The Porthole

Volume 22 No. 2 **February 2022**

The newsletter of
the Company of Master Mariners of Australia,
South Australian Branch
PO Box 1, PORT ADELAIDE, SA 5015
Branch Patron: Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC

Branch Master's Comments

I note that it's time once more to make contact with all our esteemed members to let everyone know that we are still out here, albeit keeping a very low profile!

We on the Federal Court have tentatively fixed on April 2nd as the date for our next Federal AGM, and after a modicum of e-mail discussion with particular allusion to the plight of those in the West who still have to quarantine for 7 days after any interstate sojourn, however short, it has been confirmed that this AGM will be by electronic means mainly to alleviate this possible problem. As you all are probably aware, the amount of work being undertaken by our Federal Secretary Stuart in his everyday employment is precluding him from a significant part of his CMMA duties, and he will from now on be sharing his Court duties with another WA member, Capt. Mark Pointon, who will ultimately take over the role after a thorough familiarisation.

Once more I have to report that things have been quiet on the CMMA front, both federally and locally, and I don't expect that to change until the present Pandemic eases off quite a bit more. While our Covid restrictions are being eased even as I write, the unfortunate truth is that the infection rate both nationally and locally remains as high as ever, even though the fatality rate has fallen right back. My eldest daughter (the nurse) was infected after Christmas, and, though now cured, she is adamant that it is not something you want to catch. Consequently, we are still loathe to restore our norm of after luncheon speakers for the present.

On a lighter note, we look forward to seeing as many of you as can make it to our monthly meeting at the Largs Pier Hotel next Wednesday (23rd February) at 1145 for 1200.

Until then

Happy sailing
Bob W (SABM)

COVID-19 restrictions permitting, the next Branch meeting and the Branch AGM will be held at The Largs Pier Hotel. 198 The Eplanade, Largs Bay, on Wednesday, 23rd February 2022, at 1145 for 1200.

Please confirm your attendance at the lunch or register your apology before 1200 on Monday, 21st February 2022 with Bob Westley (0427 644 947) or Ian Dickson (0418 807 788)

In this issue

Trouble in the tank

By Michael Grey

You would be, to say the least, extremely angry, if your car came to a grinding halt and the nice person from the emergency services looked up from the engine compartment and told you the engine had been wrecked because of the fuel you had been supplied by the filling station. Your sentiments might be even more extreme if your aircraft engines suddenly emitted choking noises and stopped at 30,000 feet, because the quality of the fuel was in some way deficient.

The fact is that you are able to count on the quality of what comes out of the filling station pumps or is supplied while the aircraft lies alongside its pier, secure in the knowledge that some quality controller, or expert chemical engineer has done their job and you don't have to worry unduly. So why is the chief engineer of a ship approaching its bunker station chewing his or her nails with concern, as they prepare to take on board hundreds, or even thousands, of tonnes of fuel into the vessel's tanks? Doesn't the quality of marine bunkers matter just as much, if you consider that the ship itself could be lost, or the engine wrecked by off-specification fuel? The fact is the answer does not appear to be in the affirmative. As you read this, the 6662teu container ship *SM Busan* will be lying alongside a pier in the port of Ogden Point, with the crew and machinery specialists pumping ashore her fuel into road tankers, after the ship was completely disabled a short distance into her Pacific crossing from Portland to South Korea. She had lost propulsion on Christmas Eve and drifted for more than two days in a gale, before limping back to the coast, with tugs in attendance.

It was interesting to note that the latest journal of the International Salvage Union, published just before the holiday, noted a slew of large vessels disabled off the South African coast and rescued by salvage tugs. Indeed, "disabled" ships requiring tug support featured quite largely in the reports from salvors around the world, and it would be a fair assumption that at least some of these were suffering from "fuel problems". And there is plenty of evidence that these fuel problems are often caused by mandatory changes to or from low sulphur fuel, or something nasty such as fines or chemicals in the fuel itself.

But surely prudent owners will be employing expert fuel testing laboratories to make sure that the tiger in their tanks will not bite them? Certainly, that's the advice, but it tends to be the case that the charterer who is buying the fuel may be unwilling to pay for these analysts. The fuel the charterer has sourced is an absolute bargain and it's not his engine they will be pouring the stuff into. And maybe the owner or manager will not shell out for these services automatically, hoping that the voyage will be accomplished without problems. That's the old percentage game, that is increasingly played in our industry, where the troubles all happen to somebody else, except when they don't.

"It's the Charterer – there's no berth, no stores, no shore leave, no reliefs…but we're to have a Happy New Year!

The trouble is that keeping engines running smoothly is getting much more complicated, with different grades of fuel having to be carried, and even though there may be all sorts of earnest injunctions about not using fuel that hasn't been given the green light by the laboratory, accidents do happen.

And it is going to get ever more complicated as the industry becomes involved with ever-greener fuels and fuel of very different characteristics to the simple old sludge diesels once digested. If we can't trust the bunker supplier to provide fuel that won't wreck the machinery today, will the situation be better, or worse, when many more people are buying biofuel or LNG or methanol, hydrogen or ammonia? You would like to think that bunkering such sophisticated stuff shouldn't be a matter involving such angst and the quality of ships' fuels should be beyond speculation, like fuel supplied to other industries. But you wouldn't put money on the emergence of the reliable and high-quality system that other modes of transport enjoy.

We shouldn't have big ships' machinery coughing and spluttering as the pilot tries to manoeuvre it in tight port situations, as is regularly reported these days. More to the point, we really shouldn't have to depend on the ultimate insurance of powerful salvage tugs to keep disabled ships off lee shores, after their machinery has failed.

