# The Porthole

**Volume 22 No. 7** **July 2022**

***The newsletter of***
***the Company of Master Mariners of Australia,***
***South Australian Branch***
***PO Box 1, PORT ADELAIDE, SA 5015***
***Branch Patron: Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC***

## Branch Master's Comments

Good Day to all our readers

Our Winter Solstice is past, and we can at last look forward to longer and warmer days. Not just yet, but they're coming.

While in this spirit of optimism, I recall reading recently on the internet that Australia is the world's largest exporter of both iron ore and LPG, and we are also the world's second largest exporter of coal. Since 2001 we have increased our total exports by around 300%. In 2001, four million containers were processed in and out of Australia, and in 2021, despite the COVID pandemic, we shifted 13 million containers. Not bad for a country that has virtually dumped all of its own overseas shipping. The question is, what is the government going to do about this besides talking and making vague promises for the future? As a by-product of all these foreign shipping movements though, our support services have grown even as our shipping has contracted, e.g. tugs, pilots and so on. This is a bright spot amid all the otherwise bad news for our industry, and I noticed that our existing training companies such as 'Smartship Australia' (which has just had its tenth anniversary) are doing well, and training the next generation of operatives as well as honing the skills of those already employed in these professions.

While on the subject of ports, I note that the labour employed at the Port of Darwin is protesting and threatening strike action against the possibility of wage cuts which haven't happened yet, and probably won't.

Meanwhile, back in Adelaide, our meetings are set for next Wednesday 27th July at the Largs Pier Hotel, with the monthly luncheon meeting at 1145 for 1200, and the Branch Court meeting at 1100 before that. I would be happy to see any who can make it despite the ongoing plague.

Happy Sailing to all once more

Bob W (SABM)

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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, 27th July 2022, at 1145 for 1200.**
**Please confirm your attendance at the lunch or register your apology**
**before 1200 on Monday, 25th July 2022**
**with Bob Westley (0427 644 947)**
**or Ian Dickson (0418 807 788)**

## The index of happiness afloat

*By Michael Grey*

It was the annual "Day of the Seafarer" last week, not that anyone outside the maritime world actually noticed, although some institutions, managers and maritime employers made kindly pronouncements about the value of these essential workers. It came a few days after the publication of the latest Mission to Seafarers and Standard Club Seafarers' Happiness Index, which, perhaps predictably, showed this indicator of joy sinking to new lows.

I suppose we cannot be surprised at this lack of enthusiasm for the life seafarers lead at sea, after more than two years of accumulated misery caused by the pandemic and their confinement for months, even years, on end aboard their ships. Few seafarers these days are motivated by the search for adventure and the lure of foreign parts which enthused many of their predecessors, but the shameful treatment of this forgotten workforce in so many of the world's ports is bringing its predictable reward. There is a genuine manning crisis today, and the industry is beginning to feel the loss of a lot of talented people who are electing to stay ashore, rather than return to a job which did not appear to value them.

Seafarers are no different from their opposite numbers in shore occupations, and the pandemic has made vast numbers rather more introspective about what they do for a living. And as always, it will be the brightest and best who will tend to go and do something different, where their lives might just be better and more meaningful. Marine employers will be left trying to fill the vacancies they leave behind them.

If there are any positive things to register, it is that the best employers are themselves taking a hard look at what they offer and seeking to address their employment "packages". It is not just a matter of money, although this is important, to attract and retain staff, but what might be described as the fringe benefits that make one employer stand out from others. Surveys of seafarers' attitudes invariably throw up the importance of connectivity and affordable internet and telephone communications, and the best employers are reacting appropriately. And there is no excuse not to provide better connectivity for crews, as there are good deals to be done with providers.

Good employers are also taking a look at tour lengths, improved arrangements for payment and allotments, saving schemes and pension provision, along with medical services for seafarers to provide protection for both their time afloat and ashore. These will make a great difference to those who live in countries where medical services are either costly or poorly provisioned. It is also notable that the standard of accommodation and on-board catering are issues that increasingly matter to seafarers, and which can serve to discriminate between employers. It is also a positive sign that there is much more open discussion about "wellness" issues, whether it be related to physical or mental health. There is more recognition of the industry's record on health and safety and the lamentable suicide rate. A generation ago these matters would have been largely ignored.

So far, so good, and hopefully the employers who can offer something better than was available in the past will benefit from their ability to recruit the more capable seafarers, just as long as they can find them. Nevertheless, there has always been a wide spectrum in what has been on offer for the questing maritime employee, and it is regrettably the case that these divisions between the best and worst are probably widening.

***He's asking for $5000p.m, free internet and a guarantee of happiness!!!!***

With maritime employment, unlike that ashore, it just isn't true that any improvements to wages and conditions will "float all boats" across the board. In the global bazaar in which ship manning operates, there will be plenty of employers, manning agencies and the like, which will remain oblivious to any pressure to improve, because they know they don't have to.

They know that there will always be, as there always have been, huge numbers of potential seafarers, somewhere in the world, desperate for any form of employment, no matter how awful it might be, because they will have few other opportunities for work in their benighted countries of origin. Paradoxically, it is the employers who care about standards and quality who will be experiencing the difficulties of recruitment, post-pandemic. And that's not cynicism – but the reality which has always seen the shipping industry populated by the good, the bad and the ugly.

*Michael Grey is former editor of Lloyd's List.*

*Source: Maritime Advocate 807*

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## Safety at stake

By Michael Grey

It's those darned "stakeholders" who are the trouble once again. It is one of those words which was unknown in an earlier era of free speech, when you could be quite clear about identifying those you were talking about, without having the lawyers or twitterati on your back. Now it has become common parlance. Those pesky stakeholders came to mind the other day, reading the INTERCARGO bulk carrier casualty report, which covers the latest ten-year period to 2021.

