



The Porthole

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

PO Box 1, PORT ADELAIDE, SA 5015

Branch Patron: Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC



Branch Master's Comments

Good day to All, once more,

As we come to the end of this month, I reflect on the passing and subsequent funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and of the passing of the second Elizabethan era, an era during which almost all of us spent our seagoing careers, and which saw enormous changes in our shipping world not to mention our navigational capabilities.

Whatever our royalist sympathies, or lack thereof, there is no denying that the late Queen was one of history's most remarkable women and a great stabilising force for the UK and the Commonwealth. We can only hope that her successor is as admired and appreciated as she was. Enough said. May she rest in peace. God Save the King.

Meanwhile, back in Australia, I read that it will be at least another year before the 'powers that be' even select which submarine they will commit us all to, let alone hammer out where it will be built and by whom. I sincerely hope that they will not be needed for a couple of decades...

In similar vein, we must keep our fingers crossed that the Russian war of acquisition does not become nuclear and go global. Let's hope that people have more sense.

Our meetings will be held as usual at the Largs Pier Hotel this Wednesday 28th September at 1100 for the Branch Court meeting, and 1145 for 1200 for our monthly meeting.

Any member who can make it will be appreciated.

In the meantime, I wish you all...

Happy Sailing
Bob W (SABM)

In this issue

<i>When the Boats Come In</i> Michael Grey	2
<i>Ambassadors afloat</i> Michael Grey	2/3
<i>USS Texas is in the Come Back Trail</i>	3/4
<i>Some Puns</i>	4
<i>Opinion article by Mike Schwarz, CEO IIMS</i>	5
<i>Don't Play Russian Roulette with Baltic Oil Tankers</i>	6
<i>Marine Surveyor jailed for Bunker Theft Scheme</i>	6/7
<i>Uncovering the Hazards of Abandoned & Derelict Maritime Vessels</i>	7/8
<i>Shippers sign up for Revolutionary Hydrogen-powered Box-carrying Hydrofoil</i>	8
<i>Greek-managed Bulk Carrier Shipped Coal from Russia after EU Sanctions</i>	8/9
<i>Dutch debut Clean, Automated Ship Recycling Solution</i>	9/10
<i>Flying Ferries move a Step Closer</i>	10
<i>UN ready to offload oil from decaying FSO off Yemen</i>	10
<i>Australian Investigators issue recommendations to Operator after tenth Ship Fire in 14 Years</i>	11
<i>Some More Puns</i>	11

Branch Members Only

<i>Minutes of Branch meeting 31/08/22</i>	12
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COVID-19 restrictions permitting, the next Branch meeting will be held at The Largs Pier Hotel. 198 The Esplanade, Largs Bay, on Wednesday, 28th September 2022, at 1145 for 1200. Please confirm your attendance at the lunch or register your apology before 1200 on Monday, 26th September 2022 with Bob Westley (0427 644 947) or Ian Dickson (0418 807 788)



When the boats come in

By Michael Grey

A communication from the UK Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs will probably have nobody's heart leaping with joy among the various sectors regulated by this multifarious body. It was an old shipowner who told me that he operated "in spite of" government rather than under its benign authority, and such a view will certainly predominate where farmers, food producers and fishermen congregate.

It is said that the department has long been "captured" by those whose priorities are unashamedly environmental, which accounts for fanatical enthusiasm for "rewilding" and furious planting of trees, changing the whole nature of the British landscape. Perhaps the introduced wolves will eat the beavers, before they have felled all the newly planted trees, as a sort of non-virtuous circle, which you hope might have occurred to the authorities. But greens tend not to think like the rest of us. Similarly, one wouldn't be at all surprised to discover that the ridiculous insistence that we should eschew meat (rather than chew it) will have the fell hand of some Defra sub-committee behind it. And if you wish to dredge your waterways to stop them flooding, forget it. The welfare of the invertebrates dwelling in the mud comes first.

Let us segue seamlessly to the maritime community in Northumberland, more specifically to the Holy Island of Lindisfarne, where the dead hand of Defra has recently alighted in the shape of a proposal to create what is known as a Highly Protected Marine Area around the island. There are already a number of marine conservation areas imposed in the vicinity, but this one, with all the bells and whistles attached, would prohibit pretty well everything bar paddling, in this coastal sea area. And in particular, it would spell the end of a small-scale fishing operation in which some half-dozen potters harvest crab and lobsters in a thoroughly sustainable fashion.

I should declare an interest as this is a place I know well, as my family hails from these parts, and it is fair to note that it is a precious marine habitat, which certainly does not want to see any form of industrial exploitation in the sea. But the local fishermen are genuinely "low-impact" users of the sea and take enormous pride in operating a fully sustainable fishery, recognised by the Northumberland Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Society as an exemplar. The skippers themselves know that conservation benefits them all and are the best possible policemen, protecting their own marine environment.

There is an economic case to be made for the retention of this tiny fishing fleet, in a fishery that has been operating as long as there has been a population on the island, which at the very least, is more than a millennium. Defra itself has devised criteria in which they suggest every effort will be made to "minimise social and economic impacts while maximising ecological gain", which will scarcely be fulfilled by closing down a small-scale but vital industry in this community, with surprisingly wide knock-on effects upon the island families. Maybe they think that they can move their pots and boats further offshore (which would be hazardous) or elsewhere on the coast, which would clearly negatively impact neighbouring fishing communities. The whole proposal seems to the islanders, ill-conceived, with a ludicrously short three-month consultation period, which itself has enraged everyone affected. Perhaps Defra in its wisdom thinks that a small community will be happy to roll over and submit for its supposed benefits for the environment. Perhaps the size encouraged their proposals. If this is the case, the agency has grossly miscalculated.

