The Porthole

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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

Thank you to Bob and to Ian who have been Acting Branch Master and Acting Secretary during my absence and that of David Holmes.

I look forward to seeing those of you who will be joining me in the visit to Flinders Adelaide Container Terminal on Wednesday, and we will be escorted by Captain David Sleath, one of our members, in the absence of Steve Cox.

Don't forget we are meeting at the Largs Pier Hotel, not the terminal, for pick-up by the terminal bus.

Best Wishes
Paul P
Branch Master

Speaker:

Tony Wynne: Cross Channel Sailing..

The next Branch meeting will be held at the Largs Pier Hotel, 198 The Esplanade, Largs Bay, on Wednesday, 31st May 2017 at 1145 for 1200.

Please confirm your attendance at the lunch or register your apology before 1200 on Monday, 29th May 2017 with

Paul Phillips (0407 779 209) or Ian Dickson (0418 807 788)

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

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TRADING IN EAST AFRICA WITH SOUTHERN LINE.

A talk given by David Holmes

at the April, 2017, meeting of

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

David Holmes began his talk with a resume of the career of Anthony Bentley-Buckle who, with Dick Bainbridge, had established Southern Line. They had both served in the Royal Navy during the Second World War, Bentley-Buckle being a navigator and Bainbridge an engineer.

After joining the Royal Navy as an officer cadet and serving on HM ships during the early years of the Second World War, Lt Cmdr Bentley-Buckle volunteered for special operations, and, at the age of 21, led a Naval commando unit that landed in Sicily to secure the beach in preparation for the Allied landings in June 1943. Bentley-Buckle's commando group subsequently made sorties behind the German lines, collecting escaping allied prisoners of war who had been released after Italy had surrendered to the Allies. The commando group then moved further north and started supplying Tito's partisans in Croatia. However, they were betrayed and captured by the Germans. Bentley Buckle spent the rest of the war incarcerated in a POW camp in Germany. There he and other prisoners made a realistic dummy officer as part of an escape plan. They called the dummy Albert RN, and, in the 1950s, a film was made about this exploit.

In 1946, Bentley-Buckle resigned from the Navy and made contact with Dick Bainbridge, whom he had befriended earlier in the War. Bainbridge's sister owned an old ketch which they made seaworthy, and, in 1947, the trio, with some old friends as shipmates, set sail, bound for South Africa via the Mediterranean. They got as far as Mombasa, and, with the monsoon turning against them, decided to make it their base. Bentley-Buckle then took a trip on a Bank Line ship to Ceylon to visit his father, who was a tea planter. Bentley-Buckle's father owned a motor fishing vessel that he gave to his son. Bentley-Buckle, with a coxswain and galley boy as crew, then set off on the voyage back to Mombasa, where he sold the boat to the Fisheries Department. Bentley-Buckle, accompanied by Bainbridge, then returned to Ceylon to salvage and re-engine three 50 foot fishing vessels that the Navy had sunk in Trincomalee Harbour at the end of the war. They also bought a 75 foot motor fishing vessel that they used to tow two of the salvaged vessels back to Mombasa.

With the 75 footer, which they named the *Southern Cross*, Bentley-Buckle and Bainbridge started trading on the East African coast, and, by 1952, had accumulated sufficient funds to buy a Dutch coaster of 200 tons.

In the 1950s, all coastal oil shipments were made in 44 gallon drums carried in a lighter towed behind a coaster operated by the Holland East Africa Line. Bentley-Buckle approached Shell, operators of the Mombasa Oil Refinery, proposing he introduce a coastal tanker into the trade.

Shell and the other oil companies agreed to set up receiving facilities in the outports if B-B would lay the moorings. Thus, in 1956, the company purchased a small coastal tanker, originally built for the German Air Force during the Second World War. This ship they renamed the *Southern Pioneer* (right). The company then used the *Southern Pioneer* to establish moorings firstly in Tanga, then Zanzibar and finally Pemba.

The company continued to thrive through the 1960s, gradually building up a fleet of ships trading on the coast from Somalia to Tanzania, the Seychelles and Comoros Islands. It also expanded its operations with shipments of oil from Aden into the Red Sea ports of North Yemen.

By 1971 when David Holmes joined the Company, there were eight ships ranging from around 500 to 3,000 dwt.

One of the cargoes that readily came Southern Line's way was bagged cement from Mombasa to Dar es Salaam. This was slow loading and high breakage, so Dick Bainbridge proposed a switch to bulk shipments. The cement company agreed, and, in 1960, Southern Line bought a cargo ship in Germany suitable for conversion into a bulk cement carrier. This vessel, named the *Southern Baobab* (left), could carry 2,200 tonnes of bulk cement. As the ship would also be delivering cargo to ports where there were no bulk handling facilities, Bainbridge recruited a former RN colleague, who was a centrifuge engineer, to design an on-board bagging plant.