In many respects, there would appear to be room for some optimism, as the sector has moved on substantially from the disastrous times of the 1980s and 90s, when large numbers of predominantly elderly bulkers were being lost, usually with their crews. Better maintenance, closer surveillance by people who know what they are looking for, and more responsible behaviour by terminal operators, all combined to relegate this awful period to the history books. The sector also learned valuable lessons about quality and supervision from colleagues running tankers, with the emergence of quality drivers like Rightship preventing any backsliding. One might conclude that the organisation, which has worked hard to promote safety and quality, has some room for satisfaction.

However, there is included in the report a warning against any complacency, as it notes that the menace of liquefaction remains a problem, illustrated by the five big bulk carriers lost with the deaths of 70 of their crews after their cargoes of nickel ore and bauxite liquefied on passage. Altogether, during the ten-year period under review, 27 ships over 10,000 dwt were lost and 92 crew died in these casualties. According to INTERCARGO vice chairman Uttam Kumar Jaiswal, who focused particularly on the continuing risks of liquefaction, systems, codes and procedures for testing and sampling, which are designed to protect the vessels, were not being followed. And, while emphasising that his remarks were not directed at ship operators, there was "a lack of consolidated effort by stakeholders" when it came to following codes that would keep ships safe.

It was those stakeholders again, whose attitudes, one might suggest, are relics of those found in the past, when casualties were regular occurrences. People like charterers, who would put all manner of pressure on masters to load cargo which they knew had excessive water content, in some rackety bulk terminal, with its stockpiles awash in rain-soaked slurry. People whose attitude to the bulk cargo codes was cavalier, to say the least, with inadequate testing procedures by so-called "surveyors" who were neither expert nor independent, but just a cog in the machine to get the ship loaded and away to sea.

You might suggest that the actual number of casualties, with four attributed to wet nickel ore and one to bauxite was small, over a ten-year period. Yet these were not 'rust-buckets', but modern ships and those 70 dead seafarers should not have met such a fate. And in the warning against complacency, there is more than a hint that in some soggy creek in South East Asia or West Africa, there will still be "stakeholders" prepared to take short cuts over proper water content testing and pressure still being applied on masters to open their hatches and get the cargo aboard, wet season or not. They don't seem to realise, or perhaps they just don't care, what is at stake.

Apart from the completely avoidable liquefaction casualties, the report to the IMO also suggests that grounding played a role in the totality of loss, and you have to admit that this is also a cause of loss generally associated with some degree of incompetence. But you have to wonder whether, at least at the end of this period under review, there were more accidents in which the miserable lives being lived by ships' crew might have been a contributor. Trapped aboard their steel boxes, unable to get ashore or home on leave at the end of their contracts, it would not be a perfect recipe for a focussed and committed workforce, as the long months ticked away. It will be interesting to see whether there is any related movement in the casualty statistics covering this miserable period of pandemic, when the next report comes around. A rather different set of stakeholders, perhaps, although their influence on casualties should not be altogether discounted.

*Michael Grey is former editor of Lloyd's List.*

*Source: Maritime Advocate 808*

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## Cargo Ship Captain Swims to Save Unusual "Passenger"

PUBLISHED JUN 21, 2022

It is not very often that you hear a tale about a captain that dives overboard to rescue one of his wayward "passengers" from the sea, but the BBC is reporting just such a tale today. What's more, the passengers were the four-legged kind, but both owner and captain feared the creature might not be able to swim, leaving little choice but to stage the unusual rescue.

Tom Sexton took command of the small cargo ship the *Gry Maritha* (pictured) in April after the vessel's senior captain retired in the spring, after 22 years with the Isles of Scilly Steamship Company. Just a small 123 foot knockabout built in 1981, the 590 ton vessel provides a vital, year-round freight service between Penzance in Cornwall in the UK and 36 miles to St. Mary's in the Isles of Scilly. She is equipped to carry palletised cargo and bulk fuel, plus she has a deck crane which enables the ship to carry large goods up to a maximum weight of six tons, including vehicles and machinery.

Last week, during one of her regular runs, she boarded two unusual passengers, meerkats that were being transported by their owner on their way to a zoo in Axminster, Devon, England. Named Doris and Boris, the animals, which weigh less than two

pounds, were caged for the trip from the Isles of Scilly. Somehow, when they were arriving in Penzance, the animals got free and were running around the deck of the little cargo ship.

Captain Tom Sexton with the Boris, the rescued meerkat. Image source: Jake Hall

The crew was able to catch Doris, but much to the dismay of their owner, Boris decided to make a break for it and went over the side of the ship down 10 feet into the harbor. Owner Stephen Griffin told the BBC that he did not think the meerkat could swim, but Captain Sexton said he saw the animal swimming about, but realized it had no way to get back aboard the ship.

Sexton quickly changed into a pair of boardshorts and put on a pair of gloves to prevent the animal from biting and he dove in after his wayward passenger. At the same time, the crew tied a cage to a rope and lowered it over the side. Recounting his tale to the BBC, Sexton said it was "easier" than he thought it would be, saying that the animal "was quite glad" to be caught and back on dry ground.

The captain laughs it off going back to his job of moving vital supplies to the islands, but you have to assume he had some fun in the pub recounting the day the meerkats took a cruise on his ship.

