THE PILOT

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Editorial

Welcome to 2010 and to this 300th issue of The PILOT. We are now well into the 21st century and it is interesting to look back to the 1880's when the Association was formed. In those days it was the UKPA because there were no airline pilots and that gives an indication as to just how technology has advanced. We have international air travel, man has walked on the moon, we can instantly send messages to anywhere in the world and surf through billions of pages of information on the Internet. We can even walk in the beautiful countryside or sit in a restaurant and talk to no one in particular about nothing of consequence on our mobile phone, oblivious to our surroundings. But what about shipping? Well the ships are different and we now have radar and will shortly be navigating on electronic charts but has anything really changed? In the feature I have tried to unravel the mysteries of ECDIS and I must admit that the concept is potentially a great advance towards enhancing navigational safety but it can only happen with training. ECDIS will become compulsory from 2012 onwards but what are the shipping companies doing about training their officers? Very little because there is currently no formal training requirement. One expert has estimated that 500,000 officers will need to be trained during the next 8 years and no sign yet of a rush. I think that we have a major problem.

On page 14 I have reviewed the latest Nautical Institute publications on mooring and anchoring. Reading through the pages and looking at the mooring equipment it occurred to me that any officer from the 1880's turning up in the Tardis would have no problem in mooring or anchoring a modern ship, the equipment is unchanged. The only question that our officer would ask is "Where are the crew?". Here we are in 2010 with regulations that permit flag states to set the safe manning level for a VLCC at a total of 10 men? I can see our hypothetical officer dashing back to the Tardis!

John Clandillon-Baker FNI
Email: john@pilotmag.co.uk
Canterbury Gate House, Ash Road
Sandwich, Kent CT13 9HZ

ECDIS

(Electronic Chart Display and Information System):

Part1: How ECDIS works

When I decided to produce an article on ECDIS I thought that it would simply involve reading a few articles, condensing the content and adding a few photographs. How wrong I was! Having started to delve into the mysteries of ECDIS I realised that this charting system, the carriage of which shortly will become mandatory, is a highly complex tool which, if it is to fully deliver the enhanced safety advertised, will require watchkeepers to forget many of the traditional chartwork skills and learn to use the electronic chart from scratch. Despite having waded through many papers and articles, even now I am not too sure that I fully understand all the elements that are combined to produce an authorised ECDIS.

An ECDIS console

At the end of 2008, the IMO Maritime Safety Committee approved the mandatory carriage of ECDIS for SOLAS vessels. The requirements are for ECDIS to be phased in for different classes of vessels between 2012 and 2018. One year on from the decision we are already seeing many vessels being fitted with electronic charts so pilots need to be aware of what is now becoming the primary on board navigation system. At first glance the electronic chart seems wonderful, your own ship is displayed on a computer screen sitting nicely in its exact position on the chart. But, is it real or is it an illusion?

Navigation by means of a fully approved ECDIS is totally different from traditional navigation using paper charts and requires detailed knowledge of the functions in order to ensure safe navigation yet, whereas traditional chartwork formed a major element of a deck officer's navigation exams, electronic charts are being placed on board ships and officers are frequently expected to teach themselves how to use them in their own time by use of a thick and confusing manual. The situation is further complicated by the fact that different manufacturers provide different operating systems and features and so a watchkeeper could be fully competent in

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using one system but may then be transferred to another vessel with a totally different charting system. Currently, there appears to be considerable confusion over whether or not the electronic chart being displayed is an "official" ECDIS running an approved ENC (Electronic Navigational Chart), an unapproved ECS (Electronic Charting System) or a RCDS (Raster Chart Display System). Unapproved systems must not be used for navigation but since they are usually located on the bridge front and even fitted into integrated bridge consoles they are commonly used as the primary navigation resource! I have frequently seen unauthorised electronic charts with a warning notice "Not to be used for navigation" fitted into the bridge console with the passage route displayed. There will be a set of paper charts on the chart table fully corrected up to date so the ship isn't breaking any rules but it is obvious that many watchkeepers will just cast a glance at the electronic chart and be reassured that the ship is on-track. Even worse, some incidents have revealed that watchkeepers have trusted the position provided by such unauthorised systems despite conflicting visual and radar information. Such misguided trust is a human failing not limited to ship's watchkeepers since vehicle drivers using electronic navigation systems will happily take articulated lorries down farm tracks or the wrong way down one-way streets!