For young master mariners looking for early command time in

foreign-going ships and a bit of adventure, Southern Lines was an ideal company. The ships, being small, were rarely required to take a pilot and never a tug, and there were still enough elements of shipmaster's business in the outports to make life interesting. The terms of employment were a one-year contract on bachelor terms, with air fares paid, or a two-year contract if partnered. David Holmes, accompanied by his wife, Carol, signed up for two years. His first command was the 800 dwt geared cargo ship *Southern Spray*. He later transferred to the tanker *Southern Pioneer* and also commanded the bulk cement carrier *Southern Baobab*.

The Southern Line ships were registered in Mombasa, and the Shipping Registrar took the view that, so long as the ship was commanded by a holder of a foreign-going Master's ticket, the numbers and qualifications of the other officers were up to the Company. Typically, the Mate and engineers would have worked on the East African Lake ferries and held local certificates of service. The officers and crew were an ethnic mix of Africans, Indians, Arabs and Seychellois who generally rubbed along well together. The guy with the toughest job was the cook, who, on a four-ring domestic gas stove, would somehow manage to cater for the dietary preferences of the different ethnic groups.

In his talk, David Holmes gave a snapshot, illustrated by slides, of some of the features of the ports he traded to in East Africa.

Mombasa Island was a bustling tourist city, with many beach resorts to the north of the Island. With a thriving economy, there was also a quite a large expatriate community and a good social life.

The old town of Mombasa, with its narrow alleyways, was dominated by Fort Jesus, built by the Portuguese in the late 16th Century. There were also numerous mosques in the old town dating back hundreds of years. The modern port of Mombasa was on the south side of the island while on the north side was the Old Harbour, used almost exclusively by dhows. The large dhows would start to arrive in early December from the Persian Gulf with their cargoes of carpets, Arab chests and other merchandise.

Tanga, 60 miles south of Mombasa and the northernmost port of Tanzania, was an attractive little town with a lovely harbour. Its historical claim to fame being the 1914 Battle of Tanga, when a British Expeditionary Force sailed into the port and landed troops attempting to seize German East Africa. The British were routed by a much smaller force of Germans and local native troops, suffering heavy casualties and leaving most of their equipment behind. The Battle of Tanga was also known as the Battle of the Bees because during the skirmish both sides were attacked by swarms of bees.

Coming into Tanga on one voyage, a large cargo ship swarming with people on deck could be seen tucked away up a side channel. It transpired the ship was carrying Ugandan rebels who had fled their homeland and made their way north into Sudan. There they were assembled at Port Sudan and shipped to Tanga as an intended invasion force against the Idi Amin regime. In due course, this rag-tag army invaded Uganda but was quickly overwhelmed by Idi Amin's troops.

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's largest city, had an attractive harbour, but, under the honest but rather austere socialist regime of Dr. Nyerere, lacked the tourist resorts and night life of its free-wheeling northern neighbour, Mombasa.

Zanzibar (left), also part of Tanzania, but whose local government was more socialist than that of the mainland, was quite run-down with many of its buildings crumbling. Most of the local trade was carried in small dhows (right).

The southern-most port of call was Mtwara, just on the Tanzanian side of the border with Mozambique. Mtwara had an unfortunate history of failed enterprises. The port was established in the late 1940s as a part of the groundnut scheme, aimed to supply Britain with desperately needed cooking oils. However, with unsuitable soils, inadequate equipment to clear the bush and climate problems, the scheme was an economic disaster. Two decades later, when Southern Rhodesia, under Ian Smith, had unilaterally declared independence, it was decided to make Mtwara an export port for copper ingots flown in from land-locked Zambia. On a plateau above the town, a strengthened runway was constructed (reputed to be the longest in Africa) and concrete wharves were built in the port capable of supporting the anticipated heavy loads of copper ingots. In the event, the Southern Rhodesian crisis was resolved and the concept of shipping copper by air was abandoned. In 1971, this lengthy, strengthened runway was serving nothing larger than Fokker Friendships!

The worst voyages on the *Southern Spray* were those north to Mogadishu during the south west monsoon. The port of Mogadishu had been built before the war by the Italians. Its main feature was a long

mole in the form of a viaduct, designed to allow the silt carried by the monsoon currents to flow through.

