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

Only four meetings to go before the end of the year, and perhaps time to start considering what you will be able to do for the Branch next year, especially as there will be changes to the membership of Branch Court.

This year has not been kind to the United States Navy and we are sorry for the loss of life they have suffered. It is to be hoped that the review that is being undertaken will establish 'what' (system) is at fault, not just 'who' is to blame. Commentators have compared the training received by Naval officers, who are expected to multi-task, whereas Merchant Navy officers are more task specific.

Best Wishes

Paul P

Branch Master

Speaker:

Tony Wynne
Topic: Cross Channel Sailing.

The next Branch meeting will be held at the Largs Pier Hotel, 198 The Esplanade, Largs Bay, on Wednesday, 30th August 2017 at 1145 for 1200.

Please confirm your attendance at the lunch or register your apology before 1200 on Monday, 28th August 2017 with
Paul Phillips (0407 779 209) or
David Holmes (0417 444 742)

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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UZBEKISTAN – The Silk Road Cities - 2017 Tour

Uzbekistan has only existed since September 1st, 1991, when it gained its independence from the former USSR; it became a member of the United Nations in March the following year. Before being conquered by Imperial Russia in the 19th century, what is known as Uzbekistan was a collection of city states, on the main trading route between China and the Middle East.

The "Silk Road" label is relatively recent, coined only in 1877 by the German geographer, Ferdinand von Richthofen, uncle of the first world war flying ace, the Red Baron. But the routes between China and the Mediterranean Sea, which run through what have become some of the world's most disturbed and dangerous countries (Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan…), have been trodden or ridden along since long before documented history.

There was no single, continuous Silk Road, but a chain of markets that traded between east and west. China and the Roman Empire had very little direct trade. China's main partners were the peoples of modern-day Iran, whose tombs in China reveal much about their Zoroastrian beliefs. Silk was not the most important good on the road; paper, invented in China before Julius Caesar was born, had a bigger impact in Europe, while metals, spices, and glass were just as important as silk. Perhaps most significant of all was the road's transmission of ideas, technologies, and artistic motifs.

A short note on Genghis Khan: His rules of warfare were quite simple. Surrender and the lives of the population would be spared, although the city would be looted. Resist and the men would be killed and women and children taken into slavery. Treachery, or the death of one of Genghis's family during the fighting would result in the deaths of all inhabitants. Any opposing troops who deserted (treachery) to Genghis would also be killed. Samarkand surrendered, the population were moved outside the city for six days while the city was looted by Genghis's army. Tashkent resisted and was destroyed. The Emir of Tashkent, who had killed Genghis's envoys, had the misfortune to survive the siege – he died by having molten silver poured into his ears.

The predominant religions of Central Asia were Buddhism and Zoroastrianism, with Judaism and Christianity also present until all were swept aside by the spread of Islam into the region in the 14th century. Buddhism was the predominant religion when Alexander the Great conquered the region and it was the influence of the Greeks that gave form to the Buddha that we now see in art and statuary in the present era. Despite the presence of Islam for around 700 years there are still elements of Zoroastrianism present. Our Muslim coach-driver had his prayer beads slung over the coach rear-view mirror, and a Zoroastrian 'flame' symbol hanging from the handle of the forward roof vent, both for 'good luck'. On our first evening in Samarkand we returned to our room after dinner to hear a bunch of young men with loud music and cars 'doing donuts' in the street outside. Just after 11:00pm one youth hoisted a heart symbol inside a red wreath on the end of a pole. The heart and wreath were set on fire; a procession formed and the whole group paraded down the street into the night. We were later told one of the group was being married the following day and the flaming heart and wreath were Zoroastrian 'good luck' symbols.

Despite Islam forbidding the use of images on religious buildings such as mosques and madrassahs, Zoroastrian and Buddhist symbols may often be found among the artwork, particularly on the Sher Dor Madrassah overlooking Registan Square in Samarkand, where Buddha like faces, cranes and flame rosettes may be seen.

Although the population of Uzbekistan is 85% Muslim, with about 10% being practising Muslim, (most of those living in the east of the country around the Ferghana Valley), the country is considered to be secular. All forms of proselytizing are banned including the call to prayer using exterior speakers on mosques, and church bells from Orthodox or Anglican churches. The burqa and niqab are also banned as they are considered derogatory to women.

Uzbekistan is one of only two double land-locked countries in the world, the other is Liechtenstein. Its rivers run into the Aral Sea, not reaching an ocean. It is bordered by Kazakhstan to the east and north; by Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to the east; Afghanistan and Turkmenistan to the south. It lies at the western end of the Tien Shan and Pamir mountain chains, and its most fertile soil is in the east of the country. There is an expanse of steppe before the Kyrzil Kum desert covers most of the western part of the country. The shrunken remains of the Aral Sea lie in the north-west.