I have an interest here, but it is worth highlighting this David & Goliath contest on Lindisfarne because it is symptomatic of so much of what is wrong with our current priorities as the authorities roar around pursuing their often unrealistic or downright deluded environmental goals. The journal *Nature* last year published a study by Plymouth University which concluded that commercial pot fisheries are likely to be compatible with marine conservation, when managed correctly. That ought to matter because it is entirely in the fishermen's interests to conserve their stocks. So, you might suggest that this small handful of Northumbrian skippers are the best possible custodians of their own marine environment, and not some remote authority far from their shores, but which thinks it knows best. "I'm from Defra. Here to help". We think not.

Michael Grey is former editor of Lloyd's List.

Source: *Maritime Advocate* 812

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Ambassadors afloat

By Michael Grey

The old ideas are always the best, it is said, and if you are in the mood for cliches, you probably agree that they invariably come around again and again. It is interesting to see the efforts that are being made to "sell" careers at sea and to try and persuade the current workforce that life afloat isn't quite as bad as they think and they ought to hang around, rather than turn their backs on a way of life that has not treated them well in the last few years.

Around the world, there is evidence of a growing shortage of trained seafarers, which should surprise nobody, who has seen how the pandemic has turned seafarers into latter-day Flying Dutchmen, doomed to circle the world without ever being permitted to land on the quay and generally treated as disease-carrying pariahs. It's still going on. Just a few days ago we read about the Stella Maris chaplain in a UK port finding a crew which had been unable to set foot on shore for ten months, while the strange pandemic policies of China are still making life difficult for ships visiting their ports.

Small wonder that shortages are arising, and that seafarers are becoming very much more particular about the contracts they are asked to sign, if indeed they respond to the crewing departments' blandishments at all. You cannot just switch off memory, like a light.

We are also seeing a long overdue reaction from the most enlightened maritime employers, who are responding to their labour problems with a degree of sensitivity about life at sea and how it might be made kinder and more attractive. They are showing interest in health, welfare and "wellness" in their workforce, rather than the traditional attitude of "that's the job on offer- just get on

with it!" One might suggest that this is reflecting the attitudes of societies in more developed countries, where the employer wishing to recruit and retain the best will take some interest in the welfare of the individual employee. Realists (rather than cynics) will suggest that they are being forced unwillingly down this road. But shortages are emerging, and sensible employers really have no choice.

It is interesting to see that climate and environmental concerns are causing some governments to reconsider their attitude to coastal shipping, looking at supply chains and crowded landside modes of transport. But it is not always easy just to restart shipping services that have been allowed to decay for decades. In both Australia and New Zealand, they are finding that there just isn't the home-grown talent to crew the proposed services that will take cargo off the roads and onto the sea. There just are not any seafarers available.

How can life at sea be made better? There is no real mystery about it, and one might begin by enumerating some of the things that make seafarers miserable, almost all of which are regularly identified in their "Seafarers' Happiness Indices". Affordable and quality connectivity is available but needs to be available for all. Lengths of tours are an issue constantly mentioned, while people really don't need to be afraid of the difficulties of finding a new ship if they go home on leave. You can, of course, point to those countries where unemployment remains endemic, which obviously remain a brake on any meaningful progress, with plenty of people ashore desperate for any job. That, it might be suggested, sustains the dinosaur employers who don't see the need for change.

What about this problem of people struggling with mental health and the burden of loneliness, which is reported on far more these days, with tiny multinational crews rattling around in big ships? One of the welfare agencies has suggested the use of somebody aboard each ship being appointed the "Social Ambassador", to watch over the crew and prevent people retreating into misery and loneliness. Now there's an old idea reborn! On the ships I sailed in, such a role was practically the main task of the Junior 3rd Mate, whose reputation would be judged on his success in keeping the crew busy with endless competitions and amusements with the ship at sea, and sports and excursions in port. It was a thankless task, but one which honed officer-like qualities and diplomatic skills.

You will swiftly realise the difficulties in reviving such a role, in ships where there are just not enough bodies for the work that must be done and where leisure time is frequently non-existent. Junior 3rd Mates disappeared decades ago, and you have to ask who on earth will be available for this ambassadorial role in a life which has retreated to one of work, eating and sleeping, of solitary watches, and life behind closed cabin doors. If seafarers have any time for leisure, they might just respond to such ideas. But time, in a full-on world of haste and hurry, business and bureaucracy, is the missing component in a life afloat today.

Michael Grey is former editor of Lloyd's List.

Source: Maritime Advocate 813

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Battleship *USS Texas* is on the Comeback Trail

The only preserved battleship to see service in both World Wars has been fighting a largely losing battle against the elements, and this week, *USS Texas* (BB-35) will be moved for the first time since 1948 – to undergo long needed repairs and restoration.

***USS Texas*: a History and Analysis**

Launched in 1912, she provided escort and blockade duties in the Atlantic Ocean during the First World War, and in April 1917, while protecting the merchant vessel *Mongolia*, fired on a surfaced German U-Boat – the first American shots of the conflict – and later supported the Normandy landings during the Second World War.



By Patrick Feller from Humble, Texas, USA - Battleship Texas, Laporte, Texas 1212201548, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=67337788>

She was also the first battleship to be turned into a museum after her decommissioning in 1948. Since April of that year, she's been moored in the Houston Ship Channel near the San Jacinto Monument – near the location where Texan troops led by Gen. Sam Houston surprised and quickly defeated the Mexican Army in 1836.

