime ministers, Shinzo Abe and Yoshihide Suga.

The Jardine Matheson trading firm was established in Guangzhou (Canton), China in 1832 by a pair of Scottish traders, William Jardine and James Matheson. Initially, the firm had traded in Chinese tea and Indian opium. When China’s Qing rulers banned the illegal trade in opium and ordered the stocks to be destroyed in 1839, Britain’s Parliament ordered the Royal Navy to mount a punitive expedition the following year. The events are known as the first Opium War, which continued until 1842.

The Chinese forces were soundly defeated, and Hong Kong was ceded to Britain. From its new headquarters in Hong Kong, Jardine Matheson subsequently expanded into other fields, including shipping, transport, finance and real estate, eventually becoming a multinational conglomerate. The firm’s presence in Japan predated the beginning of the Meiji Period, and it helped to arm the powerful clans of Satsuma and Choshu with modern weaponry that enabled them to overthrow the Tokugawa shogunate. Therefore, the firm can be said to have played a behind-the-scenes role in bringing about the Meiji Restoration.

Jardine Matheson can truly be said to have changed the course of world history. Control of the firm later moved to the Keswick family, and the gentleman seated before me, Sir Henry, was the fourth-generation Keswick to head the firm. Starting in Yokohama in the mid-19th century, family ties over several generations led to the present ties to Taro Aso. These extend back through Aso’s mother, Kazuko, who was the daughter of former Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida.

Arrival in Japan

In July 1859, the schooner *Troas* arrived in Yokohama. From it disembarked a young Scottish man named William Keswick. Some years earlier, he had travelled to China and taken up employment at Jardine Matheson.



William Keswick

In August 1858, five years after the US Navy’s East India Squadron, under the command of Commodore Matthew C. Perry, had forced the opening of Japan to US trade, Britain concluded the Anglo–Japanese Treaty of Amity and Commerce. Foreign merchants, full of the spirit of adventure and ambition, flocked to Japan. Among the first to arrive was Sir Henry’s great grandfather, William Keswick. The office he opened in Yokohama for Jardine Matheson was called Ei Ichiban-kan (English House Number 1).

By autumn 1868, the year of the Meiji Restoration, the port of Yokohama had been transformed into a thriving mercantile centre with rows of Western-style brick buildings. Kenzo Yoshida, a young retainer of the Fukui clan who had studied English in Nagasaki, took up employment with Jardine Matheson and, through lucrative transactions with the Japanese government, earned large remuneration. Kenzo was eventually to become the adoptive father of Shigeru Yoshida.

Kenzo left employment with Jardine Matheson and struck out on his own, becoming a highly successful businessman. But in 1889, at the young age of 40, he succumbed to illness, leaving a considerable fortune—equivalent today to some ¥3bn—to his adopted son, Shigeru, who at that time was only 11 years old. Shigeru, alas, completely squandered his inheritance. As Taro Aso was to write in a book about his family’s history:



Kenzo Yoshida

“I was told that, after receiving his adoptive father’s inheritance, my grandfather lived in such regal splendour and was an eye-grabber. Even while a student, he owned a house in Tokyo and commuted to the university on horseback.

“My mother wondered what happened to the money grandfather inherited from the Yoshida family. She once told me, ‘I had tried to ask him about it, but ended up failing to do so.’ What became of the money will remain a mystery, but it’s safe to say that grandfather squandered it before entering politics”.

Young Shigeru was not in the habit of carrying a wallet and instead wrote out cheques for his expenditures. He also hated being treated by others, and always paid for frequent geisha parties out of his own pocket. This does not suggest that he squandered his entire inheritance on geisha parties, but the seed money of his inheritance had been received as a monetary reward from Jardine Matheson. If it was these experiences that bestowed Shigeru Yoshida with the sense of pride and nerves of steel that served him well as prime minister, then perhaps it can be said his free-spending ways proved to be a good investment.