After the war, however, American engineers had decided to strengthen the mole by filling in the arches. The port had quickly silted up, and, without a dredger, became unusable, except for lighters. The *Southern Spray* would lie at anchor in the open seaway and a couple of lighters would be towed out early in the morning. However, within an hour or so, the onshore breeze and seas would strengthen and the ship would start to roll. By the time the second lighter was loaded in late morning, the ship would be rolling so heavily that cargo work stopped for the day. At this slow pace, it would take us up to 3 days to discharge a few hundred tonnes of cargo. Discharge completed, there was then the tiresome task of returning to Mombasa in a ship barely capable of 9 knots against a monsoon current of around 5 knots.

After transferring from the *Southern Spray* to the coastal oil tanker, *Southern Pioneer*, the range of ports of call expanded to include the clove island of Pemba. There heavy fuel oil was delivered to the power station which was some distance up a remote inlet. The channel was unmarked but the mate was able to guide the way, pointing out the hill with the scar, a prominent tree or other significant landmarks to aim for. Pemba, like Zanzibar, was under an extreme socialist regime, and, despite the wealth generated by its massive clove harvest, there was abject poverty on the island. The mate would even collect old paint tins to give to the locals for use as domestic utensils.

In September 1972, a small Danish ship, carrying explosives on a voyage from Scandinavia round the Cape of Good Hope to Mombasa and Red sea ports, was swept over the reef at the southern end of Pemba Island and stranded. The *Southern Pioneer* was used to support the salvage team that successfully refloated the ship.

Another regular run on the *Southern Pioneer* was from Mombasa to Mahe, the main island of the Seychelles. It was a picturesque island with beautiful palm fringed, coral sand beaches and off-lying reefs. In 1971, it was only just being opened up to international tourism with its new airport. The *Southern Pioneer* supplied the airport with avtur and the town of Port Victoria with motor spirit and diesel. At the time of his first visit to the main island Mahe, there was just one international class hotel, a single storey structure with a thatched roof that blended well into the landscape. However, on later trips the hillsides and coast were starting to be developed with new tourist hotels and resorts featuring less attractive concrete structures.

Towards the end of his two-year contract, David Holmes took temporary command of the cement carrier *Southern Baobab* and made voyages to Mahe and the Island of Reunion. By this stage, the cement company had built a silo in the Port of Mahe on reclaimed land and the ship's bagging plant was redundant. However, the weight of the silo and its contents were proving too much for the coral sub-strata, and the base of the silo had sunk several feet below ground level. Also, the port authority had constructed a new shed between the berth and the silo, necessitating the pipeline to have a number of right-angled bends, severely restricting the discharge rate.

While life on board could be a bit cramped and uncomfortable at times, especially in heavy seas or when the air-conditioning broke down, David Holmes considered the two years spent with his wife on the East African coast to be the most interesting and rewarding of his time at sea.

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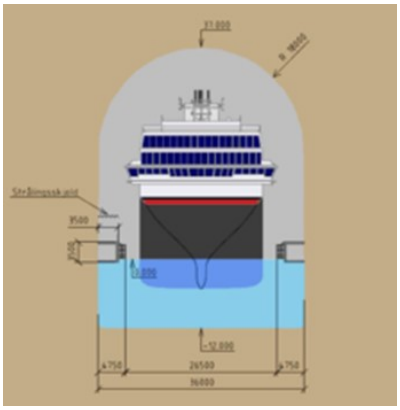
Stad Ship Tunnel

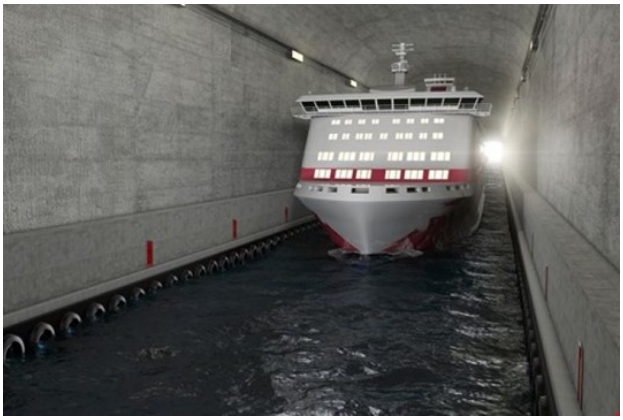
The path that the tunnel is planned to take.

The Stad Ship Tunnel (Norwegian: *Stad skipstunnel*) is a proposed canal and tunnel to bypass the Stad peninsula in Selje Municipality in Sogn og Fjordane county, Norway. The peninsula is one of the most exposed areas on the coast, without any outlying islands to protect it from the weather. The section has traditionally been one of the most dangerous along the coast of Norway. Two paths have been proposed: one 1,800m (5,900ft) long from the Eide farm at the inner part of the Moldefjorden through the Mannseidet isthmus to the Kjødspollen (the inner part of the Vanylvsfjorden), the narrowest but innermost place of the peninsula. The other option is a slightly longer tunnel from the Skårbø farm to the Fløde farm through the central part of the peninsula.