Today Battleship *Texas* as she is now known, as the official – but entirely ceremonial – flagship of the Texas Navy.

However, all those decades spent in the water have taken their toll on the old battle wagon, and in June 2017, a six-by-eight-inch hole about fifteen feet below the waterline opened and caused the ship to list six degrees. The situation was so dire that there were concerns the ship could sink. Fortunately, work has been taken to ensure that the warship won't be lost to the elements.

On Wednesday, August 31, the now legendary battleship will be moved from her long-time home in La Porte to Galveston's Pier 21. Efforts have been underway since May when crews began to remove about 23,000 cubic yards of mud from the stern around the ship to clear a path for towing.

According to The Battleship Texas Foundation, repairs will be done at Gulf Copper and Manufacturing Corporations' Galveston Shipyard. Once Battleship Texas is docked in Galveston, months of repairs will begin to address leaking and to repair the superstructure. Most of the repairs will be funded by a \$35 million federal grant.

After the restorations are completed, it isn't clear where the ship will be preserved for future generations. However, it won't be the San Jacinto Battleground Historic Site.

Instead, Galveston has been suggested as the most likely destination, while Corpus Christi has also been suggested. Some veterans have also championed Galveston as it was the original home of the Texas Navy, dating back to when Texas was a republic, while Seawolf Park is located on Galveston's Pelican Island. The park currently houses the World War II submarine *USS Cavalla* and one of only three destroyer escorts in the world, the *USS Stewart*. *USS Texas* would certainly be in good company.

"The scope of this is really big. But when we're done, and we reopen her to the public, we want her to be seen in a condition she hasn't been seen in in years," Battleship Texas Foundation Chief Operating Officer Bruce Bramlett told reporters.

Impressive Career

BB-35 is also notable for being the only battleship still in existence today to have taken part in combat operations in both World Wars. After entering service, the New York-class warship was first deployed during the "Tampico Incident," which involved the United States' occupation of Vera Cruz, and she began fleet operations after America's entry into the First World War.

USS Texas is also noteworthy for the technological improvements and advancements that were made during the course of service with the U.S. Navy.

When she and her sister warships were constructed, U.S. turbine manufacturers were unwilling to meet the strict specifications laid down by the Navy Department's Bureau of Ships. Since no compromise could be made on standards and prices, the Bureau had to revert to the older reciprocating engines for the New York-class battleships. The use of the machinery actually may have given up to 30% improvement in economy at cruising speed, and in no way was inferior at full speed.

In addition, *USS Texas* proved to be the perfect testbed for the Navy, and in March 1919, she became the first U.S. battleship to fly off an aircraft – a British Sopwith Camel – from a temporary platform that had been fitted atop her second turret. The warship subsequently underwent a major reconstruction from 1925 to 1927, and the ship was reboilered with six Bureau-Express oil-fired units.

Other improvements were made to the battleship's combat systems, and BB-35 became the first U.S. battleship to mount anti-aircraft guns, as well as the first U.S. vessel to control gunfire with directors and range-keepers. Following the modernization, *USS Texas* alternated operations between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans until 1931, when her base was shifted to California. She served as the fleet and division flagship during U.S. Fleet exercises and, in 1937, was reassigned again to the Atlantic.

BB-35 began operating the Neutrality Patrol, and later as the United States moved towards more active support of the Allied war effort, the warship began convoying ships carrying Lend-Lease material to the United Kingdom.

The warship took part in her first combat operations of the Second World War as part of Task Group 34.8 (TG 34.8) in support of Operation Torch, the Allied invasion of North Africa. *Texas* transmitted Lt. General Dwight D. Eisenhower's first "Voice of Freedom" broadcast, which called up the Vichy French forces defending Morocco not to oppose the Allied landings. In addition, as a young news reporter, Walter Cronkite was among those onboard the battleship during the operations and was even granted permission to fly off the ship in one of her OS2U Kingfisher aircraft.

The aging battleship returned to Atlantic convoy escort duties and was among the warships to provide supporting fire during the Normandy landings. The battle wagon also participated in the bombardment of Cherbourg, during which she was hit by enemy coastal artillery fire but suffered no serious damage. After undergoing repairs in Plymouth, England, she took part in the allied invasion of the South of France during Operation Dragoon. Following an overhaul in New York City, which involved replacing her main battery barrels, *USS Texas* returned to the Pacific and later provided naval gunfire support during the Battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

She earned a total of five battle stars for her service in the Second World War.

Her toughest battle has been against time and the elements, but it looks like this is a fight she'll undoubtedly win. We wouldn't expect anything less from one of the best battleships ever to sail.

Source: *BP Shipping News*, received 4 September 2022

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Some Puns

1. Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.
2. Show me a piano falling down a mineshaft and I'll show you A-flat minor.
3. To write with a broken pencil is pointless.
4. A bicycle can't stand on its own because it is two-tired.
5. Those who get too big for their britches will be exposed in the end.
6. When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds.
7. A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.
8. If you don't pay your exorcist you get repossessed.
9. What's the definition of a will? It's a dead giveaway.

(With thanks to Paul Dixon)

Source: *Maritime Advocate* 813—oo00oo—

An opinion article by Mike Schwarz, IIMS Chief Executive Officer

I have written this short article following the publication of a report into a lithium-ion battery-related fire onboard the *MS Brim* which generated the investigation by the Norwegian Safety Investigation Authority. The vessel in question is the *MS Brim*, a 2019-built all-electric excursion catamaran offering excursion tours in the Norwegian fjords. Although not a technical man, I am troubled by some of the report findings and forgive me as I have cherry-picked the bits that concern me most from a lengthy report.