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## The complex and fascinating world of modern weather routing: A deep dive into StormGeo's advanced weather routing services

**Dr. Pablo Rodas-Martini**

Do you know the name of the first navigator who used "weather routing" on his voyage from Europe to faraway lands and back? It wasn't Christopher Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Juan Sebastian Elcano, Walter Raleigh or any other famous name from the XV or XVI centuries. It was a much lesser-known figure. Antón de Alaminos, the pilot of another well-known discoverer, Juan Ponce de León, made the first roundtrip from Europe to the Americas, taking advantage of the winds and currents. On his way to the Americas, he followed, like others, the trade winds discovered by Columbus, but he used the Gulf Current and the westerlies on his way back to Europe. After his voyage, that became the "official" route to return to Europe from the new continent.

In this article, my mind navigates to the fascinating world of modern weather routing systems. Although the science of weather routing has evolved immensely since the days of de Alaminos, its fundamental concept persists: To find the optimal route for ocean voyages based on weather forecasts while ensuring the safety of the crew, vessel, and cargo. In recent years, however, technological advancements have made it easier for ship owners, charterers, and operators to conserve fuel, making modern weather routing a vital part of any decarbonization efforts in the shipping industry. Thanks to the trial account I was given by **StormGeo**, I accessed s-Suite, a one-stop solution to optimize time, fuel, and vessel performance while ensuring navigational and environmental compliance, and looked at the main components of modern weather routing through its three modules (s-Planner, s-Insight, and s-Routing). What I find fascinating about the most sophisticated modern weather routing solutions, such as s-Routing, is how they combine the characteristics of the vessels, including their cargo, with the forces of nature at sea. Since even the gigantic crude carriers, bulkers, or container carriers are nothing but microscopic pieces of metal compared to the oceans, weather routing becomes an incredibly helpful tool.

The first data s-Routing takes into account is all the necessary information about the vessel: DWT, LOA, beam, draft, trim, load condition (ballast, laden, partially laden), etc. The routing analysts at StormGeo's Operations Centers know that they deal with a particular type of ship transporting a specified amount of cargo. The recommendations, therefore, are ad hoc to that vessel, not to a generic one.

Then comes Pandora's box—all the data related to the forces of nature. In an example report for a vessel, I read the wind direction and strength: the letters of a rose of the winds for sixteen directions and the typical Beaufort scale from zero to twelve. For instance, on the 22nd at 00 hours, the wind direction and speed were S/4BF. Since I have the shipping route and its waypoints, I can almost feel from my imaginary deck the fresh and moderate breeze. But at 06 hours, it has slightly changed direction to SSE/4BF, keeping the moderate force. And then at 12 hours ESE/4BF, and at 18 hours NE/3BF. I also read the swell, those surface gravity waves; the numbers at 00 hours were SSE/1.0M/7S. I see that the period (the last number in seconds) was not long. From the 22nd day to the 26th, I also see that the wind and swell rarely come from the same direction, something expected given that swell is massive and crestless waves no longer supported by the wind. And then come the numbers of the significant wave height; of course, the higher they are, the more difficult the navigation. In brief, following the ship's route, I can reproduce the winds and waves it confronted during those days.

But that is not all: nature has many "characters." One of them is the currents, those continuous and predictable movements of seawater caused by many elements, including the earth's rotation. On the 22nd at 00 hours, for instance, its direction and speed were NNW/0.2KTS, six hours later S/0.4KTS, and so on. Other "characters" in s-Routing are the weather and current factors. The former is the speed loss due to wind, sea, and swell, a number that is always negative; the latter is the impact of the currents on the vessel's speed, which could be positive or negative. By "blending" and processing all those variables with sophisticated algorithms, the route analysts, knowing the vessel's speed over water and overground, can provide precise fuel and time optimization recommendations to each vessel.

And what happens when a storm is on the ship's route? StormGeo's expert, Solbjørg Apeland, summarized for me the four-page report they delivered to the captain of a vessel concerning a Newfoundland storm and heavy freezing spray in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. "We suggested the vessel slow-steam for approximately four days to allow this first storm to clear, then maximum safe speed after that to get into the Gulf of St. Lawrence ahead of the next storm. In the end, the vessel took a few brief periods of 6m significant waves but avoided multiple surges of 7-9m waves and also avoided prolonged freezing spray."

There is even more! StormGeo's sophisticated Strategic Power Routing considers the engine properties and provides the proper RPM for the weather conditions that the vessel faces at each waypoint to maintain constant power, optimize fuel consumption, and reduce emissions. In other words, the solution provides not only the best route but also the best speed according to the weather conditions and the vessel's characteristics, including its marine engine (Strategic Power Routing, with the ideal maximum continuous rating, MCR, percentage, is becoming critical given the universal quest towards decarbonization; I will be writing a future article only about that topic).

StormGeo's innovative software and services suite is a prime example of how advanced technology makes the complex and fascinating world of weather routing understandable and actionable for the modern navigator. And the numbers speak for themselves: with deep experience in weather routing, the route advisors provide route guidance to 68,000 voyages each year, ensuring both safety, cost reductions, and environmental compliance for navigators worldwide.

Sometimes I wish I could be an officer crossing the ocean, and, from the bridge and the deck (and occasionally visiting the engine room), appreciate first-hand the forces of nature, the operation of the vessel, and the reports produced thanks to complex algorithms. I think once again about Antón de Alaminos, his round voyage using the winds and currents in his favor, and the incredible tools that human ingenuity has developed to improve navigation.

*__Pablo Rodas-Martini__ has an M.Sc. and Ph.D. from Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London. He is a Contributor to __StormGeo__.

*Source: Flashlight 235*

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## Decarbonization threatens to Strip-Mine Ocean Seabeds

July 18, 2022

By Todd Woody (Bloomberg)

As battery makers scramble to procure cobalt, nickel, and other metals to meet rising consumer demand for electric cars, governmental opposition to strip-mining the seabed for minerals is mounting.

