



# The Porthole

Volume 16 No.7

July 2016

The newsletter of the South Australian Branch of the Company of Master Mariners of Australia PO Box 1, PORT ADELAIDE, SA 5015  
Branch Patron: His Excellency the Honorable Hieu Van Le AC



### Branch Master's Comments

We have had a Federal Court phone link-up this month and I will report on that at the Branch meeting.

Your Branch Master, Secretary and Treasurer have a meeting arranged with our Bank which we hope will go some way to resolve the issue of outstanding membership, which in some way is due to the changeover to internet banking, and we will report on the outcome at the Branch meeting.

Shipping continues to alternate between doom and boom cycles, with the odd complication caused by political events in various parts of the world.

Safety at sea is still an issue and it seems that lifeboat and rescue boat drills seem to be resulting in a high number of deaths and injuries. Launching apparatus has developed a long way since the days of luffing and radial davits. Although the new methods are an improvement on the ones I've mentioned it seems to come at a high cost.

To all those members who have swallowed the hook and are stuck ashore – Stay Warm!

Best wishes, Paul P.

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### Speaker:

**Lachlan Graham, whose talk will be on Zoos South Australia's Safari to Namibia and the Kruger National Park in South Africa.**

**The next Branch meeting will be held at the Largs Pier Hotel, 198 The Esplanade, Largs Bay, on Wednesday, 27th July 2016 at 1145 for 1200.**

**Please confirm your attendance at the lunch or register your apology before 1200 on Monday, 25th July 2016 with**

**Ian Dickson (8396 1030)  
or  
Paul Phillips (0407 779 209)**



The Company of Master Mariners of Australia Ltd. is a Company established to promote and further the efficiency of the Sea Service generally, and uphold the Status, Dignity, and Prestige of Master Mariners in particular.

## Bravery at Sea: Indian Tanker Captain First Woman to Receive Prestigious IMO Award

July 10, 2016 by John Konrad



Captain Radhika Menon, Master of the oil products tanker *Sampurna Swarajya*, is to receive the 2016 IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea for her role in the dramatic rescue of seven fishermen from a sinking fishing boat in tumultuous seas.

Captain Radhika Menon, Master of the oil products tanker *Sampurna Swarajya*. The IMO Council endorsed the decision of a Panel of Judges that Captain Menon displayed great determination and courage in leading the difficult rescue operation in the Bay of Bengal.

The IMO Council, meeting for its 116th session in London, endorsed the decision of a Panel of Judges that Captain Menon displayed great determination and courage in leading the difficult rescue operation in the Bay of Bengal in June last year.

Captain Menon was nominated by the Government of India, for the rescue of all seven fishermen from the fishing boat *Durgamma*, which was adrift following engine failure and loss of anchor in severe weather. Food and water had been washed away and they were surviving on ice from the cold storage.

Through wave heights of more than 25 feet, winds of more than 60 knots and heavy rain, on 22 June, the second officer on the *Sampurna Swarajya* spotted the boat 2.5 kilometres away, off the coast of Gopalpur, Orissa.

Captain Menon immediately ordered a rescue operation, utilising the pilot ladder and with life jackets and buoys on standby. It took three arduous attempts in the lashing wind and rain and heavy swells before all seven weak and starving fishermen, aged from 15 to 50 years old, were brought to safety on board the ship. Their families had already considered them to be lost at sea, but thanks to the rescue, led by Captain Menon, they were reunited with their loved ones a few days later.

"I am humbled, honoured and grateful," said Captain Menon, "It is a master's *obligation* to save souls in distress at sea, and, as a seafarer in command of my ship, I just did my duty".

Captain Menon is the first female captain in the Indian Merchant Navy and will be the first female to receive the IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea.



Source: gCaptain 11/07/16

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## Nordic Association of Marine Insurers (Cefor) analysis: Chinese built ships 'have more claims'

Marine insurers have expressed concern over the number of claims involving ships built in Chinese yards.

The Nordic Association of Marine Insurers (Cefor) said analysis of almost 4,500 ships showed that the overall claims frequency for Chinese constructed vessels is 89% higher than for those built in South Korea and Japan.

More than one-quarter of vessels from Chinese yards produced an insurance claim last year, compared with 14% of South Korean-constructed vessels and only 10% of Japanese-built ships.

Cefor found a particularly significant rate of machinery damage claims on ships originating from China, 13.7%, compared with 5.3% from South Korean yards and 3.6% from Japanese-built vessels.

Cefor said insurers have been concerned for some time about the rapid growth in new buildings from China, many from new yards and had questioned whether their quality represented a higher risk.

