



The Porthole

Volume 22 No. 4

April 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

Welcome to the April issue of the Porthole!

These comments are written by the Hon. Editor, in the absence of the Branch Master, who is convalescing after a shoulder reconstruction. The condition seems to be contagious as Michael Carrington, our Sea-going Warden, is also undergoing a similar operation!

What with COVID, elections just past and future and the appalling invasion of Ukraine, local maritime matters have not figured much in the news lately. Perhaps, with the change of State Government, the question of a deep water port on Kangaroo Island will be raised again, and it remains to be seen whether work on the promised green hydrogen plant will be commenced.

Because of work commitments, COVID and human frailty, attendance at the Branch meetings has been low. However, with the gradual lifting of COVID restrictions, I hope there will be an increase in the numbers. Younger members would be particularly welcome.

Ian Dickson
Hon. Editor

In this issue

<i>Ships to the Rescue</i> Michael Grey	2
<i>Minister discovers Ship-ping Industry</i>	2/3
<i>South African ship that found the Endeavour</i>	3/4
<i>Maju 510 Tug: Singapore's first autonomous vessel project completed</i>	5
<i>Ever Forward re-floated</i>	6
<i>Floating dock tilts and nearly sinks</i>	6
<i>China's transport links with Central Asia in the spot-light</i>	6/7
<i>Marin Institute tested barriers aimed at averting collisions</i>	7
<i>Cheque Mate</i>	7
<i>Popeye the Sailor Man - Who knew?</i>	8
<i>Why Russia gave up Alaska</i>	8/10
<i>Imprecision</i>	10
<i>Interview Experiences</i>	11
<i>Portuguese citizen arrested in connection with Beirut explosion</i>	11
<i>Branch members only</i>	
<i>Branch meeting 30/03/22 minutes</i>	12

**COVID-19 restrictions permitting,
the next Branch meeting will be held at**

**The Largs Pier Hotel. 198 The Esplanade, Largs Bay,
on Wednesday, 27th April 2022, at 1145 for 1200.**

**Please confirm your attendance at the lunch or register your apology
before 1200 on Monday, 25th April 2022
with Bob Westley (0427 644 947)
or Ian Dickson (0418 807 788)**



Ships to the rescue

By Michael Grey

The volcanic eruption that has devastated Tonga was extraordinary in that it was possible to see it, in real time, from a fortuitously positioned satellite directly above the colossal explosion. The Pacific is a very big ocean, but this looked vast, like a scaled-up recording of the nuclear blasts which gave Bikini Atoll a small place in our atomic history. Indeed, such were the apparent dimensions of the explosion as it appeared from space, that it seemed to be a minor miracle that no ships on passage were overwhelmed.

And in all the reports which came in from the damaged island, there was not even a mention of merchant ships in the vicinity, which perhaps says something of their general invisibility. Only a pollution event, caused by extreme waves from the eruption involving a tanker discharging alongside in faraway Peru, seemed to register with world media. Oil spills are always worth emphasising!

Perhaps there were just no ships on the route that used to take vessels bound from Panama to New Zealand ports. Maybe they just go a different way these days, or perhaps they just got a bit lucky and were routed otherwise on that particular day. It is certainly an area of sea in which the chart and sailing directions retain a certain number of "known unknowns" in the shape of reported shoals, which, when properly investigated by the hydrographers, cannot be found, which suggests that there is quite a lot of undersea activity, with mysterious things happening in the depths.

Indeed, this writer can recall a cloudless Pacific morning on passage to New Zealand, south of Tonga, when we saw a sinister brown line across the azure sea right ahead of us, where the whole sea seemed to change colour. We changed course to stay in the blue waters and then, with the echo sounder running, cautiously approached the edge of the discoloration. We dropped the sea water temperature bucket into the water, which produced a sample of cloudy liquid, faintly smelling of sulphur. This, we were told some months later by the Met. Office, was evidence of underwater volcanic activity, which at least had broken the monotony of a Pacific crossing.

The Tonga emergency also might have emphasised that when there is some unforeseen natural disaster (which happens more frequently than some people might suppose), there is nothing quite like ships to provide the aid that is needed by these stricken populations. Aircraft have limited lifting capacity and require runways that are undamaged or clear of debris to offer any help whatsoever – something that was certainly the case in Tonga, where the runways were deep in volcanic ash.

And if we look at the sort of damage that can be caused by earthquakes, tsunami and extreme weather events around the world, the sort of plant that will make the most impact in relief efforts tends to be too heavy or large to be airlifted in sufficient quantities to make a difference. Heavy lifting equipment, airlift helicopters, diggers and bulldozers, desalination plants, field hospitals, communications and worthwhile quantities of food are best provided from ships, which have ideally been designed to work with damaged port facilities.

From time to time, there have been sensible suggestions for the provision of a sort of International Marine Rescue operation, which could provide assistance in a timely manner to places sometimes wrecked by natural disasters. Various ideas have been explored for specifically designed ships, which could be pre-loaded in the same way that the US have military hardware available on pre-positioned ships in various strategic places like Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

There have been some interesting designs made public, sometimes offering an auxiliary role as training ships for seafarers struggling to gain sea time, or a limited commercial function. A very well thought out design, for disaster relief in Caribbean waters, emerged a couple of years ago in the UK. Invariably subsequent discussions on the costs of such ships, which organisations ought to be running them and how they ought to be operated, will smother the best of intentions. And sadly, while there might be an initial enthusiasm, these designs, from wherever they emerge, never seem to be translated into steel, the concept being temporarily revived, perhaps, when the next humanitarian disaster occurs.