The profile of the tunnel from the 2007 report

In 2013, the tunnel was included for the first time in the National Transport Plan. 1 billion kr was set aside for it in the budget. The tunnel will be 162ft high and 118ft wide, able to handle ships of up to 16,000



Vessels sailing through the tunnel likely will get slot times

tonnes (16,000 long tons; 18,000 short tons), large enough for the Hurtigruten coastal express ships. The water will be 12m (39ft) deep in the tunnel. The cost is estimated to be 1.7 billion kr, and construction will start in 2018 and is expected to open in 2023.

Terje Andreassen is the project manager and he states that construction is expected to start, at the earliest, in 2019.

Construction of the Stad Ship Tunnel is expected to begin in 2019. (Supplied: Kystverket)

The first proposal was in an article in *Nordre Bergenhus Amtstidende* newspaper in 1874, and shortly afterwards an article in the same newspaper proposed a railway tunnel across the peninsula. The latter would have allowed the boats to be raised onto wagons and to be hauled across, and would cost only half as much. In 2011, a report by Det Norske Veritas and Institute for Research in Economics and Business Administration for the Norwegian Coastal Administration concluded that a tunnel would not be economical. It looked at two sizes, small and large, which would cost 1,264 million and 2,027 million kr respectively. The report concluded that the utility, including saved waiting costs, for shippers have a present value of 304 million and 314 million kr, respectively, and 67 million and 76 million kr in saved accident costs. A similar report from 2007 concluded that the tunnel would be economical. The Coastal Administration stated that the differences were because of new and better data.

Sources: ABC, Wikipedia, AP.

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The Marine Advocate 686

U.S. Attorneys » Southern District of Florida » News

Justice News

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of Florida

Wednesday, April 19, 2017

Cruise Line Ordered To Pay $40 Million For Illegal Dumping Of Oil Contaminated Waste And Falsifying Records

Princess Cruise Lines Ltd. (Princess) was sentenced to pay a $40 million penalty – the largest-ever for crimes involving deliberate vessel pollution – related to illegal dumping overboard of oil contaminated waste and falsification of official logs in order to conceal the discharges, announced Acting U.S. Attorney Benjamin G. Greenberg for the Southern District of Florida in Miami, Florida, and Acting Assistant Attorney General Jeffrey H. Wood for the Department of Justice's Environment and Natural Resources Division. The sentence was imposed today by U.S. District Judge Patricia A. Seitz in Miami.

Judge Seitz also ordered that $1 million be awarded to a British engineer, who first reported the illegal discharges to the British Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), which in turn provided the evidence to the U.S. Coast Guard. The newly hired engineer on the Caribbean Princess reported that a so-called "magic pipe" had been used on Aug. 23, 2013, to illegally discharge oily waste off the coast of England without the use of required pollution prevention equipment. The evidence gathered by the whistleblower, including photographs of the magic pipe, led to an inspection of the cruise ship both in England and then when it reached New York on Sept. 14, 2013. During each of the separate inspections certain crew members concealed the illegal activity by lying to the authorities in accordance with orders they had received from Caribbean Princess engineering officers.

The sentence imposed by Judge Seitz also requires that Princess remains on probation for a period of five years, during which time all of the related Carnival cruise ship companies trading in the U.S. will be required to implement an environmental compliance plan that includes independent audits by an outside

company, and oversight by a court appointed monitor. As a result of the government's investigation, Princess has already taken various corrective actions, including upgrading the oily water separators and oil content monitors on every ship in its fleet and instituting many new policies.

According to papers filed in court, the Caribbean Princess had been making illegal discharges through bypass equipment since 2005, one year after the ship began operations. The August 2013 discharge, approximately 23 miles off the coast of England, involved approximately 4,227 gallons within the country's Exclusive Economic Zone. At the same time as the discharge, engineers ran clean seawater through the ship's monitoring equipment in order to conceal the criminal conduct and create a false digital record for a legitimate discharge.

The case against Princess included illegal practices which were found to have taken place on five Princess ships – Caribbean Princess, Star Princess, Grand Princess, Coral Princess and Golden Princess. One practice was to open a salt water valve when bilge waste was being processed by the oily water separator and oil content monitor. The purpose was to prevent the oil content monitor from going into alarm mode and stopping the overboard discharge. This was done routinely on the Caribbean Princess in 2012 and 2013. The second practice involved discharges of oily bilge water originating from the overflow of graywater tanks into the machinery space bilges. This waste was pumped back into the graywater system rather than being processed as oily bilge waste, and then pumped overboard anytime the ship was more than four nautical miles from land. As a result, discharges within U.S. waters were likely. None of the discharges were recorded in the oil record books that are required to be maintained on board the ships.