So, I pen this article in my simplistic way as a) just a concerned and interested member of the general public and b) in my role as Chief Executive Officer of the International Institute of Marine Surveying on behalf of the surveying community.

Lithium-ion batteries are not brand new, but the technology is becoming far more widely used in vessels as the world looks to decarbonize and cut emissions. The purpose of this article is not to be negative and closed to new technology, but rather to express my concerns based on what I have read with regards to this incident in particular and the safety culture around this means of propulsion. At 81 pages, the report is detailed, but I would encourage you to download it at <https://bit.ly/3bdy5vi>.

Let me take some words directly from the report itself:

‘Immediately before the fire broke out, the battery system was disconnected as a result of a ground fault, which was indicated on the panel on the bridge. Ground faults had been a recurring problem since the vessel was new. The crew, therefore, perceived the alarm as ‘one of many’.

In the interests of public and crew safety, I ask why this was thought to be acceptable and why no-one reported or did anything about a recurring problem?

Back to the report:

‘There was no camera surveillance of the battery room. The presence of a camera might have helped the crew to dispel the incorrect perception that it was the engine room that was on fire. The DNV’s updated classification rules from 2021 recommend camera surveillance of battery rooms to improve the crew’s situational awareness, in addition to gas monitoring for early detection of gases before they develop into smoke’.

I leave you to draw your own conclusions on this paragraph.

And here is another statement from the report that caused me to raise my eyebrows:

‘The investigation has also identified several areas where the risks associated with the use of lithium-ion batteries were not sufficiently identified or addressed in the design. At present, DNV’s classification rules for battery safety do not sufficiently address the risks associated with the use of lithium-ion batteries on board vessels’.

Clearly there is the suggestion that the vessel design is at fault. Will appropriate modifications be made to ensure this issue is addressed? As a potential traveller to the Norwegian fjords sometime soon, I do hope so! Mention in the report that a classification society’s rules have yet to catch up with the technology does nothing to boost my waning confidence either. As so often seems to be the case in the marine world, it appears that technology is running faster than the rule makers or maritime regulators can keep up with. I wonder how differently things might work in the aircraft business. It seems incongruous that it would be acceptable for a few of the new breed of lithium-ion powered aircraft that will surely be in the skies soon should catch fire and crash. So, what is the aircraft industry doing differently and what could the maritime sector learn?

And now, to conclude, here are the safety recommendations extracted from the report:

The Norwegian Safety Investigation Authority recommends ...

- that the Norwegian Maritime Authority issues requirements for appropriate test methods that reflect the risks associated with the design of different battery types to be chosen for conducting propagation tests.
- that the Norwegian Maritime Authority ensures that battery safety regulations be developed so that ventilation arrangements do not contribute to batteries and high-voltage components being exposed to humid sea air or seawater.
- that the Norwegian Maritime Authority introduces additional measures to verify that installations are smokeproof and ensure fire integrity.
- that the Norwegian Maritime Authority issues requirements for risk assessments relating to the use of lithium-ion batteries, and that they should contain all relevant risks identified by different disciplines, the sum of which represents the vessel’s fire risk.
- that the Norwegian Maritime Authority, as the administrative authority, cooperates with the Directorate for Civil Protection on stipulating a requirement that all Norwegian vessels, regardless of classification, must be built to a defined standard that ensures battery safety.
- that the Norwegian Maritime Authority introduces compensatory measures to address the safety of passengers and crew in the event of a lithium-ion battery fire.
- that the Directorate for Civil Protection strengthens the knowledge and expertise of the parties involved in the first-line response to accidents involving a fire on board a vessel carrying lithium-ion batteries.

Gosh, that’s a lot of safety recommendations, but read them carefully and re-read them to understand exactly what is being recommended. There is a huge onus being placed on the Norwegian Maritime Authority to react, and, presumably, this same pressure applies to other maritime regulators around the world.

So, there you have it. All I want to know is that when I get onboard such a vessel, as a paying passenger, I am reasonably safe! And in my professional role, I want marine surveyors to be aware of some of the new challenges that await them today and in the near future surrounding lithium-ion battery technology and vessel design. I would like to encourage a debate around this topic, but if nothing else, I wanted to alert people to the situation.

Mike Schwarz 27 July 2022

Source: *Flashlight 237*

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Don't Play Russian Roulette With Baltic Oil Tankers

Bloomberg September 17, 2022

By Javier Blas (Bloomberg)

Every day, dozens of oil tankers cross the narrow waterway. It's a linchpin of global trade. Shut it down and gasoline prices spike everywhere. Right now, geopolitical tension is high, and the navies of many great powers have warships patrolling it.

If you think we're talking about Iran and the Strait of Hormuz, you're not remotely close.

No — welcome to the frigid waters of the Danish straits, the narrow waterway overlooked by Copenhagen that links the Baltic Sea to the North Sea and the open waters of the Atlantic Ocean. They matter now because they are a key conduit for Russian crude and refined oil products into global markets, making it a chokepoint for the Kremlin's finances.

It's where geography, history, and politics are clashing.

The straits, at one point just 4 kilometres (2½ miles) wide, are at risk of being ensnared in a tussle between the US and Europe on one side and Russia on the other.