Michael Grey is former editor of Lloyd's List.

Source: *Maritime Advocate* 796

—oo0oo—

Minister discovers shipping industry

By Michael Grey

"In the shipping industry" an old Greek shipowner said to me, "we operate not with the help of the government, but in spite of it". And it is absolutely true, no matter where a shipping operation might be based, although some governments are more landlubberly than others.

This statement, uttered more in sorrow and weary resignation than in anger many years ago, came back to me as we read with mounting disbelief of the suggestion by the UK Secretary of State for Transport that the ports must become a sort of inspectorate to check out the pay packets of the crews of visiting ships. This of course was the wheeze as the government flailed around seeking to punish P&O Ferries for its combined HR and PR catastrophe in the summary dismissal of 800 of its employees.

The national minimum wage was the weapon of choice, and it was intolerable that any seafarer aboard ships docking in this realm should be paid any less than this hourly rate. Urgent talks would take place with countries on the other end of ferry routes

to see if “corridors” could be established along which only the minimum waged might travel. And the ports would be tasked to check out the pay packets, preventing ships, with seafarers who are paid less than the going rate, from entering these fair wage waters. Meanwhile all sorts of government departments are roaring around to facilitate the prosecution of P&O Ferries and its unrepentant chief executive for various unspecified crimes, once the lawyers can agree on their nature.

You can probably guess where this is all going. Who remembers the suggestion of some years ago that urgent action needed to be taken around the “European Lake” to preserve jobs which were disappearing fast as operators searched around looking for cheaper crews? That initiative went down like a lead balloon, when the highly economic workforces of the new EU members from Eastern Europe became available and dramatically undercut the conditions of crews from the West, without their employers searching further afield.

I can recall a conversation with a British short sea shipowner, who ran a very decent fleet with UK seafarers, and told me that he just could not compete with others manning their ships with cheaper workforces. He told me that he was sincerely ashamed that many of his British seafarers were in receipt of government benefits, such was the paucity of their pay packets. But there was no way that he could pay them more if he was to compete with road haulage or competition manned more economically. His fine little family company, it goes without saying, is now just a memory.

The P&O Ferries behaviour was downright disgraceful, both in the manner of its labour relations and the possibly fatal harm to the brand, but there have been no government interventions or ministerial grandstanding throughout the long years in which jobs on ships have been outsourced to contracted labour, to manning agents in far off places who will offer seafarers for a few dollars less. There are seafarers working for far less than the UK minimum wage in every port in the kingdom, in passenger ships, freight ferries, coastal tankers, supply boats, short sea and coastal traders. But to listen to the indignant Transport Secretary and the politicians of every party, you would think that this is something new and extraordinarily outrageous that has been just discovered as the result of P&O Ferries’ shocking behaviour.

The search for ever cheaper labour is endemic in an industry that is characterised by its parsimony. There was no ministerial action when we first saw Philippine or sub-continental hands shivering in their oilskins in offshore craft in winter-bound Peterhead, or living aboard battered middle water trawlers. I recall that it was left to people, like port chaplains, to intervene on behalf of sub-continental seafarers running a shuttle tanker around the coast on a twelve-month contract, without a single hour off.

Nobody, other than the unions, has even commented on the way the European short sea fleet has gravitated to cheap and often quite incompetent flags, just to shave a few more dollars off their costs. I once took pride in my knowledge of geography, but many of these ships are registered in ports most of us will have no clue as to where they might be. There will be hands aboard these ships to whom the UK minimum wage would be unimaginable wealth, but it is only their willingness to work for far less that makes the economics of these vessels just about add up.

And that is the reality, which might be just about dawning on Grant Shapps, in his new-found discovery of the maritime world, where a culture of cheapness has suited everyone, as far back as the days when a dug-out canoe was the channel ferry of choice.

Anyway, the ports have made it pretty clear what they think about the Minister’s grand plan for a wages inspectorate to be bolted on to their responsibilities, thus alienating the customers they work hard to win and retain. I thought their response extremely diplomatic, when more seamanlike language might have been entirely appropriate.

Michael Grey is former editor of Lloyd’s List.

Source: Maritime Advocate 801

—oo00oo—

The South African ship that found Antarctica’s Endurance wreck is vital for climate science

Published: April 7, 2022 12.53am AEST

Author: Sarah Fawcett, Senior Lecturer, University of Cape Town

Disclosure statement

Sarah Fawcett receives funding from the National Research Foundation (South African National Antarctic Programme) and the University of Cape Town Vice-Chancellor Future Leaders 2030 Fund.

Partners: University of Cape Town provides funding as a partner of The Conversation AFRICA.

It was 1914 when the English explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton set sail on his Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition aboard a ship called *Endurance*. It was an ill-fated journey: the ship got trapped in the ice and eventually crushed by pack ice in 1915. It sank to the bottom of Antarctica’s Weddell Sea. (Shackleton and his entire crew survived the ordeal by escaping in smaller boats.)