"Today's large criminal penalty makes it clear that businesses that operate in our oceans will be held accountable for violating their obligation to safeguard the marine environment," stated Acting U.S. Attorney Greenberg. "The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida and our maritime partners are committed to ensuring that all vessel operators adhere to recognized standards in order to protect our open seas and coasts. We will continue to use the U.S. courts to pursue those who circumvent the law for their own personal gain."

"These violations of law were serious, longstanding and designed to conceal illegal discharges," said Acting Assistant Attorney General Wood. "The sentence in this case should ensure that these crimes do not take place in the future and should also send a strong message to others that illegally polluting U.S. waters will not be tolerated."

"Without the courageous act of a junior crewmember to alert authorities to these criminal behaviors of deliberately dumping oil at sea, the global environmental damage caused by the Princess fleet could have been much worse," said Rear Admiral Scott Buschman, Commander of the U.S. Coast Guard Seventh District. "The selflessness of this individual exposed five different ships that embraced a culture of shortcuts and I am pleased at this outcome."

As set forth in papers filed in court, Princess admitted to the following:

- After suspecting that the authorities had been informed, senior ship engineers dismantled the bypass pipe and instructed crew members to lie.
- Following the MCA's inquiry, the chief engineer held a sham meeting in the engine control room to pretend to look into the allegations while holding up a sign stating: "LA is listening." The engineers present understood that anything said might be heard by those at the company's headquarters in Los Angeles, California, because the engine control room contained a recording device intended to monitor conversations in the event of an incident.
- A perceived motive for the crimes was financial – the chief engineer that ordered the dumping off the coast of England told subordinate engineers that it cost too much to properly offload the waste in port and that the shore-side superintendent to whom he reported would not want to pay the expense.
- Graywater tanks overflowed into the bilges on a routine basis and were pumped back into the graywater system and then improperly discharged overboard when they were required to be treated as oil contaminated bilge waste. The overflows took place when internal floats in the graywater collection tanks got stuck due to large amounts of fat, grease and food particles from the galley that drained into the graywater system. Graywater tanks overflowed at least once a month and, at times, as frequently as once per week. Princess had no written procedures or training for how internal gray water spills were supposed to be cleaned up and the problem remained uncorrected for many years.

$10 million of the $40 million criminal penalty imposed by the court is earmarked for community service projects to benefit the maritime environment; $3 million of the community service payments will go to environmental projects in South Florida; $1 million will go for projects to benefit the marine environment in United Kingdom waters. Additionally, $1 million of the criminal penalty will be deposited in the Abandoned Seafarers' Fund, a fund established to provide a mechanism for the U.S. Coast Guard to offer humanitarian relief and support of seafarers who are abandoned in the United States and are witnesses to maritime-related crimes.

The investigation was conducted by the U.S. Coast Guard Investigative Service with assistance from the U.S. Coast Guard 7th District Legal Office, U.S. Coast Guard's Office of Maritime and International Law and U.S. Coast Guard Office of Investigations and Analysis. In announcing the case, Acting U.S. Attorney Benjamin G. Greenberg and Acting Assistant Attorney General Wood expressed their appreciation to the U.S. Coast Guard and to the U.K.'s MCA. The case is being prosecuted by Thomas Watts-FitzGerald, Deputy Chief, Economic & Environmental Crimes Section for the Southern District of Florida, Richard A. Udell, Senior Litigation Counsel with the Environmental Crimes Section of the Department of Justice and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Lieutenant Commander Brendan Sullivan, U.S. Coast Guard.

Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Southern District of Florida at www.flsd.uscourts.gov or on http://pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov

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Loss of *Stellar Daisy* in the South Atlantic on 31 March 2017.

MV *Stellar Daisy* was a South Korean-owned very large ore carrier (VLOC) that sank on 31 March 2017 in the South Atlantic off the coast of Uruguay whilst on a voyage from Brazil to China.

Stellar Daisy was originally built as a very large crude carrier (VLCC) *Sunrise III* at Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Nagasaki Shipyard & Machinery Works in Nagasaki, Japan. She was laid down on 23 July 1992, launched on 25 February 1993 and delivered to the owners on 2 July 1993.