Michael Grey is former editor of Lloyd's List.

Source: Maritime Advocate 795 —oo00oo--

Useful advice for potential experts

By Michael Grey

If you consider the enormous scope for dispute in any marine "adventure", actually sorting out these problems is almost an industry in its own right. An argument about charter party terms, the tortured chronology surrounding a casualty, disputes about employment law and its terms and conditions, expensive entitlements after a massive salvage operation or a ship or equipment that failed to do what its manufacturer promised, might be thought of as just some of the areas that demand both legal judgement and technical expertise to reconcile.

Enter the expert witness, which is a possible alternative career option for expert seafarers, who might be looking for a new challenge, which is why the Nautical Institute has published Guidelines for the Maritime Expert Witness, advertised as "essential reading for anyone in the dispute resolution process". It is also a very sensible and practical guide to exactly what an expert witness does, what expertise or qualifications might be needed for someone aspiring to enter the field, and is a compendium of expertise in its own right, contributed by a group of people who are thoroughly familiar with the business. They include former seafarers who have successfully made the transition, along with practising solicitors, barristers, arbitrators, mediators and a former judge.

The expert witness, in short, assists a court in deciding the technical merits of a case in dispute. The reader quickly learns that the overriding duty of the expert witness is to the court and not to anyone who might have appointed them. And while some expert witnesses might suggest that they got into the field almost by accident, there is no doubt that there is great value in training.

I'm afraid that I learned this the hard way, having been asked to provide some expertise by a solicitor friend. It was an area in which I was familiar and I foolishly agreed, before ascertaining what being an expert witness actually meant, and the importance of what I was providing in written evidence. Too late, I asked another friend, who had long experience in the field for some helpful advice and then spent sleepless days and nights re-writing my opinions, with recurrent nightmares involving my public eviscerration by learned counsel at the subsequent hearing. Fortunately, in this case, and a handful of others in which I have been involved, the case was settled without the appearance of this apprehensive witness.

"Experts can win or lose a case" is a phrase that leaps out of the text as is the opinion that we are dealing with here in English Law with adversarial proceedings, resembling "two armies engaged in battle". And while it is confidently asserted that "a well-prepared expert has nothing to fear from the most critical counsel or tribunal", it is also emphasised, by more than one of the authors, that giving evidence can be "a daunting process". Experts who enjoy the sound of their own voices are also enjoined to curb their enthusiasms and confine their answers to brief summation of facts, the court greatly appreciating "yes" or "no" responses. It is pointed out succinctly by Sir Nigel Teare in his contribution "A View from the Bench" that experts are not supposed to be advocates in their own right!

But this is a useful book that rather than deterring a new generation of experts, may positively encourage some into an interesting career, as it is clear that real expertise has tremendous value and that, properly employed, is a vital element in the infrastructure which is such a selling point in maritime London and some of its challengers around the world.

After a foreword by Sir Julian Flaux and introduction by its technical editor John Noble, the chronology of events in a case is explained by David Pockett, along with the duties and obligations of the expert witness. The importance of training – which is available – is emphasised by Mark Solon, while a useful hypothetical case study, involving casualties and salvage issues, gives the reader food for thought. The role of the arbitrator and how an expert witness can progress into arbitration is covered by Keith Hart, while the relationship between maritime lawyers and the experts they employ forms an illuminating chapter.

What of the barristers? Their approach in these cases is explained by Sara Masters and Michael Collett, with a useful insight into the expert's role in maritime arbitration by Charles Baker. Finally, prior to Sir Nigel Teare's view from the Bench, Jonathan Lux introduces the perhaps less familiar role of the mediator, who can perhaps assist in resolving disputes without court proceedings. The NI has experience producing these useful publications, with its earlier volumes on the collection of maritime evidence, which offers essential advice to practising shipmasters.

Two items of advice from these Guidelines, which have wider and rather current resonance suggest that the expert witness "takes a pride in" the evidence provided and is "honest and truthful". Check out this useful volume which is available from the Nautical Institute this month.

Michael Grey is former editor of Lloyd's List.

Source: Maritime Advocate 797

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CMA CGM LIBRA: UK Supreme Court upholds unseaworthy judgment following errors in passage planning

Whilst departing from the Chinese port of Xiamen, the container vessel *CMA CGM Libra* grounded on rocks after departing from the marked fairway.

General average was declared but some of the cargo interest refused to contribute voluntarily, and argued that errors within the ship's passage plan had rendered the vessel unseaworthy, ie, there had been actionable fault for the purposes of Rule D of the York-Antwerp Rules.

Cargo interests criticised the passage plan in a number of aspects, but the critical error was the failure to record "all areas of danger" as per IMO guidelines for passage planning. In particular, the passage plan did not reflect a recent Notice to Mariners advising that depths on the approaches to Xiamen were less than charted.

The decision of the UK Supreme Court

The Supreme Court agreed that the vessel was unseaworthy because she commenced her voyage with a defective passage plan. The Admiralty Judge had decided that this was causative of the Master's decision to leave the buoyed fairway resulting in the grounding. Owners were unable to rely on a defence of due diligence to make the vessel seaworthy, because the crew's negligence in preparing the defective passage plan was attributable to the carrier.

Owners argued that a distinction should be drawn between acts of navigation, which were incapable of rendering a vessel unseaworthy, and aspects of a ship going to its seaworthiness and navigability.

This was part of a wider argument that unseaworthiness must arise from an attribute of the ship and not a navigational decision. Whilst the Supreme Court did not say that there was no requirement that seaworthiness should result from an attribute of the ship, they thought that the concept must be widely and diversely drawn.