It was difficult to believe that the *Endurance* might ever be found. The icy Weddell Sea is inhospitable and the wreck lay in more than 3000 metres of water. But thanks to a South African vessel, the *SA Agulhas II*, *Endurance* was found in March 2022. It was the second time the polar icebreaker reached the coordinates that *Endurance*’s Captain Frank Worsley recorded as the ship went down. The first was in 2019; the ship was not located on that occasion

Africa is becoming a leader in aspects of Antarctic science. For example, it is highly unusual to make *in situ* measurements of the physics, chemistry, and biology of the open Southern Ocean and its sea ice in winter because of the darkness, inhospitable

weather conditions and high concentrations of sea ice.

The *SA Agulhas II* has also served – and continues to serve – as a training ground for hundreds of students, most of them South African, in a range of disciplines: oceanography, marine biology, atmospheric science and more. It annually supports *SEAmester*, a ship-based educational programme dubbed “South Africa’s first class afloat”. During this government-funded capacity-building expedition, approximately 50 postgraduate students from across the country spend 10 days aboard the ship. They are introduced to interdisciplinary, applied, and the tale of the *Endurance* is fascinating. But so is the story of the *SA Agulhas II*. Because of this ship, South [Africa provides] hands-on marine science.



A 1916 image of the *Endurance* trapped in ice.
Bettmann collection/Getty Images

Shackleton’s so-called “Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration” was fundamentally a show of European colonial might. It kicked off decades of Antarctic research that was open near-exclusively to white men.

So it is fitting that one of the world’s most impressive icebreaking research vessels is today owned and operated by the only African signatory of the 1961 Antarctic Treaty – which protects Antarctica and its

surrounding ecosystems from exploitation and annexation – and is a platform to train African researchers undertaking globally-relevant research.

Fully equipped

The *SA Agulhas II* is a Polar Class 5 vessel owned by the South African Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment and operated by African Marine Solutions.

She was built in the shipyard of STX Finland in Rauma, Finland, and handed over to the South African government in 2012. Cape Town is her home port.

At 134 metres long, with ten decks, a crew of 45 and berth space for 100 scientists, the *SA Agulhas II* was uniquely designed as both a polar supply ship and scientific research vessel. As part of the ship’s mandate, she annually supplies fuel, food, personnel, and other essential resources to South Africa’s research bases in Antarctica and on the Subantarctic Marion and Gough Islands.

She is also equipped with eight permanent scientific laboratories (with space on the stern for six additional specialised labs in shipping containers). The ship’s infrastructure allows for various instruments and sample collection equipment (and even people) to be deployed over the side or through the centre of the vessel via an opening in the hull known as a “moon pool”.

These and other features are critical when exploring a location as remote, vast and inhospitable as the Southern Ocean, which is typically defined as the waters south of 40°S that connect the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans. The westerly winds can exceed 60 km/hr, driving swells of over 10 metres. Sea ice more than a metre thick often extends over 1,000 km north of Antarctica. These factors make the region arguably the most logistically challenging and expensive ocean in which to conduct research.

Such research is critical. The Southern Ocean is the most important of all oceanic regions for Earth’s climate. Waters originating near Antarctica transport large quantities of heat and dissolved gases, such as the powerful greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide (CO₂), around the planet and into the deep ocean to be stored for hundreds of years.

Nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus, critical to all life on Earth, flow from the Southern Ocean to the tropical and temperate latitudes. There they are believed to support at least two-thirds of global ocean productivity. Without the Southern Ocean, our planet would not be habitable: continued research and monitoring of this marine system is critical.

The *SA Agulhas II* was able to reach the *Endurance* wreck site partly because of lighter than normal summertime ice conditions in the Weddell Sea. This is almost certainly a consequence of human-driven warming of the natural world. Significant reductions in Antarctic ice cover due to atmospheric and oceanic warming, along with related changes to the Southern Ocean and its ecosystems, present a very real threat to Earth’s habitability.

Broader value

Across the world, and in South Africa, government funding for research is declining; proportionally more science is being supported by private funders. A significant risk of this model is that a handful of powerful people, rather than a community of scientists reliant on peer-review and subject to checks and balances, get to set the global research agenda.

The *SA Agulhas II* stands out because she belongs to the people of South Africa. The ship’s success, under the leadership of master mariner Captain Knowledge Bengu, in locating the *Endurance* is a reminder of her value not only to South African research, but to current and future global science initiatives.

Source: *The Conversation*

—oo0oo—

Maju 510 Tug: Singapore's First Autonomous Vessel Project Completed

MarineLink April 7, 2022

Singapore's Keppel Offshore & Marine said Thursday it had completed work on the Maju 510 tug, its first autonomous vessel project.



As the systems integrator for the autonomous solutions, Keppel O&M upgraded the Maju 510 by digitalising onboard systems and processes, modifying the vessel, as well as integrating best-in-class technologies and enhanced systems connectivity. - Credit: Keppel O&M

"Capable of autonomous vessel navigation as well as collision detection and avoidance (CDCA), the Maju 510 tug, owned and operated by Keppel Smit Towage, is the first vessel in the world to receive the Autonomous Notation from ABS classification society," Keppel O&M said.

According to Keppel O&M, the tug is the first in South Asia that can be remotely operated by joystick control. It can be controlled from the shore command centre with a joystick even for complex manoeuvres, and was the first vessel in the world to receive the ABS Remote Control Navigation Notation in October 2021. According to Keppel O&M, the remote-control feature leverages the ultra-low latency 4.5G network connectivity of M1, another member of the Keppel Group, to establish standards and data transfer links in terms of latency and reliability for the ship to shore communication, and support mission-critical Internet-of-Things maritime applications.