In 1888 the Russians commenced the building of the Trans-Caspian Railway to link Central Asia with the industrial centres of Russia. Samarkand and Tashkent were linked in 1899 and the railway was completed in 1906. Today the "Afrosiyob", a Spanish built 'Talgo' train links Tashkent, Samarkand and Bokhara at speeds up to 230kph (ours reached 228kph), and a second line linking Tashkent with Urgench and Nukus in the west is nearing completion. Uzbekistan has rail links to Russia north from Tashkent through Kazakhstan; the same line provides a link to China's New Silk Road railway linking China with Europe. The national airline, based at Tashkent, flies to current European Union countries; East, South-East (Malaysia and Singapore included) and South Asian countries and is one of the few airlines that fly to both Saudi Arabia and to Israel. Due to low water levels on its two major rivers no craft larger than motor launches are in operation. It has two

"Afrosiyob" fast train

main international highways, one running north from Tashkent, the second running north-west from Bukhara, crossing the Kryzil Kum desert, linking Urgench and Nukus and continuing into western Kazakstan. The stretch across the Kryzil Kum desert is mostly modern dual carriageway, but the first 80 kilometres west of Bukhara is a potholed single lane Soviet built road which took our coach over two hours to traverse.

Like South Australia, Uzbekistan's rainfall, and snow melt, is insufficient to meet all the demands placed upon it, and the country relies on the waters of the Syr Darya (Jaxartes) and Amu Darya (Oxus) rivers which flow through Tajikistan from the western end of the Tien Shen and Pamir mountains respectively. There is tension between the two countries as Tajikistan restricts water flows attempting to persuade Uzbekistan to supply it with free methane.

Uzbekistan has a plentiful supply of natural gas, uranium, granite and marble. In 1960, when fish from the Aral Sea was being served at State banquets in Moscow, the Soviet Union decided that Uzbekistan would become their main cotton growing area. Now the Aral Sea has been reduced to about ten percent of its size in 1960 and there are no fish, although freshwater fish, such as carp, are still caught in the rivers. They are not usually served to tourists having previously being described as tasting "bland" or "muddy". Agriculture is widespread and every home has a carefully tended vegetable plot. Crops include grains, orchard and vine fruits and about 50 varieties of rice, but not basmati. We were told the five Indian restaurants in Tashkent airfreight their supplies from India. Due to European Union embargoes on trade with Russia, that country is Uzbekistan's main trading partner.

Beer is brewed locally, under licence from European brewers; wine is fermented from vine stock imported from Spain by Imperial Russia. There is also locally distilled vodka (smooth), and cognac (the aroma of paint stripper, taste unknown).

My wife and I visited Uzbekistan in April and May of this year on a group tour organized by WEA Travel of Adelaide. We flew via Sydney (Virgin) and Seoul (Korea Air), with overnight stopovers in each, to Tashkent. Due to smog over Korea and eastern China it was not possible to see Beijing or the Great Wall, but the air had cleared by the time we skirted the northern edge of the Tien Shen mountain range, which ends in Uzbekistan. Tashkent Airport is under renewal and Arrivals are in the old part. The new Departure area rivals any airport I have travelled to.

Sharisab: Main gate ruins

Food, including salads and fruit, prepared at restaurants and hotels was considered to be as safe as in Australia but we were warned to avoid food from market stalls. In the eastern part of the country, Tashkent and Samarkand, it was recommended we use bottled water, which was supplied in hotel rooms and daily on our dedicated road coach for drinking. In the western part, Bukhara and Khiva, we were warned to use only bottled water for drinking and cleaning teeth.

The tour started in Tashkent, we travelled by Afrosiyob train to Samarkand, our baggage went by road, thence we travelled by road coach until we flew from Urgench to Tashkent at the end of our tour.

There is a large police presence on the streets, guarding government buildings and the Tashkent Metro. The Metro stations are also designated as air raid shelters and thus, as military installations, a ban on photography is enforced which is a pity as they are similar in design to those of the Moscow Metro. On the couple of occasions when we approached police we found them helpful despite the language barrier.

In this age of allowing extra time for security delays it was pleasing to find that we had to allow extra time due the locals being friendly. Photo stops would turn into group photos as local tourists would want to have their photographs taken and were eager to practise their English. On one occasion in Samarkand, Janet and I had our photographs taken with ten separate groups before we were able to move on. Saying we were from Australia would usually draw the response "Sydney?" or "Aah Kangaroos!" (accompanied by a skipping motion). One soccer fan replied with "Adelaide United".