The deep ocean contains the largest estimated deposits of minerals on the planet, potentially worth trillions of dollars. But in recent weeks, Chile, Fiji, Palau, and other nations have called for a moratorium on ocean mining, until there is a better understanding of the environmental consequences of destroying little-explored and unique deep-sea ecosystems that play an undetermined role in the global climate. French President Emmanuel Macron, meanwhile, expressed his opposition to seabed mining in June at the United Nations Ocean Conference in Lisbon, Portugal.

UN member states must "create the legal framework to stop high sea mining and not to allow new activities putting in danger these ecosystems," Macron said on the sidelines of the conference on June 30.

The pronouncements are striking, observers say, because those nations are members of the International Seabed Authority, the UN-affiliated organization created to regulate deep-sea mining. Three of the countries — Chile, Fiji and France — sit on the ISA Council, the organization's 36-nation policymaking body that is meeting for the next two weeks in Kingston, Jamaica, to negotiate regulations that could allow mining to begin as soon as 2024.

Matthew Gianni, a long-time ISA observer and a founder of the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, said in an email that he expects other nations to join the call for a moratorium. "Countries are finally recognizing the concerns expressed by scientists regarding the likely damage to the environment, fisheries, migratory species, biodiversity and ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration if deep-sea mining is permitted to go forward," said Gianni, whose Amsterdam-based alliance represents more than 100 environmental groups and other non-governmental organizations.

Pradeep Singh, an ocean governance scholar at the University of Bremen in Germany who studies the seabed authority, said the push for a moratorium by ISA member states "is a turning point in the negotiations" over deep-sea mining. "These calls for a pause or moratorium certainly do question the legitimacy" of seabed mining, Singh said in an email.

Ambassador Gina Guillén Grillo, who serves as Costa Rica's permanent representative to the ISA and a delegate to the Council, said, "My country has many concerns regarding the push for starting the mining phase so soon. There is basically no information on the flora, fauna and ecosystems in the deep sea and seabed."

"We have to remember that the seabed and its resources belong to humankind, so member states might also decide they don't want to mine," she added in an email. "They might instead wish to explore the potentiality of the amazing biodiversity for medicine, space aeronautics, cosmetics, fire resistance, etc."

**Electric Vehicles**

Google and automakers BMW, Renault, Volkswagen and Volvo have pledged not to use deep-sea metals for the time being, and 623 marine scientists and policy experts have signed a petition advocating a pause in seabed mining.

The ISA did not respond to a request for comment on the calls for a moratorium.

**UN Convention on the Law of the Sea**

The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea treaty (UNCLOS) established the ISA in 1994 to regulate deep-sea mining in international waters for the "benefit of mankind as a whole" while ensuring "effective protection of the marine environment."

"This obligation is absolute, we cannot disregard it," said Guillén Grillo. "We need time, and resources for marine scientific research and for the whole international community to become involved."

The ISA consists of 167 member states and the European Union. The US is not an ISA member as it has not ratified the treaty but participates in the organization's proceedings as an observer.

Since 2001, the ISA has issued exploration contracts to state-backed enterprises, government agencies and private companies to prospect for minerals over more than 500,000 square miles of the seabed in the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific oceans. Still, ISA has yet to approve mining regulations. Once it does, those contractors can apply for an exploitation licence to start mining. Each mining contractor must be sponsored by an ISA member nation and pay it and the ISA royalties on the minerals mined.

**Is Terrestrial Mining Worse?**

Mining contractors have argued that deep-sea mining will have less of an environmental impact than terrestrial mining and is necessary to provide the metals needed for a transition to a fossil fuel-free future.

The ISA Council had spent years working on mining regulations when in June 2021, Nauru, a small Pacific island nation, upended negotiations by triggering a clause in the Law of the Sea treaty that requires the seabed authority to approve mining regulations within two years.

Nauru is the sponsor of a subsidiary of The Metals Company, a Canadian-registered mining venture. If the ISA does not approve regulations by July 2023, it may be compelled to provisionally issue a mining licence to The Metals Company under whatever environmental protections for the seabed are in place at the time.

Before Nauru triggered the two-year rule, The Metals Company had told potential investors it expected to begin mining in 2024, according to US securities filings. The company had also estimated it will earn $95 billion from one area of the Nauru concession over 23 years of production. It said it expects to pay 7.6% of those revenues in royalties to Nauru and the ISA. The company's share price declined to a 52-week low of 79 cents on Friday before closing at 88 cents.

**Deep-Sea Mining Moratoriums**

"I don't think a moratorium will become a reality," Gerard Barron, chief executive officer of The Metals Company, said in a statement. "It would only curtail the deep-sea research the environmental NGOs are calling for and which TMC is undertaking in collaboration with leading independent research institutions."

Last year alone we spent tens of millions of dollars on our science program, and research teams clocked more than 170 days at sea carrying out studies that help us all better understand the deep-sea environment, in order to protect it," he added.

The company holds ISA contracts to prospect for minerals in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone, a vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean between Hawaii and Mexico. The CCZ holds billions of polymetallic nodules, potato-sized rocks rich in cobalt, nickel, manganese, and other minerals that formed over tens of millions of years at depths of 13,000 feet. The Metals Company has been testing prototypes of mining systems to collect nodules on the sea floor and transport them to a surface ship. If mining proceeds, Southern California ports are likely to serve as base of operations for some mine sites in the Pacific.