Unfortunately, without comprehensive training in the ECDIS concept, such misguided trust on board ship is usually disastrous and tragically will almost inevitably result in fatalities.

Raster and Vector Electronic Charts

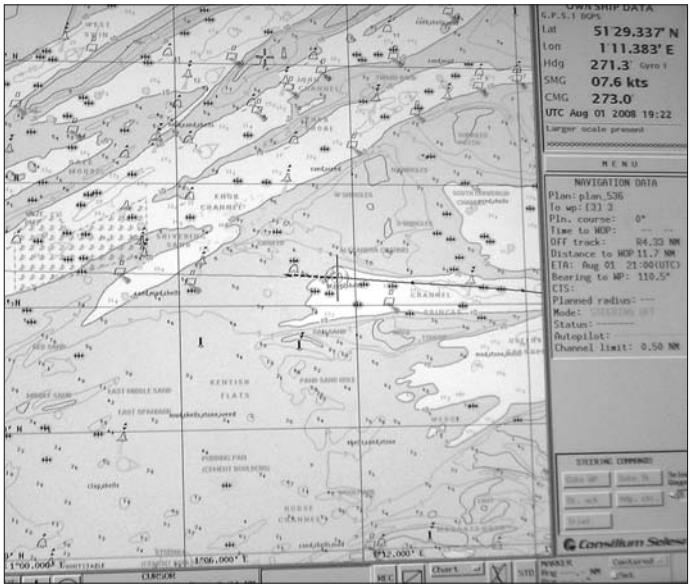
As the official ECDIS is phased in, one of the major problems is that for the last 15 years manufacturers have been producing electronic chart systems to a variety of differing standards and there are currently two totally different formats: Raster & Vector.

A **Raster** Navigation Chart (RNC) is basically a digitally scanned paper chart and the electronic chart database will be identical to a paper chart folio and the user license provides the relevant folios and corrections for a particular area with new editions being issued in an identical manner to those for paper charts. **Raster charts are never approved for navigation**. However, just to add a bit more confusion into the issue, the IMO permits raster charts to be used on an official ECDIS which can operate an approved Raster Chart Display System (RCDS). The ECDIS can therefore be used to display a raster chart in areas where ENC data is not available or the full ENC license hasn't been purchased. However, when in RCDS mode a warning should appear on the ECDIS screen and paper charts for the area must be carried and corrected up to date. This potentially dangerous "dual fuel" (as it is known) option will probably disappear rapidly as hydrographic offices complete the world database of approved ENC data since if a ship gets orders to proceed to an area not covered by its existing ENC license then, rather than keep paper chart folios and also pay for raster chart folios for the ECDIS, the ship will just have to email the chart supplier for the key to the additional areas and the access codes will be sent and the owners charged accordingly. Last year an interesting spat arose between the UKHO and an innovative chart supplier over the issue of access codes that I will cover later.

There raster chart has two main advantages over the vector chart. Firstly, they are cheap and so they have been a popular choice with ship owners. Indeed some Masters, whose owners are reluctant to invest in anything unnecessary, carry their own raster charts on a laptop with a cheap, low grade, GPS aerial plugged in. Such charts are requently from a somewhat dubious source and I have seen such laptops running charts that are at least ten years out of date. The Captain of course always states, "No no Mr. Pilot, not used for navigation. Paper charts all correct in chart room".