Kawagoe clan

The long-standing mystery as to why young Kenzo wound up being employed at Jardine Matheson was solved with the discovery of declassified documents at the British National Archives in London. Just after the Meiji Restoration, when the city name of Edo was changed to Tokyo (Eastern capital), Kenzo Yoshida had been charged as complicit in a case of fraud. The case, involving

the defrauding of a large amount of money, led to a major diplomatic spat between Japan and Britain.

It seems that in November 1870, the Yokohama office of Jardine Matheson received a business proposal from the Kawagoe clan, which at the time ruled the region around what is now Kawagoe City, in Saitama Prefecture. A man named Joichi Amano, who claimed to be the clan's chief controller, placed an order to purchase a steamship. By the end of the year, a contract had been drawn up and the firm waited for receipt of payment from the clan. However, the entire transaction was fraudulent.

According to archival documents in the Foreign Office, the Kawagoe clan denied it had authorised Amano to enter into a contract on its behalf, and it appears likely that Amano was attempting to conduct the transaction to profit personally. Jardine Matheson petitioned Sir Harry Parkes, the British Consul General in Japan, to demand payment from the Kawagoe clan, which refused, and the dispute ended up being tried in a Japanese court.

Kenzo Yoshida, who had acted as interpreter for Amano, wound up being charged as complicit in the fraud. A record of Kenzo's testimony in English remains, in which he told the investigator:

"I had previously heard from Joichi that [the steamship] was intended to carry on an extensive trade to Yezo (Hokkaido) and Osaka. I never heard before that Joichi was merely borrowing the name of the clan ... I regret very much having interpreted so carelessly".

Jardine Matheson had no cause for complaint against Kenzo Yoshida, whose only role had been translator. In spring 1872, the court ruled that the Kawagoe clan was not liable for the breach of contract. Amano was sentenced to two-and-a-half years' imprisonment and seizure of his assets. Yoshida was let off with a light sentence: home confinement for a period of 30 days.

Modern day

The British Chargé d'Affaires, who tried to arbitrate the dispute, in a report to the Foreign Secretary in London, wrote, *"If the representative in Yokohama of the English firm had been a little more careful in his enquiries before he entered even into the preliminary contract with Amano Joichi, he would have found the real position of this man"*.

This incident of 150 years ago was a learning experience for Jardine Matheson, which came to understand the importance of exercising due diligence when examining the credibility of potential customers. Given the fact that the firm hired Kenzo just after the fraud case, it would be natural to reason that Jardine Matheson hoped that he would play the role of advisor.

So, ironically, thanks to the confidence man called Joichi Amano, Jardine Matheson and Kenzo Yoshida were brought together, and the huge inheritance left to Shigeru Yoshida became the cornerstone of ties between the Yoshida–Aso family and the Keswicks. This lesson has come to span multiple generations.

"I have very good advisors," Sir Henry told me, *"Having clever people working for me is very important, and the whole Aso family are my personal friends. If we have a big problem in Japan, we might ask for Taro's advice. Finance minister and deputy prime minister are very powerful positions. But we don't have a big problem at the moment, as we do joint ventures with Japanese companies in Southeast Asia"*.

In 2018, Sir Henry Keswick—the fourth in his family line since William Keswick, who had arrived in Japan at the end of the Edo Period—retired as chairman and was succeeded by his nephew, Ben Keswick. Rumours are that Taro Aso, who has also turned 80, will soon retire from politics. Among the potential candidates for Aso's successor is his daughter, Ayako.

After graduating from the University of Tokyo, Ayako studied in Britain and subsequently wed a Frenchman. When Ayako visits Britain, the Keswick family looks after her.

"Ayako now lives in Paris, and we look after her when she comes to England. I have observed that Ayako is very smart and mentally tough. I would expect she will become a powerful politician and hope that one day she will be prime minister of Japan".