Scientists estimate that the nodules are habitat for half of the larger species in the CCZ. A study published July 7 in the journal Science found that industrial noise from a single mine in the CCZ could affect marine life within a 310-mile radius, adding to research documenting potentially harmful impacts of mining. Most species in the CCZ are new to science and up to 75% remain to be discovered, according to researchers.

**Noise Pollution**

"Part of the problem is that we don't really know how sensitive these deep-sea species are to noise pollution but we do know they live in a very quiet environment generally," said deep-sea scientist Craig Smith, a co-author of the paper and an emeritus professor at the University of Hawaii.

Smith, a leading expert on the CCZ, said the potential ecological consequences of noise from mines that would operate around the clock for 30 years have been largely overlooked by regulators and mining companies.

An exhaustive review of all available research on areas of the deep sea targeted for exploitation released in March concluded that a lack of scientific knowledge about those ecosystems precludes effective management of mining. The authors of the paper published in the journal Marine Policy included leading prominent scientists and four members of the ISA committee that writes mining regulations.

**Maritime Regulatory Transparency**

Some member nations have long complained of a lack of transparency at the ISA while scientists, environmental groups, and former ISA staffers have accused the organization and its administrative arm, the Secretariat, of being too close to the mining companies it regulates.

Those issues are likely to arise next week at the ISA Council meeting in Jamaica, where a move to a smaller venue will limit attendance by outside observers and at least one journalist has been denied credentials to cover the conference.

Andrew Thaler edits the DSM Observer, a trade publication that covers the deep-sea mining industry and the ISA. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, he said DSM Observer reporters had regularly attended ISA conferences in Kingston. But Thaler's request for press credentials for this week's meeting was denied because the ISA determined that his publication was not a "bona fide" media organization, according to an email denying accreditation.

"It does not seem that the Secretariat is particularly interested in engaging with media at the current moment," said Thaler.

The ISA did not respond to a request for comment on media outlets denied access to the meeting.

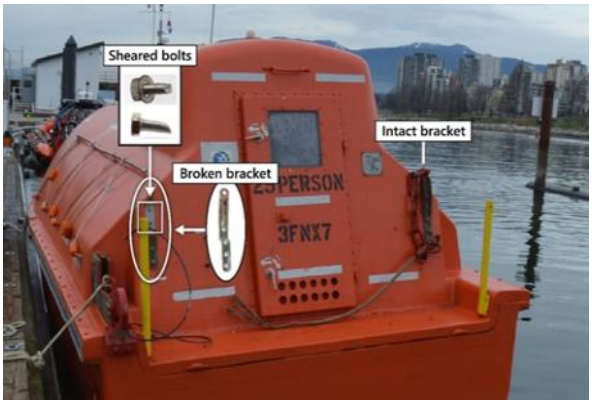
*Source: gCaptain 220719* —oo00oo--

## Another Serious Lifeboat Accident Illustrates Continued Risk in Drills

Canada's Transportation Safety Board (TSB) has released a report on yet another serious lifeboat-drill accident, illustrating the continuing hazards of this routine SOLAS safety exercise. A failure of a lifeboat launch system on a merchant vessel can result in a fall from height, ending in injuries or fatalities for anyone in the boat.

On December 1, 2020, the crew of the bulk carrier *Blue Bosporus* were carrying out a free (?) fall lifeboat drill at anchor in English Bay, British Columbia. After the four wire rope slings for lowering away the free-fall lifeboat were attached, the third mate and an AB went aboard the boat to conduct a test launch. The third mate activated the release hook, and the lifeboat slid forward about 25 centimetres. At that point, three slings connecting the boat to the davit failed, along with the bracket connecting to the fourth sling. The boat fell 45 feet into the water.

Both crewmembers aboard were seriously injured - one with leg injuries and one with an injured hand - and they were taken to a hospital for treatment. The boat's hull sustained damage where it struck the water. Most (but not all) of the broken sling components were retrieved for analysis.




A broken bracket and sheared bolts are seen onboard the lifeboat after the failed drill on Dec. 1, 2020. (Supplied by the Transportation Safety Board)

A post-accident investigation found that the crimp sleeves on the slings had weakened over time due to stress corrosion cracking - a common problem for stainless steel. In addition, one of the slings was shorter than the others, meaning that it took the full load of the boat when the hook was initially released. This sling failed first, followed by the others in sequence.

The crew were under orders to exit the lifeboat after releasing the hook, before the boat was lowered into the water using the davit - a practice consistent with IMO guidance. However, they still needed to be present in the boat in order to release the hook. They were in the practice of standing without securing themselves to the seats while carrying out this task. "There had been no assessment of the risk associated with standing unsecured in the lifeboat when it was suspended by its slings," TSB concluded.

The vessel's maintenance schedule did not specifically cover inspecting the condition of the slings, according to TSB. After the casualty, the shipowner installed new load-tested sling assemblies and brackets, and it sent a safety circular to update its requirements for lifeboat inspections and drills.

(With thanks to the Maritime Executive)

*Source: Flashlight 235* —oo00oo--

## 13 dead, hundreds injured following chlorine leak at Aqaba port

Sam Chambers June 28, 2022

Thirteen people have died and 251 have been injured in a toxic gas leak from a container carrying 25 tonnes of chlorine which dropped onto the deck of a ship at Jordan's Aqaba port yesterday, sending deadly yellow clouds into the surrounding area.

City health authorities advised residents to close their windows and stay in their homes as the noxious yellow plume spread rapidly.

The deputy chief of the Aqaba Region Ports Authority, Haj Hassan, told local media that a "cable carrying a container containing a toxic substance broke, resulting in the fall and escape of the poisonous substance".

The accident happened while loading was underway of a recently delivered deck cargo ship*, Forest 6*.