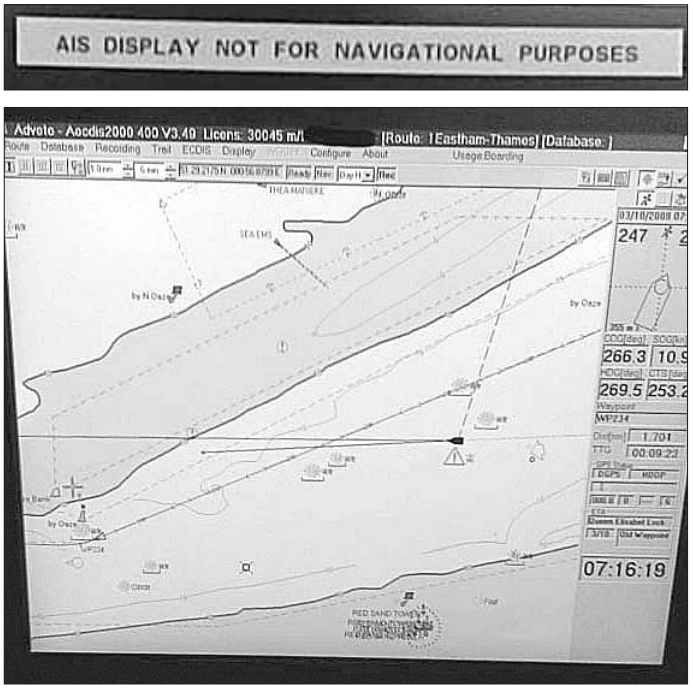
The other advantage of a raster charts is that since it is a scanned version of a traditional paper chart the chart display is totally familiar to the navigator. However, this scanned format also represents the greatest drawback of the raster chart in that by being displayed on a small screen, data which may be clear on a large paper chart may be lost and whilst switching to the larger scale chart for the area may clarify detail the important overview of the passage ahead is lost whilst the alternative of "zooming in" on the smaller scale chart generally produces distortion. Another problem frequently arises in areas where two charts overlap where the software may become confused and the navigator then has to locate and manually input the correct chart from the database.

Vector charts are far more complex being totally seamless and built from several different "layers" which cause additional features such as depth data to appear as the operator zooms in and therefore provides a less congested display on the smaller scales. However, in their wisdom the authorities have set the minimum screen display size at a tiny 27cm x 27cm which is about 1/4 the size of a paper chart so zooming in considerably reduces the view ahead for the



Raster charts are scanned paper charts. Like this one they can be years out of date and must not be used for navigation

A typical small vessel bridge showing an unapproved ECS at the conning position



This display is called an: Aecdis 2000. It isn't running an approved ENC and is marked "Not for Navigational Purposes" so why is there a track displayed on it?

passage and there is therefore a recommended optimum layer range set for navigation. The main danger of this layering function is that chart corrections and Notices to Mariners information is only required to be displayed on this optimum layer for navigation as decided by the ECDIS specifications. This results in another major disadvantage in that passage planning becomes more complex since a navigator will use a small scale display to plan a port to port passage but must then check the whole route at the recommended scale in order to ensure that no hazards or obstructions are overlooked. I have now piloted many ships operating without paper charts and this factor is a common complaint amongst the watchkeepers using them. Indeed many of these vessels still use paper planning charts for this reason, which reveals another problem in that some of the newly constructed vessels designed to operate without paper charts aren't fitted with a chart table!!

However, once a safe passage route has been identified the advantages of the vector chart become evident because the chart display can then be configured specifically to the vessel's parameters. Depth contours and "no-go" areas can be tailored to the ship's particulars and hazards highlighted with alarms that can be activated if the vessel strays from the intended track or when approaching a hazard. The provision of AIS overlay permits anti collision parameters to be set and radar and other data can be input and overlaid on the screen. Such features represent the great advantage of the vector chart and offer considerable potential to enhance safety but, in untrained hands, is also its greatest weakness. Because of its three dimensional functionality using layers of "objects" the techniques for navigating on a vector chart are totally different to the traditional paper chart methodology and so the comprehensive training in their use is paramount for the transition from a two dimensional paper chart.