Furthermore, the vessel is the first vessel to receive the Smart (Autonomous) Notation under the Singapore Registry of Ships (SRS) by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA). This certifies the tug's ability to perform autonomous and remote-control navigation in a controlled environment with seafarers on board.

As the systems integrator for the autonomous solutions, Keppel O&M, through its technology arm, Keppel Marine and Deepwater Technology (KMDTech), set up the shore command centre and upgraded the 65-ton bollard pull Maju 510 by retrofitting advanced systems to generate digital situational awareness and high accuracy positioning and manoeuvring.

The Maju 510 was outfitted by Keppel O&M with state-of-the-art systems and technologies, such as ABB Ability Marine Pilot Vision and Marine Pilot Control, which use artificial intelligence to automate navigational observations, fusion of data from different sources, risk assessment, decision making and vessel control. The tug was also outfitted with various technologies that KMDTech developed in partnership with MPA and the Technology Centre for Offshore and Marine, Singapore (TCOMS), such as a Digital Twin which simulates vessel behaviour in multiple scenarios.

Following the completion of the autonomous tug, Keppel O&M and Keppel Smit Towage aim to collaborate with MPA to test varying degrees of autonomous operations, including interaction and collaborative operations among autonomous vessels, tests in live traffic, remotely supervised autonomous operation with improved port connectivity, and pushing and towing operations, the company said.

As the systems integrator for the autonomous solutions, Keppel O&M upgraded the Maju 510 by digitalising onboard systems and processes, modifying the vessel, as well as integrating best-in-class technologies and enhanced systems connectivity.

Chris Ong, CEO of Keppel O&M, said, "Autonomous vessels and technologies have immense potential to transform the nature of maritime operations. We are pleased to be setting new records and industry standards at global scale with the completion of Keppel O&M's first autonomous tug.

"With in-depth engineering expertise and extensive retrofitting experience, Keppel O&M is able to customize autonomous solutions for a range of vessels. This includes digitalizing onboard systems and processes, modifying the vessel, as well as integrating best-in-class technologies and enhanced systems connectivity. We look forward to deepening our collaboration with MPA and industry partners to raise the bar for maritime operations."


Quah Ley Hoon, Chief Executive of MPA, said, "Singapore's regulatory sandbox for Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) allows industry players, like Keppel Offshore & Marine, to develop and demonstrate smart navigation capabilities in our port waters. We are pleased that under the SRS, the tugboat 'Maju 510' has received the first Smart (Autonomous) D2B notation. We will continue to collaborate with our industry partners to advance the deployment of autonomous vessels in the Port of Singapore."

Romi Kaushal, Managing Director of Keppel Smit Towage, said, "Autonomous and remote operations enhance the efficiency and safety of tug operations by adding value with additional traffic and situational operational information. This allows the tug captain and crew to focus on the more crucial tasks of safe tugging operations. We look forward to working with MPA and Keppel O&M to test and deploy more of the tug's autonomous capabilities."

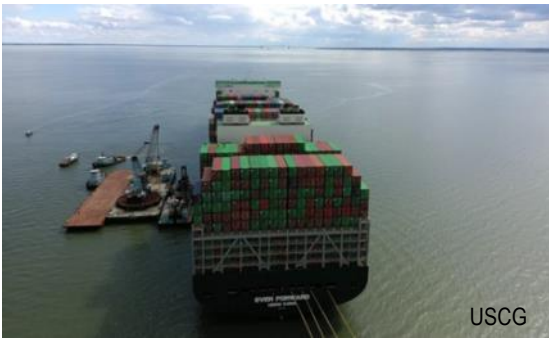
Source: MarineLink 220407

--oo00oo--

Ever Forward re-floated, will be inspected before returning to service

 Kim Biggar April 18, 2022

At 7:12 on Sunday morning, the *Ever Forward* was re-floated after being stuck in the mud in Chesapeake Bay for more than a month. A high tide, along with a month's worth of work – dredging around the ship and removing 505 containers – finally brought success to the effort.



William Doyle, executive director of the Maryland Port Administration, thanked the “many good people and companies” involved in the salvage work on LinkedIn: “A tremendous team effort with a little help from the Easter Sunday rising tide in the Chesapeake Bay. The Evergreen, *Ever Forward* has been re-floated.”

Evergreen Line said in a press release that the ship will undergo underwater inspections at anchorage, then return to the Port of Baltimore to reload the containers that were discharged, and continue on its previously scheduled voyage, beginning with a stop in Norfolk, Virginia.

The carrier noted that the ship appears to be free of damage from the grounding, and that there has been no indication of fuel leakage during its month in the mud.

Source: *Splash247 220418*

—oo00oo—

Floating dock tilts and nearly sinks in Japan

 Adis Ajdin April 20, 2022

A floating dock nearly sank after listing heavily and tilting in Saka town, Hiroshima Prefecture, on Tuesday morning.



According to the local authorities, the incident involving a 55 m long and 34 m wide dock for inspection and maintenance of ships was reported at around 08.00 hrs local time.

Although the floating dock has tilted greatly and half of it is submerged in the sea, the Japan Coast Guard said it is currently stable and there is no danger of further tilting and sinking. A small amount of oil leaked into the sea, but measures were taken to prevent it from spreading.