Close to Yamashita Park on Yokohama's waterfront is the Osanbashi Pier, a passenger terminal for luxury cruise ships. On the corner in front of the Silk Center stands a commemorative sign that reads, in English and Japanese, *"Former site of Ei Ichiban-kan"*. It marks the location of what was formerly the office of Jardine Matheson and testifies to the view that *"what's past is prologue"*. Source: *Maritime Advocate 776/ British Chamber of Commerce Journal/ Shukan Shincho*

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Sinking of the *Oceanos*

MTS Oceanos was a French-built and Greek-owned cruise ship that sank in 1991 due to uncontrolled flooding. Her captain and some of the crew were convicted of negligence for fleeing the ship without helping the passengers, who were subsequently rescued thanks to the efforts of the ship's entertainers.

Oceanos was launched in July 1952 by Forges et Chantiers de la Gironde in Bordeaux, France, as *Jean Laborde*, the last of four sister ships built for Messageries Maritimes. The ships were used on the Marseilles – Madagascar – Mauritius service. *Jean Laborde* went through many different owners and name changes (*Jean Laborde*, *Mykinai*, *Ancona*, *Eastern Princess*) in the succeeding decades. In 1976, she was acquired by Epirotiki Lines of Greece and registered under the name of *Oceanos*.^[1]

Final voyage

On 3 August 1991, *Oceanos* – initially delayed due to a bomb threat – set out from East London, South Africa, and headed for Durban. Captain Yiannis Avranas (born c. 1940) had been an officer for twenty years and a seaman for thirty. *Oceanos* headed into 40-knot winds and 9 m (30ft) swells. Usually, there would have been a "sail-away" party on deck with the ship's musicians

and British entertainers Moss and Tracy Hills. However, due to the rough seas, this was held inside in the Four Seasons lounge; most passengers chose to stay in their cabins.

The storm worsened as the evening progressed and when the first sitting of dinner was served, the waiters could hardly carry the trays of food without dropping something. Eventually *Oceanos* was rolling about from side to side so badly that crockery and cutlery began sliding off the tables and potted plants fell over.

Flooding

While trying to make up time due to the earlier delay, *Oceanos* encountered rough seas. Earlier repairs to the waste disposal system had not been completed, which meant that a vital ventilation pipe which ran through the watertight aft bulkhead and the non-return valve was not replaced. It is believed that after a series of freak waves slammed against the ship, the pipe's shell plating burst open and began filling the compartment with seawater. At about 9:30p.m., a muffled explosion was heard and *Oceanos* lost power. The ship started taking on water, rapidly flooding the engine room. By the next morning rescuers found *Oceanos* adrift just off Coffee Bay, listing badly to its starboard side.

Rescue efforts

As no alarm or announcement had been given that the ship was in trouble, several passengers went to the bridge to look for the crew, only to find it unmanned. Moss Hills then used the radio phone to broadcast a 'mayday' distress call until a ship answered. Of the sixteen rescue helicopters that came out to the ship, thirteen were South African Air Force (SAAF) Pumas, nine of which hoisted 225 passengers off the deck. They were assisted by the lifeboats of the Dutch cargo ship *Nedlloyd Mauritius*, which had responded to the distress call.

All 571 people on board were saved. Hills organized the orderly evacuation of passengers by the helicopters and is generally acknowledged as the leading hero of the event. Hills and fellow entertainer Julian Butler directed the efforts of the entertainment staff, which included Hills' wife Tracy and Robin Boltman, to assist the passengers. According to Boltman, "later in the morning, Captain Avranasi (*sic*) even contacted me from shore to ask how things were going. Butler and the Hills were among the last five to be rescued.

Among the entertainers onboard was the South African cabaret performer, Alvon Collison, who reportedly told a Cape Town Press Club gathering afterwards that he began singing an impromptu repertoire as the ship was sinking, in an effort to keep the passengers' spirits up. In his characteristic style, he managed to weave a comical moment into his narrative of the tumultuous events, telling reporters that he had started singing "American Pie", when he suddenly realised that the next line was going to be "This'll be the day that I die" - and quickly switched to another song.

After many officers and crew had abandoned ship, women and children were given priority when loading the lifeboats by cruise director Lorraine Betts. Later, after the ship's list had become so severe that the remaining lifeboats were rendered useless, the remaining passengers had to be airlifted onto SAAF helicopters by means of a safety harness. Betts again insisted that women and children be rescued first.