One does not visit Uzbekistan for museums but for architecture, the most notable being Registan Square in Samarkand with Sher Dor Madrasah and the Uleg Bekh Madrasah facing each other and Tilya Madrasah in the centre. Our tour also visited potteries, a paper making factory using mulberry bark as the source material, and carpet weaving shops using cotton and silk. We were told that, unlike some other countries in the region, child labour is banned and weavers have a minimum age of seventeen.

TASHKENT

Located in the Chirchik River valley in the foothills of the Tien Sien mountains at an altitude of 525 m (1,575 ft) above sea-level. In 1977, it was the fourth largest city in population, and the third largest in area, in the USSR, after Moscow, Leningrad (St. Petersburg) and Kiev (now capital of the Ukraine).

Believed to have started as the settlement of Ming-Uruk (Thousand Apricot Trees) in the 2nd or 1st century BC. It was a major caravan crossroads by the time the Arabs took control in AD 751. It was given the name Tashkent "City of Stone" (in Turkic) in about the 11th century AD by the Khorezmshahs (one of the ruling dynasties of Central Asia and Persia from the late 11th to early 13th centuries). Ghenghis Khan destroyed Tashkent in the early 13th century, although it slowly recovered under the Mongols and then under Timur (Timur the Lame. Timurlane). After the death of Timur and, especially, after the assassination of Uleg Bekh in 1449, a 50 year period of feudal strife began. By the beginning of the 16th century Tashkent had become part of the large feudal kingdom of the Shaybanids, the founding dynasty of what effectively became modern day Uzbekistan, ruling from the mid-15th century until the start of the 17th century. The Khan of Kokand annexed Tashkent in 1809. In 1865 the Emir of Bokhara was preparing to

capture it but was beaten to it by the Imperial Russian army, despite being outnumbered 15 to 1, and against the Tsar's orders. The Russians found a town enclosed by a 25km long wall with 11 gates, but no trace remains today. As Russian influences spread to the other Central Asian khanates, Tashkent became first the Tsars and later the Soviets, main centre for espionage in Asia during the protracted rivalry with the British Empire. Following the Russian Revolution, a Committee of the Russian Provisional Government was set up on April 7, 1917. In 1918 Tashkent became the capital of the newly formed Turkestan SSR. When, in October 1924, this was split the capital of the new Uzbek SSR became Samarkand until 1930 when it was returned to Tashkent.

On 25 April 1966 Tashkent was levelled by a massive earthquake which left 300,000 people homeless. Rebuilding efforts continued through the late '60s and '70s, and again after independence. In 1999 six car bombs, attributed to Islamic extremists, killed 16 and injured more than 120.

After independence, Revolution Square was renamed Timur Square and the Karl Marx Monument demolished and replaced with a statue portraying Timur on horseback. The adjoining Intourist Hotel was renamed Hotel Uzbekistan.

SAMARKAND

One of the oldest cities in Central Asia. In the 4th century BC it was known as Maracanda and was the capital of Sogdiana, but human settlement, by Cro-Magnon or EEMH (Early European Modern Humans) is known to have existed between 50,000 and 10,000 years ago. In 329BC Maracanda (Samarkand) was captured by Alexander the Great. He declared it to be the most splendid city he had seen during his campaigns – and then destroyed it! In the 6th century AD it was part of a Turkish kingdom; conquered by the Arabs in 712AD, and in the 9th and 10th centuries it was ruled by the Samanids of Persia. From the 11th century it was ruled by various Turkic peoples during which time it was annexed to the kingdom of Khorezm. In 1220AD it was captured and looted by Genghis Khan, and became part of the territory ruled by Jagatai, Genghis Khan's second son. In 1365 the city revolted against its Mongol emirs, and from 1369 until his death in 1405 it was the capital of Timur (Timur the Lame, Tamurlane), and was the economic and cultural centre of Central Asia. Although Timur claimed descent from Genghis Khan, this was incorrect. Timur's empire stretched, at its zenith, from Persia to northern India, but it was short-lived in Central Asia; it did however have a much longer life in south Asia as the Moghul Empire, lasting until the days of the British Raj. In 1500 Samarkand was conquered by the Uzbeks, the Muslim people of the Golden Horde, and was ruled by the Shaybanid dynasty, who transferred their capital to Bukhara in the middle of the 16th century. Following attacks by nomadic tribes and the Iranians during the 17th and 18th centuries, the city was uninhabited from the 1720s until the 1770s.