Seaworthiness is not limited to physical defects in the vessel or its equipment. Negligent navigational decisions taken pre-voyage, including passage planning, can render a vessel unseaworthy. It could though be useful in future cases to ask whether a defect is an attribute of the ship to illustrate whether or not a vessel was unseaworthy.

There was some recognition that the case represented an unusual result due to the serious nature of the defect in the passage planning, and because the defective passage planning caused the grounding. For instance, mistakes in passage planning can only result in actionable unseaworthiness when made during the appraisal and planning stages, rather than during the execution and monitoring stages. The Supreme Court emphasised that:

"Most negligent navigation will occur during the voyage rather than before it and it is correct that the main burden of resulting cargo damage or general average claims is likely to fall on cargo owners and their insurers rather than shipowners and their P&I Clubs."

Source: Flashlight 230

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Record Rogue Wave Measured Off British Columbia

Mike Schuler February 16, 2022

Researchers have measured what they believe to be the most extreme rogue wave ever recorded at 17.6 meters – the equivalent of a four-story building.

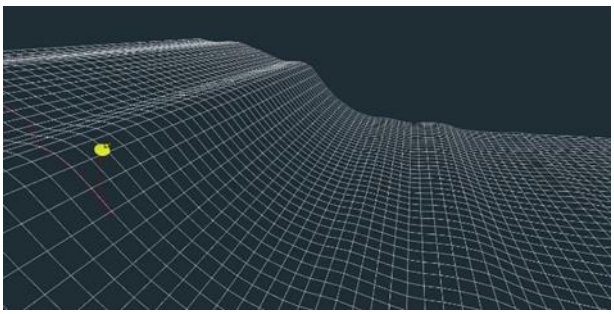
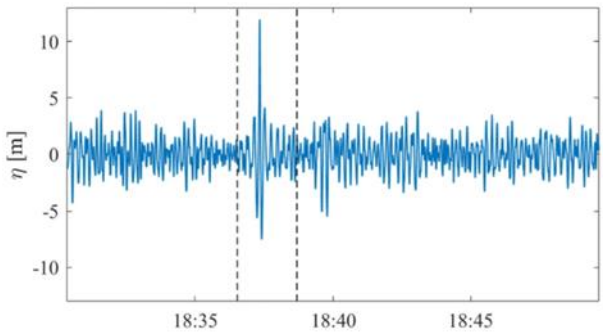


Image courtesy MarineLabs

The wave was recorded in the Pacific Ocean west of Ucluelet, British Columbia, in November 2020 by Victoria, B.C.-based MarineLabs Data Systems (MarineLabs). The wave is also the subject of a scientific report by Dr. Johannes Gemmrich and Leah Cicon, both of the University of Victoria, published last week in *Scientific Reports*.

Although rogue waves have been measured to be taller, the wave recorded by MarineLabs in Ucluelet was proportionally larger. That is, the 17.6-meter wave occurred during significant wave heights of only 6 meters, making it nearly three times the size of the waves around it.

Rogue waves are defined as waves with a height more than double that of other waves occurring around them. Although rogue waves have been the subject of maritime lore for centuries, the first ever measured occurred off the coast of Norway in 1995. Known as the 'Draupner wave', it measured 25.6 meters in a sea state with wave heights of approximately 12 meters.



Graph courtesy MarineLabs

"Proportionally, the Ucluelet wave is likely the most extreme rogue wave ever recorded," says Gemmrich, who studies large wave events along BC's coastlines as part of his work as a research physicist at the University of Victoria. "Only a few rogue waves in high sea states have been observed directly, and nothing of this magnitude. The probability of such an event occurring is once in 1,300 years."

The record-setting Ucluelet wave was recorded by one of MarineLabs' sensor buoys deployed at Amphitrite Bank, approximately four miles offshore of Ucluelet. The buoy is part of a network of marine sensors that comprise MarineLabs' CoastAware™ platform.

"The unpredictability of rogue waves, and the sheer power of these 'walls of water' can make them incredibly dangerous to marine operations and the public," says MarineLabs CEO, Dr. Scott Beatty. "The potential of predicting rogue waves remains an open question, but our data is helping to better understand when, where and how rogue waves form, and the risks that they pose."

Source: gCaptain 220218

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Chinese desk manufacturer orders 1,800 teu boxship

Sam Chambers January 31, 2022

It was in June last year that *Splash* first reported of a major retailer, Home Depot, chartering in container tonnage to battle the ongoing supply chain crisis. At the time, the news was seismic, highlighting the severity of the transport chaos on the transpacific. Since then a host of other major retail brands, including Walmart and IKEA, have pursued similar tactics. Now, one Chinese furniture manufacturer has taken the next step.

Huanghai Shipbuilding

Clarkson Research Services is reporting Loctek Ergonomic has ordered a 1,800 teu boxship from Huanghai Shipbuilding for a swift delivery in the first quarter next year. The Ningbo-headquartered desk manufacturer has managed to negotiate a competitive $32.6m for the new ship, whereas second-hand tonnage for similar sized ships is now trading at around $50m.

"In order to further enhance the company's competitiveness and accelerate the company's overseas business development, the company plans to sign a 1,800 TEU containership construction contract with a domestic first-class shipyard," Loctek Ergonomic stated in a stock exchange filing.

Among all categories shipped via containers, it has been assembled furniture that has borne the brunt of today's sky-high freight rates. Freight rates account for more than two-thirds of the retail value of these goods, severely impacting profitability for many in the furniture business.