Final moments

The following day, at approximately 15:30 UTC+2, *Oceanos* rolled over onto her starboard side and sank by the bow. The last fifteen minutes of her sinking was captured on video and broadcast by ABC News.

Aftermath

Captain Avranas and his crew were criticized for leaving hundreds of passengers behind with no one other than the ship's entertainers to help them evacuate. Avranas received extensive media coverage as an example of unprofessional behaviour whilst in command. Avranas tried to defend his actions by claiming that he left the ship first to arrange for a rescue effort, and then supervised the rescue from a helicopter. He justified his actions saying the "ship was in darkness and the batteries on the crew's walkie-talkies had died, meaning that he had no communications with his crew or with other rescue craft". Avranas was quoted as saying, "When I order abandon the ship, it doesn't matter what time I leave. Abandon is for everybody. If some people like to stay, they can stay." The captain and some of the crew were convicted of negligence by a Greek board of inquiry for fleeing the ship without helping the passengers.

Alevizos Klaudatos, head of Epirotiki Lines, was quoted as saying: "Of course the crew members assigned to the boats have to enter first in order to assist the embarkation of the passengers ... as regards the captain abandoning the vessel, this is untrue and he has maintained his position throughout in assisting the rescue in the most effective way". Epirotiki Lines had lost two other ships within the three years preceding the sinking: the company's flagship *Pegasus* only two months before, and *MV Jupiter*, three years before.

Dateline NBC aired a documentary of the incident on 23 May 2010. The sinking is the subject of a song called "Oceanos" by Celtic rock band Coast. It was also discussed in an episode of *Nova* on 18 April 2012, entitled, "Why Ships Sink", which focused mainly on the *Costa Concordia* accident (whose commanding officer also fled while passengers were still aboard) and how it related to the *Titanic*. Hills was interviewed in the special, and related that some years later he had been on board when the *MS Achille Lauro* of Star Lauro sank. The rescue featured in episode 4 of *Shockwave*, first aired 21 December 2007. The NPR radio show and podcast Snap Judgment featured a first person account of the sinking as told by Moss Hills.



Sinking of the *Oceanos*

Mayday off the Wild Coast

The *Oceanos* casualty will ring bells with many readers and *Mayday off the Wild Coast – The Epic Story of the Oceanos Rescue* has been written by Andrew Pike of law firm Bowman Gilfillan. The following review is by Captain David (Duke) Snider, FNI, past president of The Nautical Institute.

Andy Pike has deftly laid out some of the terror, the bravery, the cowardice and the reality of one of the worst maritime disasters off South Africa. That the sinking of the repurposed passenger vessel *MV Oceanos* occurred without the loss of a single life among the more than 600 persons on board in horrific weather in 1991 is a testament to the dogged efforts of many who otherwise had no connection to this ship until that storm-tossed night.

With a lawyer's thorough methodology, Pike lays out what is known about the sinking of the *Oceanos* in the short voyage from East London to Durban. Using multitudes of sources, including his own notes as part of the legal team that sorted out claims after the loss, interviews from survivors and open-source reports and information, he builds a compelling read. He sorts through some of the conflicting versions of events to present the most likely account. The reader soon becomes totally immersed in the events onboard and from ashore, in the air and on the water.

First-hand accounts from survivors rate highly in bringing the story to life. Sadly, what is missing is input from the ship's crew, other than as related by others. That might not be unexpected, given the descriptions provided from others as to the general abandonment of responsibility by most of the crew, even though a few odd crewmembers stood out as trying to do their part. What struck this reader was the courage and actions of the tour company and entertainment company personnel that soon stepped in to take the place of leadership that was so sadly abrogated by the ship's officers.