In early December, new European Union rules will make it illegal to provide maritime services to anyone exporting Russian crude — even to third countries. But the straits are a difficult passage. Storms are common, the waters are shallow, the coast rocky, and submerged sandbanks often move with the currents, reducing draft unexpectedly. That's why the Danish government, and the United Nations' International Maritime Organization (IMO), strongly recommend — although don't require — every vessel, particularly oil tankers, to hire a Danish pilot for the crossing.

In theory, the new rules could keep Danish pilots from boarding tankers full of Russian crude, perhaps preventing them from sailing into the high seas. In Washington, officials have quietly flagged that risk as a reason why third countries — say, China and India — should accept the G7 oil price cap on Russian oil, allowing them to continue using the pilots.

The reality is a bit more complicated.

To understand it, one must delve into history, starting with the "Treaty for the Redemption of the Sound Dues," signed in Copenhagen in 1857, which regulates to this day navigation through the straits. It says that Denmark should "supervise" the pilotage service through the straits, in effect creating an obligation to provide the service, according to Danish officials.

I asked the Danish Maritime Authority whether the EU sanctions will prohibit the provision of pilots to tankers full of Russian oil. In an emailed statement, it said: "Vessels enjoy the right of innocent passage through the Danish Straits, as defined by international law. Furthermore, Denmark is required to make pilots available to ships in innocent passage.

"There is no obligation on ships to make use of pilotage services when exercising the right of innocent passage," it added, insisting however that both the Danish government and the IMO, of which Russia has been a member since 1958, "highly recommend" the use of pilotage services.

In the statement, the Danish Maritime Authority added: "In conclusion, Denmark cannot prevent oil tankers from passing from the Baltic Sea to the high seas."

Copenhagen may ultimately reconsider its position, but its current approach seems right. Using the pilotage service to try to institute a de facto blockade on Russian oil exports would be wrong — and dangerous. European and US officials are right to try to strangle Russian oil revenue. Oil exports are financing President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine and helping him to sustain local support for his regime. But there are other, and better, ways to achieve that objective without jeopardizing maritime safety. The EU sanctions package, which will stop buyers of Russian oil from using the European financial sector and its oil tankers, is the way to go.

As with the vessels that shuttle sanctioned Iranian and Venezuelan crude, Russian oil is increasingly moving into the world's ghost fleet — rusting old tankers, flagged in countries with little appetite for safety inspections, and increasingly insured by dubious newly created operations. The owners are opaque shell companies. The crews are badly paid and often untrained. If Copenhagen were to refuse pilots to Russian oil tankers, the vessels would still be able to sail through the straits, exercising their international right of innocent passage, but at a much greater risk of a collision or, worse, even an oil spill.

Withdrawing the pilotage service in the dangerous waters of the straits is playing, ahem, Russian roulette. The last thing we need to add to the already high cost — in lives and property — of the Russian invasion of Ukraine is something like the Exxon Valdez catastrophe in the Baltic.

Javier Blas is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering energy and commodities. A former reporter for Bloomberg News and commodities editor at the Financial Times, he is co-author of "The World for Sale: Money, Power and the Traders Who Barter the Earth's Resources."

Source: gCaptain 220919

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Marine Surveyor Sentenced to Jail for Bunker Theft Scheme

An Indian marine surveyor has been sentenced to more than three months in jail for his role in a long-running bunker theft ring in Singapore, the world's largest bunkering hub.

Kumunan Rethana Kumaran, 40, was one of 12 surveyors charged with taking bribes from former Shell Bukom employees who ran an illegal scheme to siphon off fuel oil from Shell's physical bunker operations at Singapore.

The surveyors were third-party contractors, hired by Shell to inspect vessels during legitimate bunker deliveries. They allegedly took bribes to look the other way and falsify the amount of the delivery as the conspirators loaded more than the contracted amount aboard the receiving vessel. The Shell employees would sell the ship the extra fuel at below-market prices, then keep the money.

The former Shell employees allegedly at the heart of the scheme have been identified as Juandi Pungot, Muzaffar Ali Khan, Muhamad Akram and Richard Goh Chee Keong. All have been charged, and alleged ringleader Pungot has already been sentenced to a record-setting jail term of 29 years.

Surveyor Kumunan Rethana Kumaran was accused of playing a relatively minor role in the overarching scheme. Another surveyor charged in the conspiracy, Noruliman Bakti, allegedly recruited Kumaran for the operation. Kumaran allegedly abetted two instances of fuel oil misappropriation in 2016 in exchange for bribes totalling \$12,000, arranged and received through Bakti. The total value of the stolen product in the two cases was estimated at about \$630,000.

Kumaran was sentenced to 15 weeks in jail and restitution equal to the amount of the bribes he received. Alternately, he could spend another four weeks behind bars in lieu of repayment.

Over the full 10-year span of the scheme, the conspirators allegedly stole about \$130 million worth of fuel. Collectively, the 12 surveyors received only a small fraction of the amount of the theft in bribes, less than one percent of the take in total.

ED (Mike Wall, editor of Flashlight): These shameless criminals should never be allowed to work as marine surveyors again.

(With thanks to Maritime Executive)

Source: *Flashlight* 237

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Uncovering the Hazards of Abandoned & Derelict Maritime Vessels

Sponsored

September 19, 2022

\$2.6 million. That was the cost of raising the *Respect*, a 150-foot tugboat that sank in 2006 after thieves stole the copper plug from the vessel's sea chest. The *Respect* remained at the bottom of the Oakland Estuary in northern California for 7 years. Finally, she was raised and disposed of in 2014.