Source: splash247 220131 —oo00oo--

MOL readies for installation of its first hard sail

Sam Chambers February 1, 2022

Mitsui OSK Lines (MOL) has provided *Splash* readers with a glimpse of the enormous hard sail it is about to install on one of its bulk carriers under construction at Oshima Shipbuilding.

MOL

The huge sail, 52 m high, has been under development for the past 13 years and is known as the Wind Challenger project. The light weight FRP composite sail has a telescopic system to retract it to 23 m high when in port.

An 88,900 dwt bulk carrier due for delivery this autumn – and slated to go on long term charter hauling coal for Tohoku Electric Power Co – is now getting the hard sail installed on its prow. The additional propulsion power from wind can reduce a vessel's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by an estimated 5% to 8%, MOL, Japan's largest shipowner in dwt terms, stated today.

MOL is also considering the use of sails on other bulk carriers, tankers and LNG carriers.

"Hard Sail for Wind Challenger"
Left: Shortened Hard Sail Right: Extended Hard Sail

Source: Splash 247 220201—oo00oo--

"A Miscellany of British Flags"

Condensed from an article by Capt G G Thorne. RD, RNR

In tracing the origin of the Union Flag, go back to AD 285 when, in the reign of Diocletian, a Roman soldier was martyred for his Christian beliefs. Subsequently canonized, St George was widely revered with the Red Cross.

This was the red cross component of the Union Flag. Sometime after AD 958 the Genoese transferred spiritual allegiance from St Lawrence to St George, and through the period to 1113 the cross was adopted as a symbol of their power. Richard I of England embarked from Genoa for the third crusade and out of compliment to Genoa he adopted the cross for his banner.

By 1277 under Edward I, definite reference was made to the arms of St George in its adoption as the English national emblem. This then superseded Edward the Confessor as patron saint of England.

To the end of the 16th century frequent reference is made to the flag of St George which had become a characteristic of English shipping, both in men of war and merchant ships. Drake and Hawkins on their last voyage were supplied with 30 flags of St George.

The Union flag in its earliest form was brought into being by James I (and VI of Scotland) 1606. It consisted of the English and Scottish crosses overlaid and was intended to be flown by men of war and Merchant ships alike, but in 1633 the matter of salute came to a head. This was the old established enforcement that all vessels of any nationality should strike their flags, lower their tops'ls and pass to leeward of any King's ships. It was argued that confusion arose from both ships wearing the same flag, thus by proclamation merchant ships were forbidden to fly the union flag and were ordered to wear just the cross of St George or the cross of St Andrew. Perrin suggests that the underlying cause was jealousy of the Merchant Service by King's ships, and marked a distinct step in the exaltation of the Navy Royal into a position of superiority over the Mercantile Marine.

This position was most unpopular in merchant shipping as the wearing of the union flag brought with it considerable privilege, such as freedom from pilotage and foreign port dues, and as a result was largely ignored notwithstanding frequent threats of punishment.

The flag underwent further change in 1801 when, under the Articles of Union, the cross of St Patrick was incorporated. St Patrick was not a martyr and strictly not entitled to a cross, yet this convenient cross to represent Ireland was also the badge of the powerful Fitzgeralds and the badge of the Order of St Patrick. The Union flag remains the same to this day.

With reference to the decree forbidding the use of the Union flag to merchant ships, the Ensign Red was ordained the rightful flag of the merchant service in 1674, and it was further allowed in 1707 that the Union flag could replace the Cross of St George in the upper canton.

Red, white and blue ensigns had previously been squadronal flags in the Navy, abolished in 1864, yet the white ensign survived as the flag of distinction for the Royal Navy. The blue ensign became the distinguishing flag for the Naval Reserve, while the Merchant Navy scored the Red Duster.

Further mention should be made here to the Jack Flag. Jack was the term for any diminutive flag, which was a small flag, often square, and usually flown at the fore, or jack staff. It became the custom for the Royal Navy to fly a small Union (Jack) at the fore when demanding a pilot, a practice which the Merchant Service soon adopted. Consequently, the Admiralty reimposed the old ban in 1822 and directed that the Pilot Jack for merchant ships shall have a broad white border all round, one fifth in breadth of the Jack itself. By implication, the Merchant Shipping Act 1894 sanctions the wearing of the Pilot Jack and a number of authorities have defined the white bordered Jack as the Jack of the Merchant Service.

As opposed to this the British Pilotage Act of 1913 forbids the use of the flag except for summoning a pilot. It has been said that the only Company ships legally allowed to fly the pilot jack at the fore when alongside and in port has been Port Line, the reason for which I don't know. It is legal on any vessel to fly the white bordered Pilot Jack if there is a Queen's representative on board, and legal to fly the blue ensign if the ship's Master is in the Naval Reserve accompanied by a percentage of the ship's crew as reservists. The Titanic could fly the blue ensign, with a Master and 12 reservists.

The question is often asked as to the origin of the name "Jack", and, in that it was first mentioned as such in the reign of James I, this has given rise to the suggestion that it was named after that sovereign. However, there is no known evidence in support of this. The most acceptable explanation is put forward by Commander Mead, who quotes the 17th century "Boteler's Dialogues" showing that at sea the word "jack" generally denoted a diminutive, and it goes on to say that H M Ships are enjoined to wear a King's flag of "small volumn" in their "boltsprit's top" and such flag is termed a "jack".

Companies regularly fly their own house jacks on the jack staff when alongside. This should properly be lowered as the last mooring is released and raised as the first line is made fast to shore. The same applies when the anchor is released, and aweigh.

Other matters of flag etiquette state that the ensign flown aft when alongside, should be hauled down and transferred to the mainmast on a special gaff when underway. All flags are hauled in at sunset and hoisted again each morning at 0800.