The authorities are investigating the cause of the accident, and full-scale restoration work is expected to take place after April 20, according to local media. No injuries have been reported.

Source: *Splash247 220420*

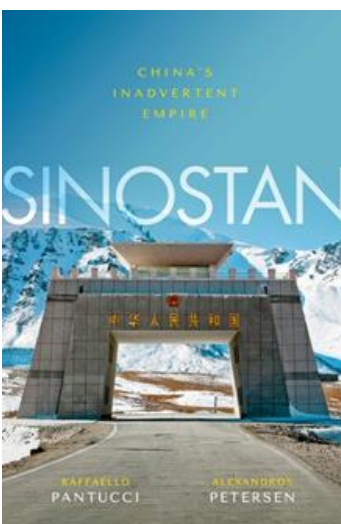
—oo00oo—

China's transport links with Central Asia in the spotlight

Splash April 18, 2022

Raffaello Pantucci, the co-author of the just published *'Sinostan: China's Inadvertent Empire'*, a book studying the People's Republic's growing influence in Central Asia, writes for Splash today.

The Chinese Belt and Road Initiative vision is to open up markets and enhance connectivity around the world, ultimately transforming China into the heart of a global web of trade routes and goods flows. But in many contexts, it is as much about connectivity more broadly than solely links back to China. In landlocked Central Asia, Beijing's vision has helped the region develop multiple links to the seas.



The most prominent example of this is Lianyungang Port in Jiangsu province which has offered itself as a staging point for Central Asian goods to get to international markets, and goods to get to the region. In late 2019, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Chinese instigated regional organization involving all of the Central Asians minus Turkmenistan, but also including Russia, India and Pakistan, held a meeting for logistics firms in the city, part of a broader engagement effort. Kazakh firms have invested heavily into the port and established numerous strong connections. Links, which have unfortunately suffered during COVID as Chinese border restrictions have tightened considerably, leaving Central Asians struggling to get goods in or out.

Beijing might have helped connect landlocked Central Asia to the seas, but it is not clear that it will be entirely smooth sailing from now on.

Another, more subversive example, is the Chabahar Port in Iran, which has long been seen primarily as an Indian-Iranian project which would enable Indian firms to reach Central Asian markets. Something they struggled to do when trying to reach directly through adversary Pakistan and war-torn Afghanistan (though this has started to change recently changed with some limited direct routes opening). But long-standing Indian prevarication over Chabahar – something Delhi has been working on for over a decade – has meant that Iran has solicited China to help

the development of the port, with mention of it included amongst the many documents circulating around the 25-year strategic deal signed between China and Iran in 2021. China is helping take over this route too.

The final, more complicated example can be found in Pakistan, where the recent Taliban take-over in Kabul has seemed to breathe life – at least from Beijing’s perspective – in a longstanding Chinese desire to connect Pakistan to Afghanistan with their BRI vision of a China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The idea is one Beijing has been pushing for some time, but has largely floundered under the Republic government in Kabul due to tensions between Islamabad and Kabul. The advent of a theoretically more friendly government in Kabul, and China’s warm embrace of the newly minted Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), suggests this idea might be on the table once again. Should this connection be realised, it will help give Afghanistan (and Central Asia) its quickest possible route to the sea, through the Chinese developed port of Gwadar in Baluchistan. It will also quite firmly anchor Afghanistan in China’s wider BRI vision, something that has been missing in any practical, meaningful way.

Whether any of this is practicable of course is a different matter altogether. While relations have changed, tensions clearly still remain between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Similarly, Chabahar is a growing port, but, equally, it remains to be seen how useful it really is as an alternative to the existing ports that access the markets that are already operational. And a key lesson many Central Asian export/importers will have learned during the pandemic was that Chinese controlled routes are not entirely reliable. It is only now, two years on, that some of the border posts between China and Central Asia are opening up once again.

Beijing might have helped connect landlocked Central Asia to the sea, but it is not clear that it is going to be entirely smooth sailing from now on.

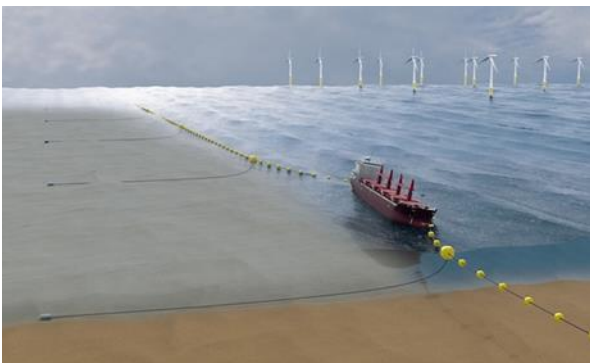
Source: *Splash: Splash247 220418*

—oo00oo--

Marin institute tested three barriers aimed at averting collisions

Dutch maritime research institute Marin have tested three barriers aimed at averting collisions between ships and wind turbines.

The research was prompted by an incident involving the *Julietta D* on 31 January this year, which saw the drifting bulk carrier initially collide with a tanker before hitting a transformer platform and a turbine foundation for the Hollandse Kust Zuid offshore wind farm.



A group of 20 experts from Marin and the wider maritime sector developed a trio of concepts for maritime crash barriers between shipping routes and wind farms during a 23 February workshop.

The first concept involves a string of surface buoys secured by drag anchors.

The second concept comprises a smart suspension net between fixed poles and the third is an anchored underwater hook line designed to catch the anchor of the drifting vessel.