*Source: Splash247 220628* —oo00oo--

## Unique high-flying aircraft will operate from Wyndham airfield, WA

Brisbane, 5 June 2018

Airbus has selected Wyndham airfield in Western Australia as the first flight base for its pioneering Zephyr solar-powered unmanned aircraft, or drone.

The decision makes Wyndham the world's first operational site for the launch and recovery of the class of unmanned aircraft known as High Altitude Pseudo Satellites (HAPS).

Airbus will begin flights of the Zephyr at Wyndham in the second half of this year. The aircraft is extremely lightweight and makes virtually zero noise as it leaves and returns to its base.

Wyndham will serve as the launch and recovery site for Zephyr which typically flies for days or weeks at a time without landing, and operates at very high altitudes, far above even commercial airliners. Approximately 20 Airbus employees will be based in the local area during operations.

Tony Fraser, Managing Director Airbus Australia Pacific said: "We are extremely grateful to the Government of Western Australia and the Shire of Wyndham and East Kimberly for their support of the Zephyr programme. The combination of that support, largely unrestricted airspace and reliable weather make Wyndham an ideal location for these operations."

The Zephyr S which will fly at Wyndham is the production version of the earlier Zephyr 7 aircraft, which holds the world record for 14 days continuous flight, set in 2010.

It weighs less than 75kg (165lb) and flies by charging its batteries from sunlight during the day and maintaining its high altitude at night, all under control from the ground. The Zephyr operates at more than 65,000ft, above weather systems, for weeks at a time. The first production aircraft are being manufactured at Farnborough, UK.

It is uniquely capable of providing persistent surveillance over land or sea, and hosting communications links for civil or military purposes.

As well as for military operations, Zephyrs can be used for humanitarian missions, precision farming guidance, environmental and security monitoring, and to provide internet coverage to regions of poor or zero connectivity.

About Airbus

Airbus is a global leader in aeronautics, space and related services. In 2017 it generated revenues of € 59 billion restated for IFRS 15 and employed a workforce of around 129,000. Airbus offers the most comprehensive range of passenger airliners from 100 to more than 600 seats. Airbus is also a European leader providing tanker, combat, transport and mission aircraft, as well as one of the world's leading space companies. In helicopters, Airbus provides the most efficient civil and military rotorcraft solutions worldwide.

*Source: Airbus 220605*

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## COLUMN | KEEP ON SPREADING THE WORD! [TUG TIMES]

By Alan Loynd July 12, 2022

Most of us are so jaded by now that we treat many of the things we read in the news with a large measure of suspicion. I was therefore delighted when a daily shipping newsletter carried two reports, one after the other, about Korea Shipbuilding and Offshore Engineering (KSOE). These reports allided neatly. The first, from the *Reuters* news agency, claimed there was very little capacity in Asia to build any more LNG carriers. KSOE, it was stated, has mostly filled its order book for the next two and a half years, while shipyards in South Korea and China "are unable to accommodate demand for new LNG vessels as they work to meet a flood of orders for new container ships". Meanwhile, Mr KW Kim of KSOE said they have a full order book until 2025, despite a shortage of skilled labour and steel prices almost doubling.

The tugs *York Cove* and *Campbell Cove* submerged alongside berth number Three West at the Port of Devonport in Australia after they were struck by the cement carrier *Goliath* on January 28, 2022 (Photo: ATSB)

Needless to say, the very next story, from the equally highly regarded *Yonhap* news agency, was an announcement that KSOE has just won an order worth US$460 million for the construction of two LNG carriers for an Asian customer. All I can offer you, gentle reader, is the confident assertion that one of the reports is probably correct, so perhaps you can unravel the allision.

Language is a fluid thing, and I have feebly tried to demonstrate this by using a word that probably does not belong in the para-

graphs above. But if I use it often enough, and can persuade weak-minded people to copy me, my home-grown meanings will soon become acceptable. This is what the lawyers have done with the word "allision," which they use to mean an encounter between a vessel and a man-made object such as a bridge or a jetty. Sadly, most reporters have jumped on the bandwagon, although I still prefer the dictionary definition, which says it is a collision between a vessel and another, stationary, vessel.

We witnessed a genuine allision in Devonport in Tasmania recently, when the cement carrier *Goliath* struck two tugs that were berthed alongside. Sadly, both *York Cove* and *Campbell Cove* were badly damaged and foundered at the berth. Almost all the reports at the time described it as a collision, and even the preliminary report by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) missed the opportunity to call it what it was. I only found one report that attempted to label the incident correctly, and that writer said it was an "elision", which is not the same thing at all.

The preliminary report indicates that a switch on the bridge of *Goliath*, which would have transferred rudder control to the joystick on the bridgewing console, was not activated, so when the master tried to go astern, he actually went ahead. No doubt further details will be forthcoming in due course, and I am not in a position to suggest who was at fault even if I wanted to, but I hope I am the first to suggest this might eventually be described as a knob-assisted allision.

In the aftermath of the allision, reports indicate all parties acted promptly and professionally, so pollution was avoided, the ship was safely berthed, and everyone seems to have done their best – as you would expect from professionals in a well-run port. Sadly, two good tugs have been lost as a result, but we can at least be thankful there were no crew members on board at the time and injuries were avoided.

In the longer term, the allision is likely to reignite the debate about pilotage exemptions. I am not in a position to comment because I spent several years in command of offshore supply vessels and tugs before I eventually delivered a tug to an Australian port, where I was ordered to take a pilot for the first time in my career as master. I was not happy about it, but on the other hand I firmly believed that all ships visiting my home port, Hong Kong, should be forced to take a pilot and tugs on every occasion. I remain conflicted.