In 2006, Polaris Shipping Co Ltd, Seoul, purchased four single-hulled oil tankers, including *Sunrise III*, for conversion to very large ore carriers (VLOC) at Cosco (Zhoushan) Shipyard in China. At the time, this was a typical strategy to increase the lifetime of an otherwise obsolete vessel by another 10 to 14 years and, thanks to the high charter rates of large bulk carriers used to transport iron ore to China, the conversion would pay itself back in just one to two years. Typically, the centre tanks of the oil tanker would be split into dry cargo holds, while the side tanks would be used for ballast or remain empty. Holes cut on the main deck for cargo hatches and coamings would require additional structural strengthening to retain sufficient longitudinal strength after conversion. A tank top strengthened for high loading rate and grab unloading would be fitted above the bottom frames and girders. The vessel returned to service in 2008 as *Stellar Daisy*.

During a March 2017 voyage, while she was carrying sinter fines (iron ore) across the South Atlantic Ocean from Vale's Ilha Guaiba terminal near Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to China, the crew reported the ship was taking on water and listing heavily. Radio contact with the ship, last reported to be 1,300 nautical miles (2,500km) from shore, was lost.

Two Filipino crew members were rescued from a life-raft on 1 April by the cargo ship *Elpida*. The crew members reported that they had seen their ship sink. The other 22 crew members, 14 Filipinos and 8 South Koreans, remain missing.

A search for survivors and wreckage was made by Uruguayan, Argentine and Brazilian ships, supported by Brazilian and US aircraft, in a search area of 70 by 100 nautical miles (130 by 190km; 80 by 120mi), 2,000 nautical miles (3,700km) off the coast of Uruguay. On 21 April, the Uruguayan Navy ship *General Artigas* returned to port after a 17-day search during which floating debris from the wreckage was found. The search continued with six merchant ships.

While the shipping journal *Lloyd's List* reported that cargo liquification caused by excessive moisture in the iron ore cargo could be a possible cause of the loss, shipping journal *ShipInsight* argued that, while a number of vessels have been lost for this reason, any liquefaction should not have been calamitous for *Stellar Daisy* because, being a converted oil tanker, her cargo holds were originally the centre tanks designed to carry liquid cargo. *ShipInsight* speculated that the most likely cause of loss of the vessel was linked to her conversion from a tanker to an ore carrier

In February 2017, China Port State Control (PSC) authorities identified six deficiencies, two of which were related to watertight and weathertight doors, during an inspection in Tianjin, China.

Following the sinking of *Stellar Daisy*, the International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners (INTERCARGO) has called for an investigation of the causes leading to the casualty. The safety of ore carriers converted from oil tankers in the 2000s has also been questioned. More than half of the bulk carriers in Polaris Shipping's fleet are such conversions.

Only few days after the loss of *Stellar Daisy*, another VLOC owned by Polaris Shipping reported structural damage in one of its ballast tanks below waterline, resulting in a small leak. The 280,000-ton vessel,

Stellar Unicorn, was built in 1993 as a single-hull oil tanker and converted to an ore carrier in China in 2008. Like *Stellar Daisy*, she was fully laden with Brazilian iron ore bound for China when the hull damage was discovered off South Africa. *Stellar Unicorn* was also found to have structural and water/ weathertight deficiencies in a Port State Control inspection in Qingdao, China, in July 2016 but these were cleared in a follow-up inspection.

On 13 April, a Polaris-owned converted VLOC that was leading the search for the missing *Stellar Daisy* crew members, *Stellar Cosmo*, was reportedly forced to head to Cape Town for repairs due to structural damage. However, this claim has been refuted by Polaris Shipping which stated that the vessel headed to Singapore for bunkering before continuing to China.

In May 2017, two cracks appeared on the main deck of *Stellar Queen*, another converted VLOC owned by Polaris Shipping, during a ballast water exchange operation while the vessel was underway from China to Brazil with empty holds. Published photographs showed sea water pouring from the ballast water tanks through cracks of about 1.5 metres (5ft) and 2.5 metres (8ft) in length.

General characteristics

Stellar Daisy was a single-deck capesize very large ore carrier (VLOC) with an overall length of 321.95 metres (1,056ft 3in) and a beam of 58 metres (190ft 3in). Fully laden, the vessel drew 20.326 metres (66ft 8in) of water and had a deadweight tonnage of 266,141 tons. Her ten cargo holds had a combined bale capacity of 141,332 cubic metres (4,991,100cuft). The gross tonnage of the vessel was 148,431 and net tonnage 44,530. On her last voyage, she had a crew of 24.

Like most bulk carriers, *Stellar Daisy* was propelled by a single low-speed diesel engine driving a large fixed pitch propeller. Her 9-cylinder main engine had an output of 21,982kW (29,478hp) at 76 rpm. This gave the vessel a service speed of 15.5 knots (28.7km/h; 17.8mph).