Are all vector charts ENCs?

Simple answer: NO! Whilst official ENC data is only supplied in vector format the vast majority of existing vector charts have been created by manufacturers using their own methodology for transferring data from existing paper charts into vector format. If this data hasn't been provided by an approved hydrographic office using the authorised S-57 format then such vector charts are only classified as ECS and therefore cannot be used in place of paper charts.

Is an ECDIS an ENC?

A common misconception is that an ECDIS is an actual chart. In fact it is basically a display system meeting the strict specifications required to display the ENC data supplied by the approved HO's. The following is the official definition for ECDIS:

IMO Resolution MSC 232 (82) defines an ECDIS as: *"a navigation information system which with adequate back-up arrangements can be accepted as complying with the up-to-date chart required by regulations V/19 and V/27 of the 1974 SOLAS Convention, as amended, by displaying selected information from a System Electronic Navigational Chart (SENC) with positional information from navigation sensors to assist the mariner in route planning and route monitoring, and if required display additional navigation-related information"*.

An ECDIS also has to meet specific performance standards which are laid down in IMO Resolution A/817. This resolution describes the minimum performance standards for ECDIS, with reference to hardware, software, ENC and updates, user interface, integration with positioning sensors, radar and other devices, etc.

The technical standards are set by the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and it is the responsibility of the Classification Societies to assess whether a particular ECDIS installation is compliant. Systems that comply with all requirements get a Type Approval certificate from the Classification Society and only such Type Approved installations can legitimately be called ECDIS.

An important point to note here is that an ECDIS can only be used in place of paper charts if the information being displayed is sourced from an ENC converted by a SENC. Confusing? Yes, because although manufacturers may fit type approved ECDIS, the ship owner, having fitted an ECDIS unit in anticipation of future carriage requirements, may not purchase licenses for ENC's until legally required to do so and the chart may therefore only be a basic Electronic Chart System (ECS). So, until all vessels are finally fitted with "approved" systems over the next eight years, mariners in general and pilots in particular will be faced with a mix of approved and non approved electronic charts.

There is also a requirement for a back up system in case of ECDIS failure. The specifictions state:

The purpose of an ECDIS back-up system is to ensure that safe navigation is not compromised in the event of ECDIS failure. This should include a timely transfer to the back-up system during critical navigation situations. The back- up system shall allow the vessel to be navigated safely until the termination of the voyage.

What's the difference between ENC & SENC?

MSC 232 provides the following definitions:

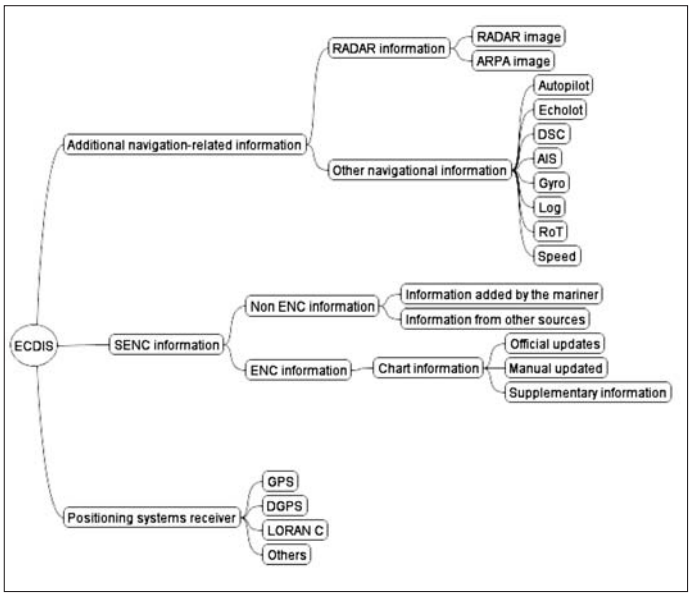
ENC: means the database, standardised as to content, structure and format, for charting and updates issued for use with ECDIS by or on the authority of a Government, authorised Hydrographic Office or other relevant government institution, and which conforms to an IHO standard known as S-57/3. The ENC contains all the chart information necessary for safe navigation. On the ship, S-57/3 data is loaded into the ECDIS in a dedicated storage area, called the ENC database.