Marin built scale models of all three solutions and ran tests in its Off-shore Basin on 17 and 18 March to see if the barriers were capable of deflecting a scale model comparable to the *Julietta D* in storm conditions.

Marin general director Bas Buchner said: “Our mission statement includes both marine safety and sustainable sea use.

“That means more than simply drawing attention to the dangers; it means going in search of solutions to prevent accidents.

“We were keen to do this in tandem with experts from the offshore sector and that’s why we opted for an open innovation project.

“We gave it the working title ‘crash barriers at sea’ because many wind farms are planned near traffic separation schemes: the freeways of the sea.”

Source: *renews.biz 220318*

—oo00oo--

Cheque Mate

Two old ladies, Dolly and Ruby, were talking about their grandchildren.

Dolly said, “Each year I send each of my grandchildren a card with a generous cheque inside. I never hear from them... Never receive a thank you message.”

Ruby replied, “I, too, send my grandchildren very generous cheques and I hear from each of them within a week after they receive them. In fact, they each pay me a personal visit!”

“Wow! How do you manage that?” asked Dolly.

“Very simple,” replied Ruby. I just don’t sign the cheques!”

POPEYE THE SAILOR MAN – WHO KNEW?

He was born in 1868 in Poland and, as a child, immigrated to the United States with his parents, who settled down in a small town in Illinois.

As a young man, Rocky went to sea. After a 20 year career as a sailor in the Merchant Marine, Fiegel retired. He was later hired by Wiebusch's Tavern in the city of Chester, Illinois, as a 'Bouncer' to maintain order in the rowdy bar.



Rocky quickly developed a reputation for always being involved in fighting (and usually winning). As a result, he had a deformed eye ("Pop-eye").

He also 'always' smoked his pipe, so he always spoke out of one side of his mouth. In his spare time as a Bouncer, Rocky would entertain the customers by regaling them with exciting stories of adventures he claimed to have had over his career as a sailor crossing the 'Seven Seas.'

The creator of Popeye, Elzie Crisler Segar, grew up in Chester, and, as a young man, met Rocky at the tavern and would sit for hours listening to the old sailor's amazing 'sea stories.'

Years later, Segar became a cartoonist and developed a comic strip called

'Thimble Theater.'

He honoured Fiegel by asking if he could model his new comic strip character, 'Popeye the Sailor Man,' after him. Naturally Fiegel was flattered and agreed.

Segar claimed that 'Olive Oyl,' along with other characters, was also loosely based on an actual person. She was Dora Paskel, owner of a small grocery store in Chester. She apparently actually looked much like the Olive Oyl character in his comic. He claimed she even dressed much the same way.

Through the years, Segar kept in touch with Rocky and always helped him with money; giving him a small percentage of what he earned from his 'Popeye' illustrations.

WHO didn't love the cartoons??? We watched them religiously ... so funny, so moral ... each story had a good ending ... wonder if kids these days even KNOW who Popeye is??? Who knew he was a real man?? Awesome!!!



Why Russia gave up Alaska, America's gateway to the Arctic

Published: March 30, 2017 3.05am AEDT Updated: March 30, 2022 1.09am AEDT

Author: William L. Iggiagruk Hensley

Visiting Distinguished Professor, University of Alaska Anchorage

Disclosure statement

William L. Iggiagruk Hensley is affiliated with: Chair, First Alaskans Institute, Vice Chair, Aqqaluk Trust, member of the Democratic Party, Vice Chair, Charter College, Professor, University of Alaska Anchorage



The 'soft gold' of the sea otter was what drew so many Russians to Alaska. Laura Rauch/AP Photo

One hundred and fifty-five years ago, on March 30, 1867, U.S. Secretary of State William H. Seward and Russian envoy Baron Edouard de Stoeckl signed the Treaty of Cession. With a stroke of a pen, Tsar Alexander II had ceded Alaska, his country's last remaining foothold in North America, to the United States for US\$7.2 million.

That sum, amounting to just \$138 million in today's dollars, brought to an end Russia's 125-year odyssey in Alaska and its expansion across the treacherous Bering Sea, which at one point extended the Russian Empire as far south as Fort Ross, California, 90 miles from San Francisco Bay.

Today Alaska is one of the richest U.S. states thanks to its abundance of natural resources, such as petroleum, gold and fish, as well as its vast expanse of pristine wilderness and strategic location as a window on Russia and gateway to the Arctic.

So, what prompted Russia to withdraw from its American beachhead? And how did it come to possess it in the first place?

As a descendant of Inupiaq Eskimos, I have been living and studying this history all my life. In a way, there are two histories of how Alaska came to be American – and two perspectives. One concerns how the Russians took "possession" of Alaska and eventually ceded it to the U.S. The other is from the perspective of my people, who have lived in Alaska for thousands of years, and for whom the anniversary of the cession brings mixed emotions, including immense loss but also optimism.

Russia looks east

The lust for new lands that brought Russia to Alaska and eventually California began in the 16th century, when the country was a fraction of its current size.



Russia's reach into North America once extended as far south as California, as evidenced by this Russian Orthodox church in Fort Ross. Rich Pedroncelli/AP Photo

That began to change in 1581, when Russia overran a Siberian territory known as the Khanate of Sibir, which was controlled by a grandson of Genghis Khan. This key victory opened up Siberia, and within 60 years the Russians were at the Pacific.