Source: Wikiipedia.

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The above loss prompted the following opinion editorial by Andrew Craig-Bennett in 'Splash24/7':

Unsafe at any draft: *Stellar Daisy*.

On March 31, in fine weather, with everything onboard as routine as could be, the *Stellar Daisy* began to list, listed badly, rolled over and sank in a few minutes, taking with her all but two of her crew of 24, and a lot of sintered iron ore fines loaded at Ilha Guiba in Brazil for carriage to China. The published accounts of the two survivors make it clear the loss was sudden, that there was insufficient time to abandon ship in good order, and that they owed their survival in the water to luck.

The weather was good and everything onboard this big ship was perfectly routine – until it wasn't.

She didn't hit anything, nothing caught fire, there was no explosion. She just took on water – a lot of water, very suddenly, she listed, she capsized and she sank.

The Steamship Mutual P&I Club, with which the ship was entered, were contacted by this site and issued, true to their reputation, a firm "No Comment".

The owners were equally helpful. The class society, Korean Register, has gone so far as to confess that the rules might have to be looked at, IACS has done a little hand wringing, and the other ore carrying ships converted from tankers, in the large fleet of Polaris Shipping and the fleets of other owners, have gone sailing blithely on, give or take the odd crack in deck and side shell, but, as we all know, "That sort of thing happens all the time…"

We have been told, by its apologists, that it should not have happened, and we do know that it should not happen again. Since the Marshall Islands have failed to convene a formal enquiry, we are not going to get an authoritative answer to the question, "Why did it happen?"

We have been told, by its apologists, that the Marshall Islands is not up to investigating this sort of loss, and indeed we have heard that "the only people with the skills and resources to investigate this properly are the UK's Maritime Accident Investigation Branch" – whom the Marshall Islands have failed to appoint to do their job for them.

Since the owners won't comment, and neither will their P&I Club nor their flag state nor their class society, we must speculate.

What follows is, I hope, reasonably well informed speculation. If I am mistaken, the owners, or their P&I Club or their flag state or their class society, are very welcome indeed to correct me. I am deliberately 'trailing my coat' in the hope of drawing out those who may know more than I do, because, as an industry, we need to know, before it happens again.

We know that the "*Stellar Daisy"* began life as the VLCC *Sunrise IIII*, at the Nagasaki yard of Mitsubishi

Heavy Industries (MHI) and was delivered to her first owners in July 1993. She was a single hull tanker, built by one of the world's leading shipyards, and she was converted in China to a very large ore carrier in 2009.

I am now going to speculate and say five things, each of which may be wrong.

First, as I recall, MHI were at that time exponents of the use of higher tensile steel to reduce the light-weight of ships.

Second, as I recall, MHI's usual practice – as was the practice of other good yards building single hull crude carriers – was to paint the deckhead and the bottom of each tank and to carry the paint up and down a distance of around three metres on the side shell and bulkheads.

Third, as I am quite sure, because I asked an eminent class society, and it's obvious anyway, when you convert an oil tanker into a dry cargo carrier, you disable the inert gas system, and common sense tells us that is what you will do.

Fourth, as is obvious to everyone, the stresses imposed on a hull by a full cargo of liquid with a specific gravity of around 0.8 are going to be very different indeed to the stresses on a hull imposed by a full cargo of granular ore and fines with a specific gravity of around 5.

Fifth, if the conversion was carried out to a good standard, which we have no reason to doubt, there will have been considerable strengthening in the structure in way of the new tank tops of the new cargo holds, to redistribute the stresses that we have just remarked on, and there will have been similar strengthening of the decks in way of the new hatch covers for those same holds.

Now I am going to quote several very eminent naval architects whom I have had the pleasure of knowing over the decades -. In large ships, the devil is in the detail.

In a good ship yard or design bureau and in good class societies, a great deal of thought goes into detail design to avoid stress raisers and to avoid crack propagation.

Now we have a ship which, for 16 years, spent roughly half her time with crude oil (whether sweet or sour is more than we can know) in her tanks and almost all her time with those tanks filled with an atmosphere of inert gas – scrubbed funnel flue gas. This is a recipe for low rates of corrosion. The original inert gas systems were developed, not to stop tankers from blowing up, but to slow down the rate of corrosion in uncoated cargo tanks. As Michael Caine once said, "Not a lot of people know that". Now, you do.

In owning and operating single hull tankers, we used to spend some time thinking about which tanks were permanent ballast tanks and which were cargo tanks, and, from time to time, we would consider changing tanks over, to even out corrosion. And we used to spend quite a lot of time thinking about stress cracking where Isherwood System longerons passed through ring frames, and stress cracking in decks. Many 1970s VLCCs were scrapped for just these reasons, at rather modest ages.