What I found as most refreshing was that Pike made certain to provide detailed but understandable explanation of technical matters so that the non-mariner could fully understand the important contributing elements or why certain things were important. He explains basic stability and design factors that were important to understanding how the situation developed and why the ship eventually foundered. There is clear explanation of the responsibilities and overlaps (or gaps) between the many rescue related resources, along with the careful diplomacy that was quickly handled between otherwise somewhat belligerent neighbours. Both an experienced mariner and a less experienced reader will feel well served.

That the ship foundered in one of the most remote coastlines of South Africa with no loss of life is amazing. The stories of heroism, often passed off as "just doing my job" by the rescuers are testament to what is great in the human spirit. Whether in the air or on the water, rescuers pushed the limits of themselves and their equipment, often going beyond their training to complete a rescue with no loss of life. Vessels of opportunity instantly responded and did their best to recover survivors from lifeboats or transferred from rescue service inflatables that had recovered many that leapt or fell into the water. Mariners pulled together regardless of their own safety.

This story reminded me clearly of the best that we can be, alongside the worst. Although a frightening abandonment of personal responsibility was shown by many of the crew of the *Oceanos*, that responsibility was taken up quickly and bravely by others. Officers and crews of other ships that instantly responded to the Mayday call showed the best of what mariners are, risking themselves to save others in peril.

Those interested in purchasing a copy of the book can find details on <https://www.amazon.com/Mayday-Off-Wild-Coast-Oceanos-ebook/dp/B08XWTCDDGP>. The book is published by Sheridan House, an imprint of the Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group.

Source: *Maritime Advocate* 777

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Wind-assisted boxship project makes headway.

Adis Ajdin May 18, 2021 Bureau Veritas

A new LNG-powered 2,500 teu boxship design featuring wind-assisted propulsion has been granted an approval in principle by the Paris-headquartered class society Bureau Veritas.



The 197 m long vessel, dubbed Trade Wings 2,500, has been designed by French firms VPLP Design, Alwena Shipping and AYRO and Shanghai Merchant Ship Design & Research Institute (SDARI).

It fosters six partially retractable Oceanwings installed on a vertical sliding mechanism, which minimises the impact on cargo operations while the vessel is in port, BV explained. The LNG engine is designed with pure gas four-stroke gensets offering possible upgrade to fuels such as ammonia or hydrogen.

Alex Gregg-Smith, senior VP Bureau Veritas North Asia, commented: "Wind-assisted propulsion is a high-potential solution that can contribute to the long-term decarbonisation of the marine industry. We have just released new wind propulsion system rules – and this innovative design, approved in principle by BV, including a sliding mechanism, demonstrates the feasibility of wind-assisted propulsion on board container ships with deck space limitations.

"Benefitting from a coverless hatch and LNG electric pod propulsion, the design provides both operational flexibility, improved efficiency and reduced carbon emissions, complying with, or exceeding, regulatory requirements."

BV said that on a typical transatlantic route of 4,000 nautical miles, the vessel will save on average 35% CO₂-equivalent emissions compared to a conventional design, with a two-stroke engine, single shaft and without wing-sails, at the same speed.

Earlier in April this year, Zéphyr & Borée, a young French company specialising in carbon-free transport, unveiled it was working to develop the world's first sailing containership equipped with eight wing-sails.

With project Meltem, the Nantes-based company is developing a 1,830 teu boxship said to be able to reduce carbon footprint by 80% on a transatlantic journey at a speed of 11 knots. Source: *Splash247* 210518

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Bloomberg First Ships Dock at Kenya's New Deepwater Port

May 20, 2021

By David Herbling (Bloomberg)

Two A.P. Moller-Maersk A/S vessels made maiden calls at Kenya's new Indian Ocean port which began operating on Thursday, edging the nation closer to fulfilling its ambition of becoming the main shipping hub on East Africa's coast.



MV CAP Camel becomes the first commercial ship to dock at Kenya's new Lamu Port, May 20, 2021. Photo: Kenya Ports

The port in Lamu is expected to eventually have 32 berths and offer an alternative gateway to access landlocked Ethiopia and South Sudan. It will supplement the clogged Mombasa port, which lies 340 kilometres (313 miles) to the south.