SENC: Since the S-57/3 format is not suitable for data processing, the ECDIS has to convert the ENC into a different format referred to as SENC. The resulting data is then loaded into a separate SENC database from where it is accessed by the chart display and navigational functions of ECDIS and this database may also contain information added by the mariner or from other sources.

The ECDIS manufacturer may choose any format and database structure for the SENC, provided that the ENC data is not downgraded in accuracy and/or contents during the conversion process.

The ECDIS structure is best explained in the following diagram which I obtained from an excellent website on ECDIS at the following link:

www.fuerstenberg-dhg.de/index.php?id=fuerstenberg&l=1



There are some concerns that the SENC is a potential weak link in the integrity of the ECDIS installation since the final chart display presented to the watchkeeper is in the hands of the ECDIS manufacturers rather than the Hydrographic Offices. There is also the fact that when corrections or new charting editions are sent to the ship the conversion process can take a long time during which time the ECDIS cannot be used. To overcome this the manufacturers are increasingly offering a service to convert the ENC data to SENC ashore. In a recent paper, Dr. Fosco Bianchetti (President & CEO of C-Map) detailed the problems associated with the ENC's and the conversion process within and ECDIS and why he believes that the conversion to SENC should be undertaken ashore rather than on board the ship. The following is an edited extract from his paper which can be found at the following link:

www.thsoa.org/hy99/a_5.pdf

*"The problem is that the SENC is generated by the ECDIS, and **never tested** before being used by the ECDIS itself. It may be argued that the SENC Compiler, as part of a type-approved ECDIS, has undergone a severe testing procedure and is therefore assumed to be robust, reliable and exact. Nevertheless there is always a certain degree of uncertainty in format conversion, that could result in partial data loading, unexpected behaviour of the ECDIS, or a system crash. Also, the conversion of a large amount of data may be a lengthy affair, and could absorb a large part of the ECDIS resources, maybe right in the moment in which the system is performing a critical computation or analysis. The lack of official ENC's makes things worse. Even if a number of Hydrographic Offices have started ambitious programs of ENC production, very few official electronic charts in S-57/3 format are currently available. The result is that ECDIS users have to supplement ENC data with non-ENC electronic charts. This is the concept of the so-called "dual-fuel" ECDIS.*

Since the ECDIS operates in non-equivalent mode when using non-ENC charts, S-52 and the IMO Performance Standards require that these are not mixed with the ENC and therefore, they must be loaded in the ECDIS into a separate storage area (Non-ENC information' in the diagram) and must remain clearly distinguishable from official charts even after compilation in the SENC.

It must be stressed that quality of non-ENC charts may vary to a large extent, and their format may be very different from S-57/3 and this adds further complications (and potential problems) to the task of the SENC Compiler that has to blend various electronic charts with different features into a single database".

In order to address these issues, not surprisingly, C-MAP have come up with a solution in the latest version of their product known as CM 93/3 which produces the SENC database ashore in a format which I understand has type approval from DNV. Dr Bianchetti explains.