It is also likely that a number of tug companies will revisit their risk management policies in order to determine whether they are berthing their tugs in a reasonably safe location away from marauding bulk carriers. We cannot be of much help in an emergency if we ourselves are victims of that emergency, so I will not be surprised if a number of companies look for safer places to tie up when the tugs are not working. If so, some good might come out of this unfortunate incident.

I could not finish this column without a mention of Piet Sinke, tug man par excellence and compiler of the daily *Shipping News Clippings*, who was recently appointed Knight in the Order of Orange-Nassau by His Majesty King Willem-Alexander. In the Netherlands, they value what we do and are more aware than most of the importance of tugs, so congratulations to Piet and his family, and well done to his government for recognising his many services to our industry. Richly deserved!

*Source: Baird Maritime Column 1 220712* —oo00oo--

## TT Club hits out at 'criminal' shippers of lithium batteries

A leading transport insurer has hit out at the "regulatory mismatch" in the shipping of lithium batteries, classing some manufacturers of the dangerous cargo as "criminal". UK-based TT Club has issued an update on the carriage of these batteries as the number of fires on boxships and roros linked to them grows.

Lithium batteries are required to be certified to an international standard, involving a rigorous series of tests performed by an approved independent testing laboratory, to ensure they can both withstand everyday use through their expected lifetime and the rigours of transport. Responsibility for testing and achieving certification rests with the shipper and/or manufacturer.

The sharp rise in demand has been accompanied by supply of cheaper, poorer quality and untested batteries, including refurbished and even homemade power banks, according to the TT Club.

"E-commerce platforms have facilitated a global trade in potentially lethal products, often circumventing global standards and regulations," the insurer stated.

TT's risk management director, Peregrine Storrs-Fox, commented: "As with many successful technologies, market demand has outpaced the development of safety regulations." Since the mid-1980s lithium batteries have been classified under dangerous goods regulations, for transport based on the weight of lithium contained in the cells or batteries and the potential hazard presented by a given battery is also related to the amount of lithium it contains. However, as technology has advanced, the amount of energy derived from the active material has increased by up to 50%, leading to what Storrs-Fox described as a "regulatory mismatch" where provisions are essentially framed around mass and energy output.

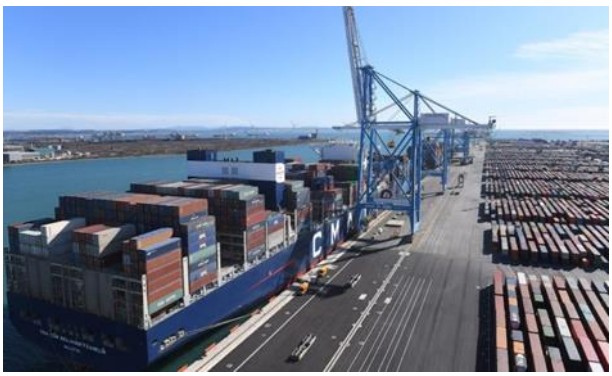
The consequences of lithium fuelled fires can be more extensive than others. They are very difficult to extinguish, prone to thermal runaway and present an explosion risk. Due to the heat generated, re-ignition once a fire has been extinguished is an additional risk. "The majority of shippers will take all practicable steps to ensure that their lithium batteries achieve certification and are classified, packaged, packed, labelled and declared correctly. A small – frankly criminal – minority are motivated to avoid compliance, entering cargo into the supply chain that presents great risk to all," Storrs-Fox observed. "Once lithium batteries are placed into the intermodal supply chain, there is little opportunity for the cargo to be checked, visually or otherwise to verify compliance. For all who are contracted to transport, handle or store lithium batteries therefore, developing a thorough understanding of this particular cargo is a prudent step. Moreover, due diligence into the origin of manufacture and integrity of the shipper instigating the move of these potentially lethal power sources is critical."

(With thanks to the NAMSGlobal eNews May 2022)

*Source: Flashlight 235* —oo00oo--

## Mediterranean Hubs: Marseille in the spotlight

Marseille is the second most populated city in France. Founded around 600 BC by Greek settlers from Phoenicia, Marseille is the oldest city in the country, as well as one of Europe's oldest continuously inhabited settlements. It is a place that has lived and breathed maritime trade for just about longer than anywhere else in the region.



Port of Marseille Fos

Over the past decade the city has transformed, retooled and repurposed for the challenges of the 21st century.

Historically, the economy of Marseille was dominated by its role as a port of the French Empire, linking the North African colonies of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia with Metropolitan France.

The economy of Marseille and its region is still linked to its commercial port, the first French port and the fifth European port by cargo tonnage. Some 45,000 jobs are linked to the port activities, and it represents €4bn added value to the regional economy. 100m tons of freight pass annually through the port, 60% of which is petroleum, making it number one in France and the Mediterranean and number three in Europe.

Located near one of the biggest French rivers, the Rhône, the city is directly linked to the European hinterland by waterways and rail, and latterly its boxport has tried to position itself as an alternative to the busy north European terminals.

Marseille is also reinventing itself through the renovation of its neighbourhoods.

President Emanuel Macron, one of the most famous supporters of the city's football club, has made a great deal of his ambition to regenerate the city, setting aside billions of euros for the process last autumn with the provincial city a regular stop for him during this spring's presidential election. The city's *grand rattrapage* – or big catchup plan – officially called *Marseille en grand* – promises very significant investments in local schools and transport, particularly in northern districts.

There's also an innovation component of the *Marseille en grand* plan. A call for initiatives was launched in December to create four entrepreneurship hubs in Marseille, which will be dedicated places where young people with projects will be trained, advised and mentored free of charge by business leaders, associations and supported by public services.