The \$5 billion project is part of a bigger infrastructure plan known as Lapsset that's being rolled out by Kenya's government and includes an oil pipeline, roads, rail lines and airports that connect the nation to its northern neighbours.

The port's first berth is expected to process 400,000 twenty-foot equivalent units in its first year of operation, according to the Lapsset Corridor Development Authority. Establishing the first three berths has cost \$480 million, with two of those set to be fully operational by year-

end.

Customer Incentives

Trans-shipment fees will be waived and permissible periods for the removal of transit cargo will be extended in a bid to woo shipping lines and cargo owners to Lamu, according to the Kenya Revenue Authority.

Luring new business to Lamu could prove challenging. Ethiopia has regained use of the Red Sea ports of Assab and Massawa following a rapprochement with Eritrea, while about 90% of its inbound trade already arrives through the Port of Djibouti. South Sudan may however consider using Lamu as an alternative to Port Sudan, the main maritime gateway in neighbouring Sudan.

A key concern for potential users will be Lamu's location. The idyllic resort town lies about 100 kilometres from the Somalia border and has come under multiple attacks from al-Shabaab — an al-Qaeda-backed group of insurgents.

Last month, Kenya began constructing a 257 kilometre highway linking Lamu to the town of Garissa, part of a road network that will extend to the border with Ethiopia and South Sudan. The road will traverse sparsely populated Kenyan territory that's particularly vulnerable to attacks from the Somalia-based militant group.

—With assistance from Mike Cohen.

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Wrongly stowed container led to fire

The Swedish Club has reported an incident where a wrongly stowed container led to a fire.

During early morning hours, the Master was at the bridge of the vessel when they observed a large cloud of smoke issuing from the forward part of the vessel. At the same time the fire detection system for cargo hold 3 sounded on the bridge. According to the Master, the smoke was first white and then greyish. Yet the Chief Officer, however, described the smoke as being "dark grey, almost black".

Following observation of the smoke, the ventilation fans for the cargo holds were stopped. The fans for cargo hold 3 were not operating at that time but natural ventilation was being provided for the holds as the covers for the vents were open. Crew members closed the covers of the vents for cargo hold 3 and no crew member entered the cargo hold.

The Master then anchored the vessel. After checking the vessel, the Chief Engineer released the contents of almost 200 CO₂ cylinders into cargo hold 3. This discharge was the designated full complement of CO₂ required for the hold, and appeared to extinguish the fire. A couple of hours later smoke began to issue from the hold and a further 50 CO₂ cylinders were released into cargo hold 3. About six hours later smoke was observed issuing from cargo hold 3 and the Chief Engineer released a further 50 CO₂ cylinders.

The next morning, salvors boarded the vessel to better check the vessel. Shortly before midnight, temperature checks were completed by the vessel's crew, indicating that the temperature in cargo hold 3 was rising, so five more CO₂ cylinders were released.

In the morning, another 20 CO₂ cylinders were released. The salvors entered cargo hold 2 and measured the temperature for the bulkhead to cargo hold 3 - it was 80°C. It was decided that cargo hold 3 should be filled with water from the fire hydrants. The water filled three container tiers up and after a couple of hours the salvors considered the fire to be extinguished.

It is stated that the container where the fire started was not declared as dangerous cargo but was actually loaded with calcium hypochlorite and had been mis-declared by the shipper. The charterer had loaded the container as per the rules of the IMDG code. As per the manifest, the container was allowed to be loaded in the cargo hold, but as the cargo was calcium hypochlorite it should not have been loaded below deck or in the position it was stowed in.

(With thanks to the IIMS Report)

Source: Flashlight 220

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World's Largest Iceberg Breaks Off from Antarctica

Mike Schuler

By Steve Gorman May 19 (Reuters)

A giant slab of ice bigger than the Spanish island of Majorca has sheared off from the frozen edge of Antarctica into the Weddell Sea, becoming the largest iceberg afloat in the world, the European Space Agency said on Wednesday.