It noted that claims frequency is linked to many factors apart from country of build, including operational practices, maintenance standards and safety cultures, but warned that 'observed differences are considerable and unlikely to be purely incidental'.

'China has made major strides in modernising its shipbuilding industry in the past few years. The statistics of the past might, therefore, not be indicative of vessels built in the future,' the report added. 'However, irrespective of the cause, it will be interesting to follow the performance of these vessels as they grow older.'

Source: Flashlight 164.

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## Remembering the 1966 British Seamen's Strike.

Flashlight Editor, Mike Wall, quotes from an un-named source the fact that 85% of the UK public don't know what the merchant navy is. He suggests that most of the remaining 15% are probably older and remember the 1966 seaman's strike, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of which is celebrated this month.

The 47-day dispute, the first national stoppage by the National Union of Seamen since 1911, saw more than 400 ships idled and almost 12,000 seafarers on strike within a few days.

The 1966 strike was in many ways an explosion of pent-up grievances that seafarers had with shipowners, with the strict laws they had to work under, and to some extent with their own union. Simmering discontent had been mounting over many years, especially with the Merchant Shipping Act, which effectively outlawed union representation at sea and made union activists the targets of criminal prosecution and blacklisting by shipowners.

The strike was called in support of demands to cut the working week from 56 to 40 hours and to secure a pay rate of £60 a month for an able seaman.

As the stoppage intensified, the Labour government declared a State of Emergency, giving it powers to clear ports and cargoes and to use troops to do dock work.

At its peak, the strike saw 891 vessels immobilised and 26,000 NUS members taking action. There were warnings of food shortages and postal problems, as well as estimations that the country's gold and currency reserves had been depleted by one-fifth as a result of the stoppage and the run on sterling.

The dispute ended when the owners agreed to make a modest pay increase and to phase in the 40-hour week by July 1967, giving nine extra days of leave a year in exchange for manning concessions.

It has taken 50 years for the public to forget the contribution which the MN makes to the world economy. Whilst I would not advocate it, perhaps another seaman's strike would make them more aware of our existence.

Mike Wall comments further that it is no wonder that there is a shortage of MN officer cadets and officers. If the public does not know that the MN exists how will new officers be recruited?

Source: Flashlight 164.

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## Failings caused fire to spread. MV Marigold: Port Hedland, 13 July 2014.



Multiple failings in fire safety and maintenance caused an engine room blaze to spread out of control on board a bulk carrier for 12 hours, an investigation has concluded.

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) discovered that fire doors on the Panama-flagged *Marigold* had been held open with wire and rope, fire dampers and ventilators could not be closed, and the Halon fire-suppression system had failed to work properly.

The 207,250dwt vessel suffered extensive damage, with the fire, which began as a result of a failed fuel oil pipe fitting, spreading and causing substantial smoke damage to the accommodation areas.

Two Burmese crewmen and the South Korean chief engineer had to be treated in hospital for burns. Investigators said there was evidence that the shipboard procedures for crew induction, familiarisation, fire drills and safety training had not been effectively implemented. As a result, senior officers were not sufficiently familiar with the operation of the Halon system and crew took unnecessary risks by using the lift to evacuate the engine room.

The ATSB also found the fire door leading to engine room from the upper deck inside the engine room had been tied open, and the fire door leading to the ECR from the steering gear room had been wired open. Fire-fighting efforts were extended because the fire door from the accommodation remained open throughout the blaze, the report notes.

Investigators said it had been impossible to fully close a number of mushroom ventilators and dampers, and that this was 'indicative of inadequate maintenance of this critical equipment over an extended period'.

The multiple failures of the Halon system and the condition of some of its components also suggested that regular and effective maintenance had not been carried out, the report adds.

*Marigold* was loading iron ore in Port Hedland in July 2014 when the incident occurred, and the ATSB called for action to address the 'limited professional fire-fighting capability' in Port Hedland and other regional ports.

Source: Flashlight 164.

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## Container Alliance

Six container shipping operators have joined forces to create a new vessel sharing alliance on the main east-west trades. Dubbed 'The Alliance', the agreement brings together the German operator Hapag-Lloyd with NYK, MOL and K-Line of Japan, South Korea's Hanjin Shipping and Taiwan's Yang Ming Marine Transport. The partnership, which represents around 18% of global box-ship capacity, is scheduled to begin operation in April 2017, subject to regulatory approval.

Source: Flashlight 164.