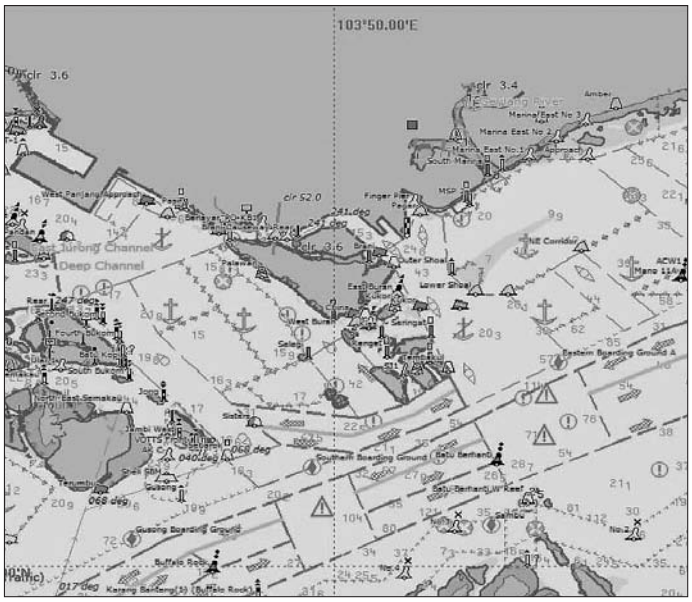
The advantages of this approach are obvious. All format conversions, as well as the difficult task of harmonising and merging data from different sources, are performed at C-MAP facilities, under strictly controlled conditions, and not by the ECDIS installed on board. All data delivered to ships is double checked in advance, in the format in which it will be actually used by the ECDIS, to ensure that it is fully functional and does not contain "unwanted surprises". Any error affecting the source electronic charts is detected (and, if possible, corrected) by C-MAP, instead of being just passed off to the user.

As regards the theoretical issue of whether the original ENC in S-57/3 format should be physically present in the ECDIS or not, there are a number of considerations that could mitigate such requirement, or lead to a different interpretation of it:

- *The only purpose for the ENC to exist on board is generating the SENC. In fact, whatever operation performed by the ECDIS on electronic chart data pertains to the SENC, not the ENC. Therefore, existence of the ENC in the ECDIS is purposeless, if the conversion to SENC has been already performed under controlled conditions, by a SENC compiler that is part of a type-approved ECDIS.*
- *S-52 and the IMO performance standards require that data is not downgraded in accuracy and/or contents during the conversion from ENC to SENC, meaning that ENC and SENC are logically equivalent to each other. At this point, any ENC stored in the ECDIS would represent a mere duplication of the corresponding SENC.*
- *Based on the above consideration, the theoretical requirement of having the ENC physically present in the ECDIS could be fulfilled by the capability of the SENC compiler to perform a back conversion (i.e. from SENC to ENC).*

Operation

When an ECDIS is switched on the watchkeeper is presented with



An approved ECDIS chart. Note the crowded screen!

a "standard display" which will consist of the largest scale available in the SENC for the displayed area. The navigator can then build on that display and taylor it to his own watch keeping needs. The specifications require that the ECDIS can be returned to the standard display by means of a "single operator action".

However, this standard display will not show all the features that you would expect to see on the paper chart. For example features such as submarine cables and spot depths aren't there and although navigation marks are shown their characteristics aren't so the navigator needs to know how to access and display this important additional data from the menu system.

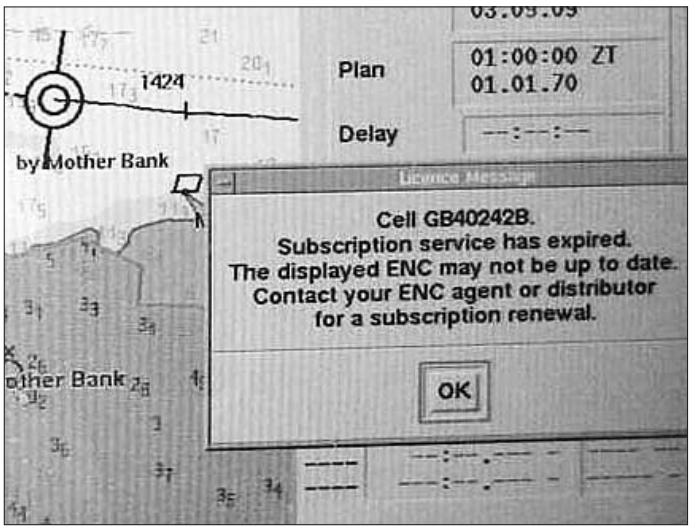
For passage planning, the navigator first needs to ensure that the ECDIS contains all the necessary charts for the passage and it is here that an interesting argument has developed between a chart supplier and the UKHO. In 2009 an authorised Dutch ENC supply company Datema introduced a sort of "pay as you go" charging plan called ENCTrack that basically permitted free access to all ENC's but only required the ship owner to pay licence fees for those he actually used on passage.