Macron has described the city as a "laboratory for the republic" – something that is definitely the case, too, for maritime with new fuels and shipping-related start-ups flourishing. Into his second term as president, Macron has vowed to make Marseille the "capital of the Mediterranean".

Like many great trading hubs, Marseille has had to reinvent itself every few generations. Its citizens find themselves in the crux of another transformation right now – carrying on its mercantile traditions while ensuring the municipality is a digital leader.

The city's mayor, Benoît Payan, could leave a more widespread maritime legacy as it is he who has led the charge to speed up the creation of a Mediterranean emissions control area (ECA), something that would become the largest maritime zone in the world regulating polluting emissions.

Marseille has also recently been selected as one of 100 European cities to participate in a European Union project whose objective is climate neutrality by 2030. Marseille and the other 99 cities must become laboratories for experimentation and innovation, to enable all European cities to achieve this objective by 2050 with Payan saying many resources will be spent to ensure the port becomes greener, while freight moving through the city will increasingly be carried on electric vehicles.

*Source: Splash247 220629*

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## British Navy Seized Smuggled Iranian Missiles

GCaptain July 9, 2022

In early 2022, whilst on routine maritime security operations, Royal Navy ship *HMS Montrose* seized Iranian weapons from speedboats being operated by smugglers in international waters south of Iran.

Some of the weaponry and weapons parts seized by *HMS Montrose*. Photo Via: Royal Navy

The weapons seized included surface-to-air-missiles and engines for land attack cruise missiles, in contravention of UN Security Council resolution 2216 (2015).

This is the first time a British Naval warship has interdicted a vessel carrying such sophisticated weapons from Iran.

The seizures, which occurred on January 28 and February 25, took place in the early hours of the morning. *HMS Montrose's* Wildcat helicopter, equipped with state of the art radar systems, was scanning for vessels smuggling illicit goods. The helicopter crew spotted small vessels moving at speed away from the Iranian coast.

During the February interdiction, United States Navy destroyer *USS Gridley* supported efforts by deploying a Seahawk helicopter to provide critical overwatch during the operation. On both occasions, the Wildcat helicopter pursued the vessels and reported back to *HMS Montrose* that they could see suspicious cargo on deck.

A team of Royal Marines approached the vessels on two Rigid Hulled Inflatable Boats before securing and searching the vessel. Dozens of packages containing advanced weaponry were discovered, confiscated and brought back to HMS Montrose.

"The UK is committed to upholding international law, from standing up to aggression in Europe to interdicting illegal shipments of weaponry that perpetuates instability in the Middle East," said Minister for the Armed Forces James Heappey.

Some of the weaponry and weapons parts seized by HMS Montrose. Photo Via: Royal Navy

"The UK will continue to work in support of an enduring peace in Yemen and is committed to international maritime security so that commercial shipping can transit safely without threat of disruption."

The seized packages were returned to the UK for technical analysis, which revealed that the shipment contained multiple rocket engines for the Iranian produced 351 land attack cruise missiles and a batch of 358 surface to air missiles.

The 351 is a cruise missile with a range of 1000kms, it is regularly used by the Houthis to strike targets in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and was also the type of weapon used to attack Abu Dhabi on January 17 2022, which killed three civilians.

On Friday 24 June, the Ministry of Defence hosted the Panel of Experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2140 (2014), which concerns the conflict in Yemen. The panel inspected the seized weapons and received a technical brief by the UK's Defence Intelligence analysts.

"These interdictions demonstrate the professionalism and commitment of the Royal Navy to promoting stability in this region," said *HMS Montrose's* Commanding Officer Commander Claire Thompson.

"I am extremely proud of my crew – the Royal Navy sailors, aircrew and Royal Marines involved in these endeavours and the significant positive impact they are having in maintaining the international rules-based order at sea."

The UK retains a permanent presence in the Middle East, with *HMS Montrose* having been deployed to the region since early 2019, actively supporting multi-national maritime security operations and protecting the interests of the United Kingdom and its allies. The ship operates under the control and direction of the UK Maritime Component Command (UKMCC), based in Bahrain.

In the wider Gulf, *HMS Montrose* regularly works alongside international partners as part of the 38-nation coalition Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). CMF is the world's largest multinational maritime partnership, which exists to counter illicit non-state actors. *HMS Montrose*, a Type 23 frigate, has taken part in numerous successful operations to seize illicit drugs in the Gulf of Oman, most recently in May. This year alone, the ship has intercepted nearly £100m of illegal narcotics.

*Source: gCaptain 220711* —oo00oo--

## Expertise and Effort

Ever heard the story of the giant ship engine that failed? The ship's owners tried one expert after another, but none of them could figure but how to fix the engine.

Then they brought in an old man who had been fixing ships since he was a youngster. He carried a large bag of tools with him, and when he arrived, he immediately went to work.

He inspected the engine very carefully, top to bottom.

Two of the ship's owners were there, watching this man, hoping he would know what to do.

After looking things over, the old man reached into his bag and pulled out a small hammer. He gently tapped something. Instantly, the engine lurched into life. He carefully put his hammer away. The engine was fixed!

A week later, the owners received a bill from the old man for ten thousand dollars. "What?!" the owners exclaimed. "He hardly did anything!" So they wrote the old man a note saying, "Please send us an itemized bill."

The man sent a bill that read:

Tapping with a hammer ..... $ 2.00

Knowing where to tap ..... $ 9998.00

Effort is important but knowing where to make an effort in your life makes all the difference.

*With thanks to Paul Dixon*

*Source: Maritime Advocate 808*—oo00oo--