The *Respect* posed hazards to the environment and public safety because of the presence of oil, asbestos, and other sediments that had become contaminated over time. She also posed a navigational threat to vessels in the 35-foot-deep Oakland Estuary, which connects San Francisco Bay and San Leandro Bay.

Removing the vessel was expensive and time-consuming, taking approximately seven months to complete. It took two barge cranes to raise the vessel. At that point, the U.S. Coast Guard and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) removed hazardous substances before sending it to be taken apart and decommissioned. Crews ended up

removing 31,000 gallons of oil-laden sediment and 40 cubic yards of asbestos from the vessel.

The story of the *Respect* offers but a glimpse into a far more significant problem—and it's an issue that affects all waterways and ports in the United States and worldwide.

Thousands of Abandoned & Derelict Vessels Litter U.S. Ports & Waterways

Per the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Marine Debris Program (MDP), thousands of abandoned and derelict vessels (ADV) exist in ports and waterways across the U.S. The MDP considers an "**abandoned vessel**" one with no known owner because they cannot be found or have surrendered their rights. A "**derelict vessel**" may have an owner but is neglected or in disrepair. Abandoned and derelict vessels pose severe hazards to delicate ecosystems, sea life, and people who live or work in the area. They also endanger maritime workers on vessels attempting to navigate any ports or waterways around the wrecked vessels.

Many of these vessels remain abandoned for years or even decades—increasing their risk of causing environmental harm and endangering commercial or recreational maritime activities. When coastal storms hit, they may sink and move. As they break apart, they may send debris and potentially harmful substances into the ocean, harbors, and bays. This includes oil and toxic chemicals on board when the vessel was abandoned. Even nets and fishing lines can detach from abandoned ships, where they can harm or kill marine life.

As time goes on, these hazards only increase.

Whether abandoned and derelict vessels are abandoned by their owners, fall prey to severe weather, run aground, or are rendered unseaworthy because of negligent operation, they require extensive resources to remove. Properly raising and disposing of abandoned vessels is expensive and demands specialized equipment and skilled labour to get the job done. Then there are legal obstacles to overcome, which vary depending on the jurisdiction and whether the vessel is in state, national, or international waters.

All of this means, despite the best efforts of programs and groups like the Marine Debris Program, abandoned vessels are bound to litter our waterways and ports for years to come.

Who Is Responsible for Removing Abandoned & Derelict Vessels?

The owner of a derelict or sunken vessel is responsible for marking and removing it, but the cost of removal presents a serious obstacle many owners do not overcome. With abandoned vessels, the owners often cannot be found or were companies that are now dissolved. Abandoned and derelict vessels then become the problems of the ports and coastal states where they are located.

In the case of the *Respect*, the State of California initially lacked the funding to remove the tug. It took years before the state received funding to raise other derelict vessels in the Oakland Estuary. However, the EPA still had to pay for the cost of pollution abatement and raising the vessel through the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund.

Protecting Maritime Workers' Rights & Interests

The environmental impact of abandoned and derelict vessels is significant. Another issue bears mentioning, however, involving maritime workers. When encountering an abandoned vessel, seamen and harbor workers may face serious dangers. In harbors, bays, and waterways, abandoned vessels pose threats to maritime traffic, whether fully submerged, partially underwater, or still afloat. Crews that work to raise and decommission abandoned vessels can also be at risk of being injured if they are not given the proper training and equipment to do their jobs. Crane and winch accidents and exposure to asbestos, oil, or other toxins are examples.

Arnold & Itkin has represented maritime workers injured in U.S. and international waters since 2004. The firm helped one-third of the *Deepwater Horizon* crew find justice after the 2010 explosion and spill, which remains the worst in United States history. The firm helped three widows of the sunken *El Faro* get answers and hold at-fault parties accountable after the cargo ship was lost in Hurricane Joaquin in 2015. When maritime disasters cause harm and claim lives, Arnold & Itkin's offshore injury lawyers stand up for seamen and their families, exposing the wrongdoing that was the ultimate cause of their injury or loss.

Source: *gCaptain* 220920

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Shippers sign up for revolutionary hydrogen-powered box-carrying hydrofoil

Sam Chambers August 9, 2022

California-based Boundary Layer Technologies announced yesterday that key Fortune 500 companies will become launch partners for its zero-emission freight service launching in 2025. The plan is to operate high-speed, hydrogen-powered hydrofoil cargo ships called ARGOs. Boundary Layer Technologies claims it will be able to offer zero-emission transit alternatives to air freight at half the price, with only one day increased transit time door-to-door.



Boundary Layer Technologies

As launch partners, the companies have signed letters of intent for freight and will receive first rights to block space when the new ships become available. They will primarily use the service to reduce their use of air freight along key intra-Asia trade lanes.

ARGO will be powered by green liquid hydrogen and fuel cells, emitting zero CO2 into the atmosphere during operation. For companies like Schneider Electric, a signatory of the Climate Pledge that has committed to reaching end-to-end carbon neutrality by 2040 and net-zero by 2050, reducing air freight with this alternative is an effective way to reduce tons of CO2 from their annual carbon footprint.

Marcus LeMaster, global director of logistics sustainability at Schneider Electric, commented: "We recognise that new technologies like ARGO play an important role in reducing our carbon emissions, especially in hard to abate sectors like air transportation."

The first vessel will be launched into operation in Asia by 2025 and will have a gross payload capacity of 200 tons or 20 teu. It will operate at a cruising speed of 40 knots, enabled by the company's proprietary hydrofoil technology. The exact routes for service will be selected with their launch partners over the coming months, but key port cities under consideration include Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Tokyo, and several Southeast Asian cities.