The newly calved berg, designated A-76 by scientists, was spotted in recent satellite images captured by the Copernicus Sentinel-1 mission, the space agency said in a statement posted on its website with a photo of the enormous, oblong ice sheet.



A view of the newly calved iceberg designated A-76 by scientists, the largest currently afloat in the world according to the European Space Agency (ESA), and captured by the ESA's Copernicus Sentinel-1 mission, is seen in this handout photo obtained by Reuters on May 20, 2021. ESA/Copernicus Sentinel-1 Mission, CC BY-SA 3.0 IGO/Handout via REUTERS

Its surface area spans 4,320 square km (1,668 square miles) and measures 175 km (106 miles) long by 25 km (15 miles) wide.

By comparison, Spain's tourist island of Majorca in the Mediterranean occupies 3,640 square km (1,405 square miles). The U.S. state of Rhode Island is smaller still, with a land mass of just 2,678 square km (1,034 square miles).

The enormity of A-76, which broke away from Antarctica's Ronne Ice Shelf, ranks as the largest existing iceberg on the planet, surpassing the now second-place A-23A, about 3,380 square km (1,305 square miles) in size and also floating in the Weddell Sea.

Another massive Antarctic iceberg that had threatened a penguin-populated island off the southern tip of South America has since lost much of its mass and broken into pieces, scientists said earlier this year.

A-76 was first detected by the British Antarctic Survey and confirmed by the Maryland-based U.S. National Ice Center, using imagery from Copernicus Sentinel-1, consisting of two polar-orbiting satellites.

The Ronne Ice Shelf near the base of the Antarctic Peninsula is one of the largest of several enormous floating sheets of ice that connect to the continent's landmass and extend out into surrounding seas.

Periodic calving of large chunks of those shelves is part of a natural cycle, and the breaking off of A-76, which is likely to split into two or three pieces soon, is not linked to climate change, said Ted Scambos, a research glaciologist at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Scambos said the Ronne and another vast ice shelf, the Ross, have "behaved in a stable, quasi-periodic fashion" over the past century or more. Because the ice was already floating in the sea before dislodging from the coast, its break-away does not raise ocean levels, he told Reuters by email.

Some ice shelves along the Antarctic peninsula, farther from the South Pole, have undergone rapid disintegration in recent years, a phenomenon scientists believe may be related to global warming, according to the U.S. National Snow & Ice Data Center. (Reporting by Steve Gorman in Los Angeles; Editing by Peter Cooney)

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Source: gCaptain 210521

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Waterways Are Drying Up Making Navigation Difficult In Key South American Crop-Shipping Ports

Bloomberg April 27, 2021

The South American drought that's helping push Wheat, Corn, and Soybean prices to multiyear highs isn't just threatening crops, but also the ability to haul them on waterways that are drying up.



Employees working cargo ship *Kypros Land* loading soybeans to China at Tiplam terminal in Santos, Brazil, March 13, 2017. Picture taken March 13, 2017. REUTERS/Paulo Whitaker

On the increasingly shallow rivers that flow through top producers Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay, barges are carrying less than their usual load. The situation is so desperate in Paraguay that the country is asking neighbouring Brazil to release water from the giant Itaipu hydroelectric dam, after vessels have run aground and logjams are forming in river ports because barges can't move. In a key Argentine leg of the 4,900-kilometer (3,000-mile) Parana River, uncertainty over dredging work could make it even harder for farmers to ship their harvests.

The region's waterway crisis highlights the growing impact of a warming climate on global agricultural supplies that's raising the spectre of food inflation at a time of rampant demand led by China. The situation is bound to get worse because the dry season has just

started. Argentina, the world's top exporter of soybean meal for livestock feed and soybean oil for cooking, ships about 80% of its crops through rivers. In landlocked Paraguay, the region's third-biggest soybean producer, roughly 80% of the country's trade moves through inland watercourses.

"This will be a difficult year for navigation," said Esteban dos Santos, head of the Shipowners Association of Paraguay, where the world's third-largest river-barge fleet, after the U.S. and China, is moving on waters that are 3 metres (10 feet) lower than usual. "Navigation channels are getting smaller and shallower every day."