Any flag may be broken out when raising in strong winds, except the national flag, and never should the national flag be allowed to touch the deck.

Salutes are still practised by dipping the ensign to Naval vessels on passing or being passed. Ensigns should always be topped first then lowered such that the top of the flag is at half the mast. Lowering commences on passing when stem and stem, or stem and stern when overtaking. Naval vessel acknowledges, during the pass, raises again after passing, and is followed to the top.

Source: M. Hehir 220217

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Ichthyosaur: Huge fossilised ‘sea dragon’ found in Rutland reservoir

By Jonah Fisher Environment correspondent

Published 10 January 2022

"I rang up the county council and I said I think I've found a dinosaur," explained Joe Davis, who works at Rutland Water Nature Reserve.

Matthew Power Photography

During landscaping work at the reserve's reservoir in February 2021, he had spotted something odd poking out of the mud.

It wasn't a dinosaur. But it was the fossilised remains of a 10m-long sea predator called an ichthyosaur.

And it was the largest of its type ever discovered in the UK.

"I looked down at what seemed like stones or ridges in the mud and I said this looks a bit organic, a bit different," Mr Davis told BBC News. "Then we saw something that looked almost like a jawbone."

The council said to Mr Davis: "We don't have a dinosaur department at Rutland County Council so we're going to have to get someone to call you back." A team of palaeontologists were brought in for a closer look.

They concluded it was an ichthyosaur - a type of warm-blooded, air-breathing sea predator not unlike dolphins. They could grow up to 25 metres long and lived between 250 million and 90 million years ago.

Dr Dean Lomax, a palaeontologist from Manchester University, was brought in to lead the excavation effort. He called the discovery "truly unprecedented" and - due to its size and completeness - "one of the greatest finds in British palaeontological history".

Anglian Water

"Usually, we think of ichthyosaurs and other marine reptiles being discovered along the Jurassic coast in Dorset or the Yorkshire coast, where many of them are exposed by the erosion of the cliffs. Here at an inland location is very unusual."

Rutland is more than thirty miles from the coast, but 200 million years ago higher sea levels meant it was covered by a shallow ocean.

When water levels at the Rutland reservoir were lowered again in the late summer of 2021, a team of palaeontologists came in to excavate the remains. Special attention was paid to the removal of the huge skull.

Ichthyosaurs became extinct about 90 million years ago

A large block of clay containing the ichthyosaur's head was carefully dug out before being covered in plaster and placed on wooden splints.

The block, weighing almost a tonne, was raised out of the mud and will now be examined further.

Anglian Water

"It's not often you are responsible for safely lifting a very important but very fragile fossil weighing that much," said Nigel Larkin, palaeontological conservator and Visiting Research Fellow at Reading University. "It is a responsibility, but I love a challenge."

Anglian Water, which manages the Rutland reservoir, is now looking for funding to enable the ichthyosaur to stay in the area and be enjoyed by the general public.

"A lot of people thought I was pulling their leg when I told them I'd found a large marine reptile at work," Mr Davis said. "I think a lot of people won't believe it until the TV programme goes out."

That TV programme is on Tuesday 11 January at 8pm on BBC Two. **"Digging for Britain"** will then be available on the BBC iPlayer.

Source: BBC News Science

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Four inefficient shipping regulations that no one talks about.

in International Shipping News 20/01/2022

Do you know exactly how many regulations and laws govern today's shipping?

For an industry that's about 5,000 years old and moves approximately 90% of the world's goods, while navigating some of the most challenging environments on international waters, there are bound to be a bunch of rules. In fact, there are so many, it's almost impossible to give an exact number.

Shipping was amongst the very first industries to adopt the widely implemented international safety standards. Because of its inherent global nature, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has developed a comprehensive global maritime safety regulations framework. But that's obviously not all. There's SOLAS, MARPOL, COLREG, LOADLINE AND ISPS, which just cover ship operations. Then there's STWC and ILO 147 for the seafarers, and ISM dealing with the shipping companies. On top of this, there are numerous local and port regulations to follow, certifications to obtain, taxation frameworks, cybersecurity guidelines, along with many other maritime instruments concerning more specific issues that are also in force worldwide.

To put it mildly, shipping's regulatory framework is complex.

But what makes this landscape sometimes unnecessarily cumbersome are obsolete rules and requirements that have lost their relevance with time. *"We're using AI on ships while forcing them to have a bell on board. In between these two generations of technologies, there's a huge gap that's getting too big to manage,"* says Hendrik Bußhoff, Head of Product Autonomy Solutions, Wärtsilä Voyage. *"With every technological advancement, we keep adding new regulations to the books without retiring or at least reviewing the old ones."*

"*Many of these old conditions of operation are mindlessly enforced, and unnecessary solutions are engineered to incorporate them in modern automated systems merely to check a box."*

Here are four such examples of obsolete regulations and redundant systems that shipping could sail without.

The Foghorn

In reduced and low visibility conditions, as per rules, a ship is supposed to sound the horn to signal its presence to other ships. In return, other ships are required to keep a lookout 'by sight and hearing'. On most ships, when you go on the bridge wing, you hear your auxiliary engines, engine room fans and possibly the noise of a few hundred reefer containers. There's hardly a chance of hearing another ship, not to mention determining its accurate bearing and range. So why do we have this requirement? That's because back in the old days, you had little choice but to listen. And it did work well when you were on a sailing ship or older three-island designs where the bridge is separate from the engine. But today, it's a different scenario. You no longer have to depend on hearing other ships to be aware of their presence or sound the foghorn to make them aware of yours. We now have a rich set of technology choices to solve this archaic problem that are much better and more accurate than honking the horn or ringing the bells and gongs.