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## After Sailing Across the North Atlantic, Real Viking Ship Forced to Leave Great Lakes Over Pilot Fees

July 13, 2016 by Mike Schuler

The Norwegian Viking Ship, *Draken Harald Hårfagr*, has already sailed across the North Atlantic with stops in Iceland, Greenland and Newfoundland, and is currently in Lake Erie after having passed through the St Lawrence Seaway. It is headed to the Tall Ships Challenge Great Lakes 2016 race series, a tall ship race through all five Great Lakes with port appearances in cities throughout the United States and Canada.



Draken Harald Hårfagr. Photo: Draken Expedition America

A modern day Viking ship that sailed all the way from Norway to attend a Great Lakes tall ship festival may not even make be forced to turn back over an issue regarding pilotage fees.

However, Draken Expedition America, the non-profit organization behind the *Draken*, says that the Viking ship recently entered the Great Lakes with information from the Great Lakes Pilotage Authorities that the ship would not be required to obtain pilotage based on a rule stating, in part, that "...Foreign ships of less than 35 meters in overall length are not subject to compulsory pilotage in the Great Lakes Region".

Unfortunately, the organization later learned that, when entering the St Lawrence Seaway, the ship actually *is* required a pilot at all times while at sea, with no possibility of a discount on fees. If the ship were to participate in the Tall Ships Challenge Great Lakes, as scheduled, the cost for the pilotage would be well over \$400,000 – a fee so high that it is simply not possible for a non-profit organization like Draken Expedition America.



"We are required a pilot as soon as we leave the dock with the cost of 400 USD per hour, the same rate as a commercial freight ship," says Captain Björn Ahlander. "It is very disappointing, the people in the harbors around the lakes are expecting us and we have been warmly welcomed in every port we have visited; it is a pity if we cannot pursue this expedition. Despite the setback, the organization has decided to attend this weekend's Tall Ships Celebration in Bay City, Michigan, despite the hefty fees associated with it. "There is not room in our budget to go further west into the Great Lakes, but we cannot let the people in Bay City down," added Captain Ahlander. "The Tall Ships Celebration in Bay City is just days away and the planning is in its final stages; it would be a great disappointment for us, and, more importantly, to the people that we are already committed to."

But, after this weekend's festival, the *Draken* will be forced to leave the Great Lakes as soon as possible unless it can raise enough money to fund the rest of the trip.



"It is very unfortunate if *Draken Harald Hårfagre* is not able to continue the expedition to sail the waters where there is such a high interest, and presence of the cultural heritage from the Nordic countries. At present, the only solution for *Draken Harald Hårfagre* to stay in the Great Lakes is if the project somehow gets the cost for pilotage covered," the organization said.

As gCaptain reported a few weeks ago after the ship completed its transatlantic voyage, *Draken Harald Hårfagre* is actually not a replica, rather it's a real-life Viking ship built using ancient Norwegian boat building techniques found in history books and from archaeological studies. Construction was completed in 2014 and it is now heralded as the world's largest Viking ship ever built in modern times.

Outside the Great Lakes, the *Draken's* schedule still includes a stop in New York City and finally Mystic Seaport in Mystic, Connecticut, in October.

The news of *Draken's* plight comes as the U.S. Coast Guard, who sets Great Lakes pilotage rates, is being sued by a coalition of foreign-flag shipping companies and trade organizations in Canada and United States over a drastic increase in pilotage rates on the Great Lakes.

Source: gCaptain 25/07/16

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### P&I Club backs old skills

'Safe navigation of a ship to its destination cannot yet be achieved purely with technological resources,' a P&I Club has warned. Reports of GPS jamming and signal interference highlight the danger of relying on a single form of position fixing, and the importance of ships using the full range of navigational equipment available to them, the UK Club said.

Officers should practise traditional methods of navigation, including celestial navigation and keeping a proper lookout, as failure to do so is often identified in casualty investigations, the Club argued. Safe navigation 'still requires the presence of experienced and properly trained people with traditional seafaring skills', it stressed.

Source: Flashlight 164.

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## AUCTION SALE OF MARITIME ITEMS AND BOOKS

The contents of the Maritime Museum of SA's library room, including most of the books, are to be sold by auction in the last quarter of this year, possibly as early as October. The Auctioneers will be Small & Whitfield, 1 Unley Road, Parkside, Tel: 08 8272 8777, website: [www.smallandwhitfield.com](http://www.smallandwhitfield.com), and the sale will be advertised on the website and in *The Advertiser*.