The Russian advance across Siberia was fuelled in part by the lucrative fur trade, a desire to expand the Russian Orthodox Christian faith to the "heathen" populations in the east and the addition of new taxpayers and resources to the empire.

In the early 18th century, Peter the Great – who created Russia's first Navy – wanted to know how far the Asian landmass extended to the east. The Siberian city of Okhotsk became the staging point for two explorations he ordered. And in 1741, Vitus Bering successfully crossed the strait that bears his name and sighted Mt. Saint Elias, near what is now the village of Yakutat, Alaska.

Although Bering's second Kamchatka Expedition brought disaster for him personally when adverse weather on the return journey led to a shipwreck on one of the westernmost Aleutian Islands and his eventual death from scurvy in December 1741, it was an incredible success for Russia. The surviving crew fixed the ship, stocked it full of hundreds of the sea otters, foxes and fur seals that were abundant there and returned to Siberia, impressing Russian fur hunters with their valuable cargo. This prompted something akin to the Klondike gold rush 150 years later.

Challenges emerge

But maintaining these settlements wasn't easy. Russians in Alaska – who numbered no more than 800 at their peak – faced the reality of being half a globe away from St. Petersburg, then the capital of the empire, making communications a key problem.

Also, Alaska was too far north to allow for significant agriculture and therefore unfavourable as a place to send large numbers of settlers. So they began exploring lands farther south, at first looking only for people to trade with so they could import the foods that wouldn't grow in Alaska's harsh climate. They sent ships to what is now California, established trade relations with the Spaniards there and eventually set up their own settlement at Fort Ross in 1812.

Thirty years later, however, the entity set up to handle Russia's American explorations failed and sold what remained. Not long after, the Russians began to seriously question whether they could continue their Alaskan colony as well.

For starters, the colony was no longer profitable after the sea otter population was decimated. Then there was the fact that Alaska was difficult to defend and Russia was short on cash due to the costs of the war in Crimea.

Americans eager for a deal

So clearly the Russians were ready to sell, but what motivated the Americans to want to buy?

In the 1840s, the United States had expanded its interests to Oregon, annexed Texas, fought a war with Mexico and acquired California. Afterward, Secretary of State Seward wrote in March 1848:

"Our population is destined to roll resistless waves to the ice barriers of the north, and to encounter oriental civilization on the shores of the Pacific."

Almost 20 years after expressing his thoughts about expansion into the Arctic, Seward accomplished his goal.

In Alaska, the Americans foresaw a potential for gold, fur and fisheries, as well as more trade with China and Japan. The Americans worried that England might try to establish a presence in the territory, and the acquisition of Alaska, it was believed, would help the U.S. become a Pacific power. And, overall, the government was in an expansionist mode backed by the then-popular idea of "manifest destiny."

So a deal with incalculable geopolitical consequences was struck, and the Americans seemed to get quite a bargain for their \$7.2 million.

Just in terms of wealth, the U.S. gained about 370 million acres of mostly pristine wilderness – almost a third the size of the European Union, including 220 million acres of what are now federal parks and wildlife refuges. Hundreds of billions of dollars in whale oil, fur, copper, gold, timber, fish, platinum, zinc, lead and petroleum have been produced in Alaska over the years – allowing the state to do without a sales or income tax and give every resident an annual stipend. Alaska still likely has billions of barrels of oil reserves.

The state is also a key part of the United States defence system, with military bases located in Anchorage and Fairbanks, and it is the country's only connection to the Arctic, which ensures it has a seat at the table as melting glaciers allow the exploration of the region's significant resources.

Impact on Alaska Natives

But there's an alternate version of this history.

When Bering finally located Alaska in 1741, Alaska was home to about 100,000 people, including Inuit, Athabascan, Yupik,

Unangan and Tlingit. There were 17,000 alone on the Aleutian Islands.

Despite the relatively small number of Russians who at any one time lived at one of their settlements, mostly on the Aleutians Islands, Kodiak, Kenai Peninsula and Sitka, they ruled over the native populations in their areas with an iron hand, taking children of the leaders as hostages, destroying kayaks and other hunting equipment to control the men and showing extreme force when necessary.

The Russians brought with them weaponry such as firearms, swords, cannons and gunpowder, which helped them secure a foothold in Alaska along the southern coast. They used firepower, spies and secured forts to maintain security, and selected Christianised local leaders to carry out their wishes. However, they also met resistance, such as from the Tlingits, who were capable warriors, ensuring their hold on territory was tenuous.



While the U.S. treated Alaska's Native population much better than the Russians, it's still been a rocky relationship, even today. Al Grillo/AP Photo

By the time of the cession, only 50,000 indigenous people were estimated to be left, as well as 483 Russians and 1,421 Creoles (descendants of Russian men and indigenous women).

On the Aleutian Islands alone, the Russians enslaved or killed thousands of Aleuts. Their population plummeted to 1,500 in the first 50 years of Russian occupation due to a combination of warfare, disease and enslavement.

When the Americans took over, the United States was still engaged in its Indian Wars, so they looked at Alaska and its indigenous inhabitants as potential adversaries. Alaska was made a military district by Gen. Ulysses S. Grant with Gen. Jefferson C. Davis selected as the new commander.

For their part, Alaska Natives claimed that they still had title to the territory as its original inhabitants and having not lost the land in war or ceded it to any country, including the U.S., which technically didn't buy it from the Russians but bought the right to negotiate with the indigenous populations. Still, Natives were denied U.S. citizenship until 1924, when the Indian Citizenship Act was passed.