Unmanned engine rooms are a good example of similar progression. Original regulations required an engine room watchkeeper to utilise their senses of hearing, sight, smell and touch. But when we substituted human watchkeeping with 'unmanned' technological solutions, we didn't have to substitute the senses of touch and smell. *"That's because, 50 years ago, someone was brave enough to say it doesn't make sense anymore, given all the technological advancements. Take the example of smell, for instance: The original purpose behind this requirement was to ensure that the whole ship doesn't go up in flames. But today we are better off with a contemporary fire detection system than trying to sniff out smoke. So, we decided to get rid of the 'smell' part of the regulation. And, thus, in engine rooms, we have advanced a little further than we have on the bridge,"* points out Bußhoff.

Logbooks and Noon Reports

There are many digital ways today to quickly and efficiently record data. Yet, the golden standard to date is writing things down. This makes the information neither searchable nor can it be structured or unified. Similarly, like everyone else, ships start their days at midnight and yet are still required to file noon reports. *"Noon reports made sense when navigation was based on stars, and around noon the sun offered a convenient opportunity to calculate the vessel's position. We definitely no longer depend on the sun to determine the ship's position and yet continue to obsess with noon reports,"* says Bußhoff. *"Ships are generally not even required to carry sextants anymore. So, even if you remembered how to use it, your noon position often is just out of reach nowadays."*

The Magnetic Compass

Lots of time and money is spent on adjusting and operationally monitoring the deviation of the magnetic compass. However, what used to be a tool of immense value on wooden ships, now delivers questionable results on today's ship made of steel. As we know, steel corrupts the core alignment of the compass that's based on Earth's magnetic field. And it doesn't get any better when you have thousands of containers made of, well, steel again. Meaning, the compass has to be reconfigured during every port call as every loading and unloading operation disrupts your careful adjustment. And so, what is often perceived as your last navigational resort to bring you home if the lights went out, has every chance of underperforming when it is needed the most. But then again, considering today's systems, your engines most likely also went out with your lights, making having the compass futile again.

But that's not all. *"There is a particular failure mode on many new builds connected to the magnetic compass,"* tells Bußhoff. *"Because there is a requirement to have the compass visible on the steering station, many ships have a periscope-like duct, pointing upwards. This open duct catches not only light but often rainwater, which finds its way down, dripping directly on instruments, damaging them and often triggering the same short-circuit against which the magnetic compass is immune."* Thus, the question here is: Does the compass still solve a real problem onboard? Or is it just another nugatory remnant from shipping's evolutionary past, only delivering a perceived sense of safety?

Numerous Certificates to sail

To give an example, we simulated an inland voyage carrying grain from Nakskov in Denmark to Salzgitter, a small port about 200 kilometres south of Hamburg, Germany. The journey starts somewhere in the Baltic Sea, and we travel down Germany's inland river system. To complete this single journey, it requires six different operator qualifications and certifications along with expert knowledge of the German language. Starting with the standard deep-sea certificates of competence to the different pilot exemptions certificates and separate river licenses along with a Class A general inland waterways licence, it can take about ten years of training to get there. In short, no one person can be expected to have all these skill sets alone. So, typically a vessel would have to have multiple crew members on board to be able to navigate this small stretch, or spend a handsome amount on getting special pilots' assistance at each junction. The bigger problem with such an arrangement is that all these qualifications and pilot exemption certificates are then tied to resources onboard a specific ship, in a particular area.

Instead, if the operations were carried out by a remotely monitored vessel, there won't be a need to have six different specialists on board anymore. Having the right competencies available in a single remote control centre, and used only when they are needed, would both suffice and optimise the process. This way, the same bunch of experts, who are no more tied to a particular vessel, can be shuffled to manage multiple ships in a fleet as, when and where their specialised skill sets are required.

This will not only cut costs and ease operations but also help tackle any plausible crew shortages. Having niche specialisations among operators will also make training easier and faster. *"Instead of spending ten years to obtain multiple licenses and certifications to operate one vessel, a person can operate multiple vessels on a particular stretch with a specialised but much shorter training,"* says Bußhoff.

Shipping is full of such examples where we're expected to have modern automation work around rather ancient rules, which merely exist because *"things have always been done that way"*. They were the smart solutions in their age and time, but technology has advanced by leaps and bounds since. And there are much more intelligent, precise and safer systems to take care of the same functions. But we have not bothered to get rid of some of these archaic rules and replace them with something more contemporary.

The sea is an unforgiving medium where safety always comes first. Bad weather, wind and waves make for a dangerous environment that challenges the ingenuity of engineers, designers, and navigators. That won't change when the balance between humans and technology shifts in favour of technology. Plus, as the push for decarbonisation becomes a dominant driver, the introduction of new technologies will bring new ways of working and demand a new mindset from everyone involved in shipping.

But before we start building ships with new technology, maybe, it's time to re-evaluate a bit, think which regulations and guidelines are still relevant and make sense, and which ones have become outdated. The answer is not simply to keep adding new regulations, but also to analyse the old rules and their fundamentals – ask why they exist in the first place, and then implement intelligently – revise where needed, and get rid of the unnecessary.

After all, regulations are not a checklist with ticks alongside. They are the most logical measures taken to govern the most rudimentary principle of the maritime industry – ensuring safety at all times.

Source: Wärtsilä Oyj

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Royal Navy's first female admiral takes command

Published 19 January

A Jersey woman has become the Royal Navy's first female admiral.