Samarkand: The Registan

In 1868, it was occupied by Imperial Russian troops. When the Uzbek SSR was constituted in 1924, Samarkand was capital until 1930, when the capital was transferred to Tashkent.

Bukhara: Hotel interior

BUKARA

Traces of irrigation canals dating to the second and first millennia BC have been found. The city and surrounding country was conquered by the Persian Cyrus the Great in the 6th century BC. It was invaded by Genghis Khan in 1219-21. Although the Russian Revolution occurred in 1917 it was 1920 before the Emir of Bukara and the Khan of Khiva were forced to flee to Afghanistan. The last Emir of Bukara is reputed to have had between 100 and 450 wives or concubines. He was possibly the cruellest of all the Emirs. Any woman who upset him was punished with the "sweet death" – forced to drink a boiling sugar-based concoction.

Of the four cities, Samarkand contains the most impressive monumental buildings, the Registan, Ulug Beg's observatory, the Bibi Khanym Mosque, the Shah-i-Zinda (an avenue of mausoleums), Gur-e-Amir Mausoleum (containing the body of Timur), the Afrosiab ruins and museum. If you could only visit one city in Uzbekistan, Tashkent is in my opinion the one to choose.

View over Khiva from watch tower

The 'Old Town' quarter of Bukhara is filled with old madrassahs and merchants' arcades with the Ark, the impressive gate-house/fortress, on the outskirts. We stayed in a boutique hotel, a converted merchant's house with rooms connected by a maze of courtyards.

At Khiva, we were very fortunate to stay in a converted madrassah within the old city walls; very quiet and isolated from the sound and hustle of modern day traffic.

Would I go again? Probably not, but I have achieved my aim of seeing an area that has been on my travel list since I was a teenager.

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Another Megaship Grounding Pushes Salvors to Their Limits

August 15, 2017

By Mike Wackett (The Loadstar)

Another ultra-large container vessel has run aground in North Europe, again raising questions about the ability of salvage facilities to tackle a major incident involving the new megaships.

The MV CSCL Indian Ocean, one of the world's largest container-ships, aground on the Elbe River, February 5, 2016.
Photo: Central Command for Maritime Emergencies

The 14,074 teu *CSCL Jupiter* ran aground at around 7am yesterday in the river Scheldt after leaving the port of Antwerp *en route* for Hamburg.

The fully-laden 366-metre vessel, with a pilot still on board, apparently failed to make a turn in the river when steaming at 14 knots. It became stuck on a sandbank near Bath in the Netherlands.

In a huge salvage operation mounted by the port and local authorities, 16 tugs were reportedly deployed to pull the ULCV off at high tide, around 9pm last night.

Salvors were concerned that if they failed, the ship would sink deeper into the sand and would need to be lightened to enable it to be refloated.

Fortunately, the combined power of the tugs was enough to pull the ship back into the water, with no damage so far having been reported.

However, during the salvage operation, shipping traffic at North Europe's second-biggest container port was suspended, and the immense salvage costs will be dwarfed by the cost to the port, shipping lines and shippers from the delay and knock-on impact.

The port of Antwerp is already suffering from quay and landside congestion as it strives to cope with increased throughput from higher demand, due to a combination of a recovery in trade, the realignment of alliance networks and the impact of more ULCVs.

But the port and its customers will be breathing a sigh of relief that the disruption was relatively brief; it could have been much more serious. Such as when the 19,100 teu *CSCL Indian Ocean* ran aground on the river Elbe in February 2016 on its approach into the port of Hamburg after suffering a steering gear fault.

Despite being lightened by the pumping out of 2,500 tonnes of bunker fuel and the attendance of 12 tugs, the ULCV remained stuck for almost a week until a higher than expected spring tide helped the salvors.

Without that high tide, the next move for the *CSCL Indian Ocean* involved attempting to discharge the ship of some of its deck cargo. However, the nearest floating crane with sufficient height and reach was off the west coast of Canada.

Just a week later, the 13,892 teu *APL Vanda* became another casualty, suffering an "engine blackout" after leaving Southampton, and was subject to a "controlled grounding" on Bramble Bank, the Solent approach, to protect it from strong currents and high winds. Eight tugs succeeded in towing the ship back into port.

Loss of power or steering at sea could be catastrophic for an ULCV. And as one seasoned salvage operator told The Loadstar at the time of the CSCL Indian Ocean incident: "We just do not have the equipment on station any longer to deal with this size of casualty."