Source: *Splash247* 220809

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Greek-Managed Bulk Carrier Shipped Coal from Russia after EU Sanctions

Bloomberg September 15, 2022

By Áine Quinn and Alberto Nardelli (Bloomberg).

A vessel managed by a company based in Greece transported coal from a port in Russia late last month, after European Union sanctions on the commodity had come into force, according to maritime data reviewed by Bloomberg.

The ship, the *Stavros*, completed loading of 53,000 tons of coal from Russia's Taman Bulk Cargo Terminal on Aug. 29, according to data from analytics firms Kpler and Logistic OS. It arrived at a port near the city of Iskenderun in Turkey on Sept. 5, Bloom-

berg ship-tracking data show.

Stavros is managed by Athens-based Eastern Mediterranean Maritime. A spokesman for the company declined to comment on the ship's cargo but said there couldn't be a sanctions breach if the destination wasn't in the EU. The European Commission has previously said the sanctions apply to any coal shipments originating in Russia, regardless of their destination.



The prohibition relating to coal refers both to the "purchase" and the "transfer" of these goods, irrespective of final destination, the EU's executive arm said. The sanctions also extend to financing and

insurance by EU companies, irrespective of the origin of the company picking up the cargo.

It is not clear if the coal originated in Russia or who ultimately owns the vessel, while the final destination and use of the consignment is unknown.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February, the EU has introduced a series of sanctions in an effort to turn up the pressure on President Vladimir Putin's war machine. But the restrictions have also imposed massive costs on European economies, with surging energy prices triggering inflation and interest rate hikes, especially since the Kremlin shut off a key gas pipeline to Germany this month.

The ban on Russian coal imports began on Aug. 10, following a wind-down period of four months. The commission issued a clarification last month to make underline that the sanctions prohibit EU companies from providing services, such as financing or insurance, to any coal shipments originating in Russia.

A circular sent last month by members of the International Group of P&I Clubs, which cover 90% of the world's ocean-going tonnage for risks such as spills, suggested that companies were surprised by the EU's explanation and had assumed the ban on transfers and services wouldn't apply to export destinations outside the EU.

Most insurers are subject to the jurisdiction of the EU, according to the circular, because even those that are based outside of the bloc are reliant on European reinsurers to diversify their risks.

The *Stavros* departed from berth 2B in the Taman Bulk Cargo Terminal and left Russian waters heading for Turkey, according to the shipping data. That berth is used for loading coal, according to the shipping agency EISA. After its stop in Turkey, the ship sat higher in the water than when it arrived, according to Bloomberg ship-tracking data, indicating that it had unloaded a substantial amount of cargo.

A commission spokesman declined to comment, saying sanctions enforcement is a matter for national authorities. A spokesman for the Greek government said he was unable to comment.

The *Stavros* has protection and indemnity insurance with the Standard Club, according to its website. The entry says the vessel's cover is entered into the Standard Club's European division.

UK companies are also banned from providing insurance to shipments of Russian coal, according to a government official familiar with the UK regime. That ban applies irrespective of the coal's destination, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

An official at the Standard Club said it has standing policies that a sanctioned shipment would be uninsured, but that it wouldn't go into the detail of individual cargoes.

The coal ban was approved by the EU in April as part of a fifth package of sanctions against Russia. The EU said at the time that it would affect a quarter of all Russian coal exports, representing annual revenues of about 8 billion euros (\$8 billion).

Restrictions on Russian seaborne oil shipments will also kick in later this year. Those measures will similarly include a ban on related services, including insurance, that are used to move oil around the world.

—With assistance from Beril Akman, Alex Longley and Paul Tugwell.

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Source: gCaptain 220916

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Dutch debut clean, automated ship recycling solution

Sam Chambers September 16, 2022

Circular Maritime Technologies International (CMT) from the Netherlands has debuted a brand new way of breaking up ships, where humans are not placed in danger.

At CMT's proposed yard, no human lives will be put at risk as the ships will be taken out of the water and dismantled by a fully mechanised and automated system (pictured).

A proof-of-concept prototype is planned to be launched in the Netherlands soon with the company claiming it will then establish yards with international partners and attract business from shipowners by matching the price paid by South Asian competitors.

The proposed CMT yard runs on its own power and produces clean steel. The yard will reduce the size of the vessel step by

step through various automated tools, up to the point where each part of the ship's steel structure is reduced to many small pieces.



The CMT yard will go from a 3D structure to a 2D material package of steel plates, a process the company says will be executed quickly and precisely, managed by tailored control tools and software, overseen by specialised CMT staff.

Among CMT's backers are Damen Shipyards, Huisman Equipment, Jansen Recycling Group, and Sojitz Corporation.

Many in shipping have been demanding more advanced and greener recycling options in an industry that has had to contend with the exit of China, deemed the most environmentally conscious of the shipbreakers, four years ago.

Signing up for the SteelZero initiative earlier this year, Danish carrier

Maersk said that more than 700 of its operated vessels are projected to be recycled in the next decade.

Speaking on the occasion, Palle Laursen, senior vice president and chief technical officer at Maersk, noted: "Global ship recycling volumes are projected to nearly double by 2028 and quadruple by 2033. Recycled steel will progressively be recognised as a viable raw material for steel consumers with net-zero emissions targets."

Driving circularity in the steel industry, Laursen said, would help Maersk reduce its Scope 3 emissions.

Impending legislation from the International Maritime Organization such as EEXI and CII is widely anticipated to make a tranche of the global fleet obsolete.