Rear Adm Jude Terry

Jude Terry, 48, takes the helm as Director of People and Training and Naval Secretary after nearly 25 years' service.

Rear Adm Terry is responsible for more than 40,000 regular and reservist sailors, Royal Marines, Royal Fleet Auxiliary staff and civil servants.

She said being a woman was irrelevant to her post and rank and that "someone has to be first".

"The world has changed in terms of what people want from life and careers, whatever their gender, and the navy needs to work to modernise our organisation to support this change - a diverse and inclusive workforce is a better place for all but is also proven to deliver better outcomes," Rear Adm Terry said.

First Sea Lord, Adm Sir Ben Key said Rear Adm Terry was "a great example of all the amazing women serving today. and a role model for all who serve and those who follow".

She took the reins of her department from her predecessor Rear Adm Phil Hally following a ceremony aboard HMS Victory in Portsmouth.

Source: BBC News

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Final remnants of the *Wakashio* removed

Sam Chambers January 21, 2022

Some 18 months after it ran aground on a reef off the coast of Mauritius, the remnants of the *Wakashio* newcastlemax bulk carrier are no longer scarring the Indian Ocean.

bMC Group

The ship's owner and its salvage team have confirmed that the stern section of the hull has now been removed as has all debris in the vicinity. A diving survey was conducted by the Mauritius authorities five days ago which confirmed the completion of the wreck removal work and recovery of any debris and pollutants around the wreck.

The aft portion of the giant vessel was towed out to sea and scuttled in 2020.

Work to remove the oil booms installed in the surrounding area is underway and is expected to be completed by the end of January.

Two crew members were recently charged over the grounding of the *Wakashio*, 2020's most high profile ship casualty.

Source: Splash247 220121

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New U.S. Virgin Islands Open Registry Officially Launched

Mike Schuler February 1, 2022

New open international registry launched in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Maritime unions strongly condemn the idea.

Lukasz Stefanski/Shutterstock

A new U.S. Virgin Islands open ship registry was officially launched Tuesday during an event at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

Maritime unions have issued a joint statement condemning the idea.

The ship registry is part of a "*Revitalization Plan for US Maritime Trade, Commerce and Strategic Competition,*" developed by the Northeast Maritime Institute's Center for Ocean Policy and Economics (COPE) and "advised by an array of leading thinkers in the maritime industry." Northeast Maritime College (NMI) is a private maritime college based in Massachusetts.

The plan has been billed by its designers as "the most relevant maritime initiative in the past 75 years," promising to "support and assist in resolving America's supply chain crisis, ensure maritime sovereignty and security, and revitalize maritime commerce," according to a press release announcing the launch.

During Tuesday's event, the Honorable Albert Bryan, Jr., Governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands, and NMI President Eric R. Dawicki participated in a signing ceremony launching the registry.

According to a recently published white paper by NMI's COPE describing the plan, an autonomous open international flag based in the U.S. Virgin Islands would provide "responsible and transparent oversight to a commercial fleet of foreign and domestically owned and operated vessels" and "allow the U.S. to command a diverse commercial fleet and reform the practices of international flags."

"A new secondary U.S. Flag dedicated to international trade and commerce would provide a significant increase to U.S. tonnage; increase U.S. maritime labour capacity; uphold higher international standards for the safety of seafarers; allow for greater oversight of global trade and commerce; facilitate green seas initiatives, and incentivize U.S. financing, investment, and ownership in domestic maritime initiatives," the paper explains.

Through the Virgin Islands' formal relationship with the United States, USVI flagged commercial ships could help bolster the nation's military sealift capability, while also benefit from the same protections provided to the U.S. flag commercial fleet by relevant U.S. agencies, including the U.S. Navy, Coast Guard and Special Forces, "especially in global hotspots," the paper says.

"The creation of an open, international U.S. Virgin Islands registry will expand the number of U.S.-flagged vessels traversing the world's oceans. Those ships that fly the USVI flag will carry the same level of protection as their U.S. flagged counterparts as they travel around-the-world," COPE writes.

Since the USVI is exempt from the Jones Act, COPE believes basing a new maritime registry there "allows the U.S. maintain the regulatory framework of the Jones Act, a 'Separate, Yet One,' policy, and at the same time increase U.S. international competitiveness and influence in the global maritime community," according to the paper.

Additional action items listed in the revitalization plan include the development of a short sea transhipment hub in the Caribbean to help alleviate congestion, building "public/private/international partnerships to address strategic maritime issues, increase

transparency and enforce legal and ethical standards," and establishing and implementing a green shipping strategy, including decarbonization of the U.S.-flagged fleet. There are also plans for a Maritime Venture Capital Fund and "state of the art" education and training in the U.S. and abroad to help modernize the maritime workforce.

Maritime unions condemn the registry

Responding to the registry launch, a number of U.S. based labour organizations (including the American Maritime Organization, Sailors Union of the Pacific, Seafarers' International Union, International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots, Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association, and Marine Firemen's Union) have issued a statement strongly condemning the idea and calling on the Department of Defense, the Maritime Administration, the Biden Administration and the Congress to "reject any suggestion that United States Virgin Islands flag vessels be treated as if they are U.S. flag and U.S. crewed vessels for any purpose or for any program."

"On behalf of the licensed and unlicensed American merchant mariners who have proudly and without fail served our country since its founding, we oppose in the strongest possible terms the creation of an open registry in the Virgin Islands, a territory of the United States," the labour organizations said in the joint statement.

The labor unions contend that a U.S. open registry will provide no more benefit to the U.S. than any other flag of convenience does to its flag nation and called the move an "affront to American mariners."