The same ship now spends about eight years during which time what were once cargo oil tanks, and are now ballast tanks, are full of ballast water for about half the time, and full of damp air for the rest of the time. This is a recipe for much higher rates of corrosion inside those tanks. An ore carrier or ore oiler has side ballast tanks which are much larger than those of a bulk carrier, so flooding a single side ballast tank on an ore carrier is going to have a bigger effect on the ship's stability than flooding a space on a conventional bulker will have.

I suspect that the true cause of the loss of the *Stellar Daisy* may lie in people thinking, as so often happens in our industry today, about their own 'part of the ship' and not thinking enough about the ship and her cargo as a whole.

The ship is now 23 years old, nobody expects her to pass her fifth special survey, and she is carrying ore, which may or may not be loaded very quickly.

Dear reader, do you think that this was – do you think that this is – a good idea?

Because, as I have said before, ships should not suddenly sink, in good weather.

—oo00oo—

Items for Sale

Snow blower for sale... Only used on snowy days.
Cows, calves Never bred... Also 1 gay bull for sale.
Georgia peaches - California grown - 89 cents lb.
Nice Parachute: Never opened - Used Once
Tired of working for only $9.75 per hour? We offer profit sharing and flexible hours. starting pay: $7 - $9 per hour.
Joining Nudist Colony! Must sell washer & dryer $300.
Alzheimer's centre prepares for an affair to remember
OPEN HOUSE BODY SHAPERS TONING SALON - Free coffee & donuts

***Pioneering Spirit* Sets World Lifting Record**

April 28, 2017 by Mike Schuler

Pioneering Spirit in the Brent field

The giant offshore installation and commissioning vessel *Pioneering Spirit* has set the new world lifting record with the successful removal of Shell's 24,000 tonne Brent Delta platform in the North Sea in a single lift.

Pioneering Spirit lining up the Delta topsides. Photo: Allseas

Pioneering Spirit's owner Allseas confirmed the safe and successful completion of the topsides removal operation on April 28.

Located in the Brent field approximately 115 miles off the northeast coast of Shetland, the Brent Delta topsides sat on a three-legged, gravity-based structure in 140 meters of water.

With all yokes connected, the *Pioneering Spirit* gets ready for the lift by pre-tensioning and de-ballasting. Credit: Allseas:

The topsides is now sea-fastened on board *Pioneering Spirit* for transport to the Able UK decommissioning yard in Teesside, northeast England, for recycling and disposal.

The *Pioneering Spirit* entered service in 2016 and, by design, has set a number of records. At 382 metres long and 124 metres wide, the purpose-built vessel is the largest offshore construction ship ever built. The bow features a large slot and lifting beams that allow the vessel to straddle a platform and remove entire topsides weighing up to 48,000 tonnes in a single lift. This single lift method is considered a major departure from traditional decommissioning, where topsides are usually taken apart piece by piece.

Pioneering is also capable of installing oil and gas pipelines, making it also the world's biggest pipelaying vessel.

Lifting the Delta topsides. Credit: Allseas

To connect to the topsides, the *Pioneering Spirit* uses eight sets of horizontal lifting beams, which are motion-compensated to account for any wind and wave action.

Topsides sea-fastened on board and ready for transport to the decommissioning yard.

The *Pioneering Spirit*, which has been rumoured to cost about $3 billion, was built in South Korea by Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering and arrived in Rotterdam for final outfitting in January 2015. The vessel had been under construction since at least 2010, but its concept dates back nearly three decades and is based on two large tankers placed side-by-side. Allseas founder and CEO, Edward Hereema, who first came up with the idea, has called the vessel one of the biggest bets of his career.

The removal of the Brent topsides is one of the main components of the Brent decommissioning project. The Brent Delta is one of four large platforms making up the Brent Field, which has been a cornerstone of the UK oil and gas industry since coming online in 1976. When the field was first discovered in 1971, it was one of the most significant oil and gas find in the North Sea.

At its peak in 1982, the Brent field was producing around 500,000 barrels per day. With around three billion barrels of oil equivalent produced over its lifetime, the field has generated billions of dollars in tax revenue for the UK Government. But after extending the life of the field well beyond its original 25-year lifespan, Shell made the decision in 2006 to begin the process of decommissioning the field, and eventually all four platforms will be removed to shore and recycled.

—oo00oo—

BOURBON SLUMP: French off shore operator Bourbon said it had put almost a third of its fleet into lay-up over the past year, warning that the marine services industry is going through the most acute crisis of the last 40 years. The company says it has cut its operating costs by 19% since 2015.