Source: *Splash 247 220916*

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Flying ferries move a step closer

Sam Chambers August 31, 2022

Regent

A flying ferry project has moved a step closer to reality.



Nkm American firm Regent has received an approval in principle from Bureau Veritas for its 12-passenger, fully electric, wing-in-ground effect (WIG) seaglider, the Viceroy. Regent claims to have a backlog of \$7bn in provisional orders for its seagliders from ferry and aviation operators.

Regent will also be leveraging the class approval in support of a design basis agreement (DBA) with the US Coast Guard, which is expected this autumn. The class approval and DBA are similar to the G-1 and G-2 issue paper used in FAA aircraft certification.

Regent's seagliders will operate exclusively over the water servicing routes, up to 180 miles with existing battery technology, and up to 500 miles with next-generation batteries, via existing dock infrastructure. The seaglider can take cargo as well as passengers.

"Society is accelerating its move toward highly digitalized, decarbonized transportation solutions. Our work with seagliders has been an opportunity for Bureau Veritas to further share and develop our expertise in new systems, and technologies, including electric propulsion systems, high-speed hydrofoils, and digital fly-by-wire control systems whilst also assessing the safety of these systems," said Laurent Leblanc, a senior vice president at BV.

Source: *Splash247 220831*

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UN ready to offload oil from decaying FSO off Yemen

Sam Chambers September 20, 2022



The United Nations has said it has raised enough money for the first phase operation to remove 1m barrels of oil from a decaying, stranded tanker lying five nautical miles off the coastline of war-torn Yemen.

UN officials are now contacting all parties who have pledged to donate to fund the immense salvage operation of the *FSO Safer*, with the Netherlands the latest government to come in with a sizeable donation.

The *FSO Safer* has been moored off Yemen's Red Sea coast for over 30 years. The vessel has recently deteriorated beyond repair and could disintegrate or explode at any time, with its oil cargo spilling into the Red Sea. The *FSO Safer* has 157,000 tonnes of crude onboard. By comparison, the Exxon Valdez was merely carrying around 35,000 tonnes when it met with disaster.

Source: *Splash 247 220920*

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Australian Investigators Issue Recommendations to Operator After Tenth Ship Fire in 14 Years

Mike Schuler September 21, 2022

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) has issued safety recommendations to the managers and parent company of the cargo ship *BBC Rhonetal* following an investigation into a fire in the hold of the vessel at Port Hedland, Western Australia.



Photo courtesy ATSB

The fire was the tenth such fire on a company ship in the past 14 years, and the fourth investigated by the ATSB, identifying similar contributing factors. At the time of the fire, *BBC Rhonetal* was owned by Briese Schifffahrts, managed by Briese Heavylift and operated by BBC Chartering & Logistic, all based out of Leer, Germany.

The ship was alongside at Port Hedland on the morning of March 25, 2021, when a fire broke out in the lower cargo hold during hot work using a plasma torch to cut welded sea fastenings for cargo units in preparation for unloading them. It took three days to extinguish the fire.

The ATSB found *BBC Rhonetal's* managers had not effectively implemented the shipboard safety management system procedures to prevent the fire.

“The ATSB’s investigation found the risk of fire had not been adequately assessed by the crew prior to the commencement of the hot work,” said ATSB Chief Commissioner Angus Mitchell. “As a result, a continuous fire watch was not maintained, and proper precautions were not taken to sufficiently protect vulnerable cargo from catching alight.”

Mitchell added that the continuing incidences of fires on the cargo holds of ships while performing hot work highlights the importance of adhering to shipboard procedures and recognised safe work guidelines for hot work.

BBC Rhonetal's managers have advised the ATSB that procedures for hot work will be amended to better describe the role of the fire watch, emphasising its importance in fire prevention. Fire watch requirements will also be integrated into the hot work permit procedure and additional equipment for the fire watch is to be distributed across the fleet.

The company also intends to undertake measures to educate shipboard crew on the amended procedures and the additional equipment, including through implementation of a training video.

“While the ATSB considers the safety action proposed by the ship’s managers in this case has the potential to address the hot work safety issue, no timeline has been provided for their implementation, and the ATSB has therefore issued a formal recommendation to the ship’s managers, and the parent company,” Mr Mitchell noted.

An ATSB safety recommendation remains open until it is satisfied the safety issue has been addressed.

“The ATSB is recommending the ship’s managers, Briese Heavylift, and its parent company Briese Schifffahrts, take safety action to ensure safety management system procedures are effectively implemented on *BBC Rhonetal* and all other relevant ships across their fleets,” Mitchell said.

“Ship operators and managers must ensure that their safety management system protocols for hot work are suitable and properly implemented on board their ships. This requires regular verification that ships’ crews understand and follow prescribed safe work practices for hot work,” Mitchell concluded.

Source: *gCaptain 220922*

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Some More Puns

10. The man who fell into an upholstery machine is fully recovered.
11. Every calendar's days are numbered.
12. Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead to know basis.
13. When the electricity went off during a storm at a school the students were de-lighted.
14. I used to be a tap dancer until I fell in the sink.
15. He wears glasses during math because it improves division.
16. She was only a whisky maker but he loved her still.
17. She had a boyfriend with a wooden leg, but broke it off.
18. Those who jump off a Paris bridge are in Seine.
19. It wasn't school John disliked it was just the principal of it.
20. It's better to love a short girl than not a tall.
21. There was once a cross-eyed teacher who couldn't control his pupils.

(With thanks to Paul Dixon)

Source: *Maritime Advocate 813*

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