"The proposed Virgin Islands flag of convenience open registry will not benefit the United States nor America's maritime industry, any more than any other second or open registry benefits a national flag country. In fact, the establishment and growth of second registries by other industrialized nations has done little more than decimate their national flag fleets to the point that they are no longer able to provide the requisite military security and logistical support to their flag nations," according to the labour organizations.

"At its core, this proposal, allowing for the operation of vessels with foreign mariners under a United States open registry, is an affront to the American mariners who have always put themselves in harm's way whenever called upon by our nation," they say.

The statement is signed by:

- David Connolly, President, Sailors Union of the Pacific
- Paul Doell, President, American Maritime Officers
- Dan Duncan, Secretary-Treasurer, Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO Don Marcus, President, International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots
- Anthony Poplawski, President, Marine Firemen's Union
- Greg Regan, President, Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO
- Michael Sacco, President, Seafarers International Union

Adam Vokac, President, Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association

Source: gCaptain 220202 —oo00oo--

China's COSCO Pays Huge Bonuses 30 Times Worker's Salary Amid Container Shipping Boom

Bloomberg January 20, 2022

By Ann Koh (Bloomberg)

Asian shipping companies are offering mega bonuses to employees amid a boom in freight rates, with China's state-owned giant Cosco Shipping Holdings Co. doling out as much as 30 times a worker's monthly salary, according to Caixin Global.

Sheila Fitzgerald / Shutterstock.com

Cosco is doling out the huge year-end bonuses to employees including its sales and marketing staff, Caixin said, citing employees at the company. Other shippers are also giving out generous rewards. A worker at Taiwan's Evergreen Marine Corp. received a year-end bonus that was nearly 40 times their monthly salary, according to the daily.

Asian shipping lines have seen revenues soar on record freight rates, as the pandemic created major disruptions to the global supply chain. Surging demand for consumer goods coupled with lockdowns and border closures have created a worldwide shortage of shipping capacity and port delays.

Cosco's earnings jumped 1,651% to 67.6 billion yuan ($10.7 billion) in the first three quarters of 2021, according to a company filing. The spot rate for a 40-foot container to the U.S. from Asia topped $20,000 last year, including surcharges and premiums, up from less than $2,000 a few years ago.

Source: gCaptain 220121 —oo00oo--

Volkswagen confirms thousands of vehicles, including VW, Porsche and Audis, burning on board *Felicity Ace*

By Madison Muller (Bloomberg) — February 18, 2022

Photo courtesy Portuguese Navy

The *Felicity Ace*, a massive cargo ship carrying thousands of Volkswagen Group vehicles, caught fire near the Azores islands in the Atlantic Ocean Wednesday afternoon.

The Panama-flagged ship's 22 crewmembers were evacuated and taken to a local hotel by the Portuguese Navy and Air Force, who were deployed to help with the rescue effort, according to a statement from the Navy. The ship itself was left unmanned and adrift.

An internal email from Volkswagen AG's U.S. operations revealed there were 3,965 vehicles aboard the ship. Headquartered in Wolfsburg, Germany, the group manufactures cars under brands including VW, Porsche, Audi and Lamborghini, all of which were in stow when the vessel set ablaze.

More than 100 of those cars were headed for the Port of Houston in Texas, with VW GTI, Golf R, and ID.4 models deemed to be at risk, according to the email. The auto industry is already struggling with supply issues, including pandemic-related staffing woes and the global chip shortage.

Luke Vandezande, a spokesperson for Porsche, said the company estimates around 1,100 of its vehicles were among those on board *Felicity Ace* at the time of the fire. He said customers affected by the incident are being contacted by their dealers. "Our immediate thoughts are of relief that the 22 crew of the merchant ship *Felicity Ace* are safe and well," Vandezande said.

A spokesperson for Lamborghini's U.S. operation declined to comment on the number of cars the company had on board or which models were affected but said that they are in contact with the shipping company to get more information about the incident.

Some customers expressed their disappointment on social media. One Twitter user reported his custom spec'd Porsche Boxter Spyder was on board the ship. Standard models of the vehicle start around $99,650.

Source: gCaptain 220219 —oo00oo--

It's all a matter of perception!

1. The fattest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference. He acquired his size from too much pi.
2. I thought I saw an eye-doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian.
3. She was only a whisky-maker, but he loved her still.
4. A rubber-band pistol was confiscated from an algebra class, because it was a weapon of math disruption.
5. No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.
6. A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.
7. A grenade thrown into a kitchen in France would result in Linoleum Blownapart.
8. Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.
9. A hole has been found in the nudist-camp wall. The police are looking into it.
10. Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.
11. Atheism is a non-prophet organisation.
12. Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway. One hat said to the other: 'You stay here; I'll go on a head.'
13. Iwondered why the baseball kept getting bigger. Then it hit me.
14. A sign on the lawn at a drug rehab centre said: 'Keep off the Grass.'
15. The midget fortune-teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.
16. The soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.
17. A backward poet writes inverse.
18. In a democracy it's your vote that counts. In feudalism it's your count that votes.
19. When the cannibals ate a missionary, they got a taste of religion.
20. If you jumped off the bridge in Paris, you'd be in Seine.
21. A vulture carrying two dead racoons boards an airplane. The stewardess looks at him and says, 'I'm sorry, sir, only one carrion allowed per passenger.'
22. Two fish swim into a concrete wall. One turns to the other and says, 'Dam!'
23. Two paddlers sitting in a kayak were chilly, so they lit a fire in the craft. Unsurprisingly it sank, proving once again that you can't have your kayak and heat it too.

With thanks to Lawrence Black

Source: Maritime Advocate 796 —oo00oo—