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### NATIONAL MERCHANT NAVY DAY 3 September 2016

The Branch Master has received an invitation from the President of Merchant Navy Association of South Australia to join their members in a remembrance ceremony to be held in Port Adelaide on 3 September 2016 at 11:00. The received copy of the invitation is too indistinct to print, so the following is a transcript:

#### THE MERCHANT NAVY ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

We invite you to join us on this Special day to honour all seafarers around the world.

MARCH STARTS AT 11.0am

JOIN US OUTSIDE THE PORT ADELAIDE INFORMATION CENTRE FOR  
A SHORT WALK TO THE NAVIGATOR MEMORIAL TO HONOUR PAST  
AND PRESENT SEAFARERS WHO SAILED IN THE MERCHANT NAVY.

We respectfully ask that you read and observe the accompanying letter [*copy following*] issued by the Merchant Navy Association of SA with regards to the formality and importance of this day to all our members and associations.

Sincerely

Philip Mason, President and Errol Ford, Vice President

Merchant Navy Association of SA



THE MERCHANT NAVY  
ASSOCIATION OF  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA  
INCORPORATED



July.2016.

Dear Guests,

Enclosed is the resolution passed by our General Meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

It is as follows:

The Merchant Navy Association of South Australia Inc, at its General Meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015, discussed our Merchant Navy Day and the following motion was passed unanimously by all present.

Declared as a National Day of Observance in 2008, our members wish to keep this day as a special memorial to all seafarers who sacrificed their lives in all theatres of war.

That our memorial service be free of any political references made by guest speakers on the day.

And the only Flags to be carried are as follows:

The Merchant Navy Flag (Red Ensign), the National Flag, and Flags of Allied Nations who served with the Merchant Navy Association, which represents serving and ex seafarers from many nationalities.

Yours Sincerely,

Philip Mason. President.



## 'The Art of Science' Public Programs



### 9th August - 5.30pm Talking History Series – Desperately Seeking Baudin

Join SA Maritime Museum Senior Curator Lindl Lawton as she provides some tantalising 'behind the scenes' glimpses into the development of *The Art of Science* exhibition. Flinders and Baudin are household names in South Australia. In France, Baudin has largely been forgotten. Lindl unpacks her recent trip to France and her search for traces of the elusive navigator in its rich museum collections and archives. Bookings via Eventbrite: <https://talking-history-desperately-seeking-baudin.eventbrite.com.au>

### SALA - The Art of Engraving

<http://www.salafestival.com/program/705/>

Join artists in residence Vicki Reynolds and Lorelei Medcalf and discover *The Art of Science* exhibition at the South Australian Maritime Museum. Over two weekends, printmakers Vicki and Lorelei will explore links between their work and French artists who documented Nicholas Baudin's 1800-1804 scientific voyage the southern coast. Working in the Museum, they will produce stunning original prints alongside rare historic artworks on loan for a limited time from the Museum of Natural History in Le Havre, France. Included with general Maritime Museum admission.

7 August: 11am to 4pm - The Art of Engraving with Lorelei Medcalf

14 August: 11am to 4pm – The Art of Engraving with Vicki Reynolds

### 10 September and 8 October – Workshop – The Art of Engraving

This exclusive one day workshop with accomplished printmakers

Lorelei Medcalf and Vicki Reynolds will teach participants to prepare and print from copper plates using traditional and contemporary drypoint techniques.

Suitable for beginners, students and teachers. Maximum 10 participants per workshop. Bookings essential.

\$140 and \$110 concession – includes materials and entry to the exhibition 'The Art of Science'.

### 27 September - 6pm Josephine's kangaroos: An Australian Garden at Malmaison

When Baudin's ship *Naturaliste* returned to Le Havre in 1803, Josephine Bonaparte tussled with the museum's curators over its scientific haul. Seedlings collected by Baudin's botanists were cultivated at her estate at Malmaison and kangaroos and emus grazed in her Australian arboretum. Carrick Hill's Director, Richard Heathcote guides you through a little slice of Australia on the outskirts of 19th century Paris.

Bookings essential. \$10 for Maritime Museum members, \$15 for Non-members.

### 8 November - 6pm (A meeting of two extremes) La rencontre entre deux extrêmes: the art of the Flinders and Baudin Voyages

Tracey Lock, Curator of Australian Paintings and Sculpture at the Art Gallery of South Australia, discusses the rich visual intersections between the art of the expeditions of Nicolas Baudin and Matthew Flinders, two of the greatest voyages of European exploration. Through the expeditions' watercolours, drawings and prints, Tracey explores the collision of art and science and the clash of cultures.

Bookings essential. \$10 for Maritime Museum members, \$15 for Non-members.