During that time, Alaska Natives had no rights as citizens and could not vote, own property or file for mining claims. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, in conjunction with missionary societies, in the 1860s began a campaign to eradicate indigenous languages, religion, art, music, dance, ceremonies and lifestyles.

It was only in 1936 that the Indian Reorganization Act authorized tribal governments to form, and only nine years later overt discrimination was outlawed by Alaska's Anti-Discrimination Act of 1945. The law banned signs such as "No Natives Need Apply" and "No Dogs or Natives Allowed," which were common at the time.

Statehood and a disclaimer

Eventually, however, the situation improved markedly for Natives.

Alaska finally became a state on Jan 3, 1959, when President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Alaska Statehood Act, allotting it 104 million acres of the territory. And in an unprecedented nod to the rights of Alaska's indigenous populations, the act contained a clause emphasizing that citizens of the new state were declining any right to land subject to Native title – which by itself was a very thorny topic because they claimed the entire territory.

A result of this clause was that in 1971 President Richard Nixon ceded 44 million acres of federal land, along with \$1 billion, to Alaska's native populations, which numbered around 75,000 at the time. That came after a Land Claims Task Force that I chaired gave the state ideas about how to resolve the issue.

Today Alaska has a population of 740,000, of which 120,000 are Natives.

As the United States celebrates the signing of the Treaty of Cession, we all – Alaskans, Natives and Americans of the lower 48 – should salute Secretary of State William H. Seward, the man who eventually brought democracy and the rule of law to Alaska.

This is an updated version of an article originally published on March 29, 2017.

Source: *The Conversation*

—oo0oo—

Imprecision

There were three men at a bar. One man got drunk and started a fight with the other two men. The police came and took the drunk guy to jail.

The next day the man went before the judge. The judge asked the man, "Where do you work?"

The man said, 'Here and there.'

The judge asked the man, 'What do you do for a living?'

The man said, 'This and that.'

The judge then said, 'Take him away.'

The man said, 'Wait, judge, when will I get out?'

The judge said to the man, 'Sooner or later'

(With thanks to Paul Dixon)

Source: *Maritime Advocate* 802

—oo0oo—

Interview Experiences

Vice Presidents and personnel directors of the one hundred largest corporations were asked to describe their most unusual experience interviewing prospective employees.

- A job applicant challenged the interviewer to an arm wrestle.
- The interviewee wore a Walkman, explaining that she could listen to the interviewer and the music at the same time.
- The candidate fell and broke an arm during interview.
- The candidate announced she hadn't had lunch and proceeded to eat a hamburger and french fries in the interviewer's office.
- The candidate explained that her long-term goals was to replace the interviewer.
- The candidate said he never finished high school because he was kidnapped and kept in a closet in Mexico.
- The balding Candidate excused himself and returned to the office a few minutes later wearing a headpiece.
- The applicant said if he was hired he would demonstrate his loyalty by having the corporate logo tattooed on his forearm.
- The applicant interrupted interview to phone her therapist for advice on how to answer specific interview questions.
- The candidate brought a large dog to interview.
- The candidate dozed off during interview.

The employers were also asked to list the "most unusual" questions that have been asked by job candidates.

- "What is it that you people do at this company?"
- "What is the company motto?"
- "Why aren't you in a more interesting business?"
- "What are the zodiac signs of all the board members?"
- "Why do you want references?"
- "Do I have to dress for the next interview?"
- "I know this is off the subject, but will you marry me?"
- "Will the company move my rock collection from California to Maryland?"
- "Will the company pay to relocate my horse?"
- "Does your health insurance cover pets?"
- "Would it be a problem if I'm angry most of the time?"
- "Does your company have a policy regarding concealed weapons?"
- "Do you think the company would be willing to lower my pay?"
- "Why am I here?"

Source: *Maritime Advocate* 801

--oo00oo--

Portuguese citizen arrested in ongoing investigation into the Beirut port explosion

Sam Chambers April 22, 2022

Jorge Moreira, a 43-year-old Portuguese man, was arrested by Spanish authorities on Thursday in connection with the enormous explosion that destroyed Beirut port two years ago. The man is wanted by Lebanon "for an offence of terrorism and use of explosives resulting in death, with a maximum sentence of life imprisonment", according to Spanish prosecutors.



Spanish authorities announced on Thursday the arrest and provisional release of a Portuguese man wanted by Interpol in connection with the explosion which killed more than 200 people in August 2020 in the port of Beirut.

Moreira was first arrested in Chile when he arrived at Santiago airport on a flight from Spain, before being immediately sent back to Madrid, in coordination with Interpol. He is suspected of having introduced "explosive elements" into Lebanon, in connection with the August 2020 explosion, according to Christian Saez, head of the Santiago airport police.

Moreira previously worked for the Mozambique Explosives Factory, placing an order for ammonium nitrate which was to be transported from Georgia to Mozambique, but which ended up being stored in the port of Beirut.

The 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate arrived at the port of Beirut in November 2013 on a ship flying the Moldovan flag called the *Rhosus*. Port authorities stored the explosive cargo in a dilapidated warehouse with cracked walls, while the abandoned *Rhosus* eventually sank in the port in 2018.

Source: *Splash247* 220422

--oo00oo--