Source: gCaptain 170815

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Chinese Paper Says U.S. Navy a Hazard to Shipping

BEIJING, Aug 22 (Reuters)

Guided-missile destroyer *USS John S. McCain* (DDG 56) moored pier side at Changi Naval Base, Republic of Singapore following, a collision with a merchant vessel, August 21, 2017. U.S. Navy Photo

The U.S. navy's latest collision at sea, the fourth in its Pacific fleet this year, shows it is becoming an increasing risk to shipping in Asia despite its claims of helping to protect freedom of navigation, an official Chinese newspaper said.

The *USS John S. McCain* and the tanker *Alnic MC* collided while the guided-missile vessel was nearing Singapore on Monday. The collision tore a hole in the warship's port side at the waterline, flooding compartments that included a crew sleeping area. Ten sailors are missing.

The collision – the fourth major accident in the U.S. Pacific fleet this year – prompted a fleet-wide investigation and plans for temporary halts in operations to focus on safety.

The state-run China Daily said in an editorial on Tuesday that people will wonder why such a sophisticated navy keeps having these problems.

"The investigations into the latest collision will take time to reach their conclusions,

but there is no denying the fact that the increased activities by U.S. warships in Asia-Pacific, since Washington initiated its re-balancing to the region, are making them a growing risk to commercial shipping," it said.

China has been upset at U.S. freedom of navigation operations near Chinese controlled islands in the disputed South China Sea, where China has been reclaiming land, building air bases and increasing its military presence.

"While the U.S. Navy is becoming a dangerous obstacle in Asian waters, China has been making joint efforts with the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to draw up a Code of Conduct for the South China Sea, and it has boosted navigational safety by constructing five lighthouses on its islands," the China Daily said.

"Anyone should be able to tell who is to blame for militarizing the waters and posing a threat to navigation." (Reporting by Ben Blanchard; Editing by Michael Perry

Source: gCaptain 170823

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CMA CGM Theodore Roosevelt Breaks Panama Canal Capacity Record on Way to U.S. East Coast – 14,855 TEU!

August 22, 2017 by Mike Schuler

MV *CMA CGM Theodore Roosevelt* breaks the record for the largest capacity ship to use the Panama Canal's new Expanded Locks, August 22, 2017.
Photo: Panama Canal Authority

The 14,855 TEU capacity *CMA CGM Theodore Roosevelt* has set a new record as the largest capacity ship to ever transit the new Expanded Locks of the Panama Canal.

The Neopanamax containership, which began its voyage from Asia, made its inaugural transit of the Panama Canal on Tuesday as it heads for the U.S. East Coast.

The *CMA CGM Theodore Roosevelt* has a Total TEU Allowance (TTA) of 14,855 and measures 365.9 meters in length and 48.2 meters in beam. It beats records set by the 13,926 TEU *OOCL France* and 13,092 TEU *COSCO Development* in May as the largest capacity ship to use the waterway.

Technically speaking, the *CMA CGM Theodore Roosevelt* is the first Ultra Large Container Vessel to ever use the Panama Canal. ULCVs are categorized as having more than 14,000 TEU capacity.

Expanded Panama Canal Marks One Year Since Opening
Photo: Panama Canal Authority

"Today's transit not only represents the growing success and adoption of the Expanded Canal, but also its impact on reshaping world trade," said Panama Canal Administrator Jorge L. Quijano.

Like the *OOCL France* and *COSCO Development*, *CMA CGM Theodore Roosevelt* is deployed on the new OCEAN Alliance's weekly South Atlantic Express (SAX) service, which connects Asia and U.S. East Coast ports via the Panama Canal. The SAX service is composed of 11 vessels ranging in size from 11,000 to 14,000 TEUs.

The *CMA CGM Theodore Roosevelt* began its voyage in Shanghai and will soon call on ports along the U.S. East Coast, with stops which will include Norfolk, Savannah, and Charleston. For this voyage, the *CMA CGM Theodore Roosevelt* will also call on the Port of New York and New Jersey, which recently completed a four year, $1.6 billion project to raise the Bayonne Bridge to 215 ft. The move will allow the nation's third-largest port for the first time to accept ships larger than 9,500 TEU to reach three of its four main terminals.

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Sniffing Ships: Denmark is planning to deploy drones to 'sniff out' ships breaching emission standards. The Danish Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced last month that it will start to use the new 'sniffer' technology on helicopters to monitor compliance with emission control area rules. The equipment can measure both sulphur and nitrogen oxide emissions.
Source: Flashlight n177

COSCO Deal: China Cosco Shipping has announced a US$6.3bn deal to take over Hong Kong-based Orient Overseas International (OOIL), which includes Orient Overseas Container Line (OOCL). If approved by competition authorities, the combined containership fleet will be the world's third largest, totalling more than 400 vessels and with capacity of more than 2.9m TEU.
Source: Flashlight 177