Near the Yacyreta hydroelectric dam in Paraguay, barges loaded with soybeans for export are stranded. The water depth of the Parana River there needs to reach at least 95 centimetres (3.1 feet) for them to proceed, but it's currently at a third of that, Dos Santos said. Dryness has halted navigation since early April. Similar logjams are forming in other parts of the country.

The basin comprising the Parana and Paraguay rivers and their tributaries derives its water mainly from sources in Brazil's Centre South region, where the drought is pushing up prices for everything from corn to coffee and sugar. Even in stretches where vessels are moving, they are carrying less load to reduce their draft.

In Rosario, a key Argentine shipping hub on the Parana where large ships load crop exports before heading to the Atlantic Ocean, water levels are expected to drop to about 1.17 meters (3.8 feet) this week. The historical average for this time of the year is 3.58 metres. The situation is getting worse every year because of consecutive droughts in Brazil, with insufficient rains during the wet season to replenish the rivers.

"It's going to be really difficult," said Guillermo Wade, manager of port group CAPyM in Rosario. "We're going to have shallow water levels that are going to affect the possibility of loading ships with lower drafts."

A decrease of a foot in the maximum ship draft — the vertical length that sinks underwater — represents a loss of 1,800 to 2,200 metric tons of load capacity, depending on the ship, according to Wade.

To make matters worse in Argentina, dredging in the Parana River is on the verge of a crisis. A government contract with a joint venture led by Jan De Nul NV, the Belgian company that does the excavation in the riverbed and has been working overtime during the dryness, is expiring this month and there's no clear plan to extend or replace it. Dredging workers are considering going on strike to protest the uncertainty.

The waters that feed the Paraguay and Parana rivers flow south from the Brazilian states of Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Minas Gerais and Sao Paulo. In Sao Paulo state, there's been a precipitation shortage every wet season for the past 13 years, with rains in the first quarter of this year reaching only half of the expected volumes, according to data from Brazil's weather and climate centre, known as CPTEC. In Mato Grosso, key areas that feed the basin have had below-average precipitation for a decade. In Mato Grosso do Sul and Minas Gerais, it's been similar.

Last year, Argentina had to ask Brazil to release water from the Itaipu dam into the Parana River to increase water volumes that hit the lowest level since 1989.

Brazil sends most of its crops to sea ports by truck or train, and soybean hauling on inland waters is more common in the plentiful Amazon basin in the north, but some of the country's river transportation is being affected by the drought. In Corumba, near the southern border with Paraguay, where iron-ore giant Vale SA uses watercourses for exports, barges are navigating with 20% less load because of the shallowness.

The problem won't be easy to overcome and crop markets will likely have to brace for logistical headaches beyond this season's harvest.

"Rivers can take one or two years to recover, depending on the rains," said Francisco Catarino, a partner at river logistics firm FJLC Consultoria in Sao Paulo.

—By Fabiana Batista and Jonathan Gilbert. With assistance from Dave Merrill. Copyright 2021 Bloomberg

Source: gCaptain 210521

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And finally...

It is a tale of tight times in the military. Because of excessive budget constraints, the military housing shortage was very, very severe. It was so terrible that the troops were forced to domicile themselves in the large kitchen pots frequently used for making gelatine desserts. How did the drill sergeant respond to the recruit that complained about the situation?

"We all live in a Jello-Tub, Marine."

The base was quite far from "civilization" with the obvious result that the troops were forced to entertain themselves.

One of the more popular pastimes was card playing. A large number of groups met regularly to indulge themselves. Bridge, poker, and gin rummy were played, but the most popular game by far was hearts.

It happened that a few of the NCOs were not well liked by the troops. One in particular was unanimously hated. As a result, he was never invited to any of the card sessions. When he complained to the Commanding Officer, it was decided to put a stop to the whole business with the following command:

Sgt. Pepper's lonely. Hearts club banned.

Source: Maritime Advocate 778

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