The UKHO, along with some other approved HO's halted the launch of this service on the basis that the licensing of any chart should start on the commencement of the planning process; that is, *"when it is 'first used' in the vital and mandated process of assessing the data available to enable a voyage plan to be prepared"*.

In contrast, 'ENCTrack' considers the chart's 'first use' to be when the vessel is passing through the chart region, not when the mariner starts his planning process with those same charts. The UKHO argument is that when preparing a passage plan a navigating officer is making informed decisions affecting ship safety from consulting all the charts and the embedded additional information relevant to his plan so licences should be purchased for all the charts not just for a narrow track over which the vessel actually passes. However, not all HOs agree with the UKHO position on this and consequently at the time of writing Datema have launched a limited ENCTrack service with those HO's. Interestingly, despite the objections, Datema have recently won an award as a "Value Added" reseller of ENC's. This case highlights just one of the many issues that need to be resolved within the next two years.

Once the navigator has the relevant charts he can now set his waypoints and save the passage in the database and should back this up in case of failure of the primary system. He can then set the safe depth parameters and the ECDIS can then be set to highlight the appropriate contours for the passage. Undertaking the passage and the quirks of ECDIS for navigation will be covered in part 2 in the April issue.

Of course, having the shiny new ECDIS with the relevant chart folios is only the initial element of chart work since the ENCs stored in a SENC require regular updating and it is here that some further



Don't forget to pay! photo: N Allen

unresolved complications arise. Updating data can either be made by sending a CD ROM by post, or by data transfer using satellite or mobile phone. Because of the large size of files associated with the updates the latter mode, although preferable is currently expensive. Also, upon receipt, data transferred by satellite or mobile phone must be burnt on to a CD ROM before the ENC can be updated. The CD ROM is necessary for keeping a hard copy of the update available. The cheaper option of updating by post, apart from the obvious problem of time delays, also could result in some updates being missed. This is serious because updates are sequential and if one is missing the update procedure cannot be completed until the missing previous updates have been applied.

Even when the CD is received on board there is evidence that the updating process is not always simple and can take considerable time. It also appears that on many systems there is no confirmation that the update has been successful without the navigator having to subsequently check in the folio database for each chart affected which represents a total waste of a busy watchkeeper's time and totally annuls one of the fundamental advantages claimed for ECDIS.

For urgent navigation warnings ECDIS specifications require that they can be manually updated but again I understand that on many systems this can be a time consuming and fiddly process with no standard input procedure. These problems are well known and the following somewhat alarming information is taken from the latest (January 2010) ECDIS guidance CD issued by the UKHO:

Updates for UKHO ENCs are issued weekly in line with UKHO policy for all its navigational charts, paper and electronic. Due to unforeseen technical difficulties, ENC updates may occasionally be issued late and consequently ***may not be synchronised with the corresponding Notices to Mariners*** *and updates for paper and ARCS charts. Updates are issued for all Permanent Chart-Correcting and Preliminary Notices to Mariners. However, it may not always be possible to issue updates for Temporary Notices to Mariners, especially those that cover large geographical areas and are not chart specific.* ***Mariners should consult the paper weekly Notices to Mariners booklet or the UKHO website, www.nms.ukho.gov.uk****, for details of these Notices to Mariners.*

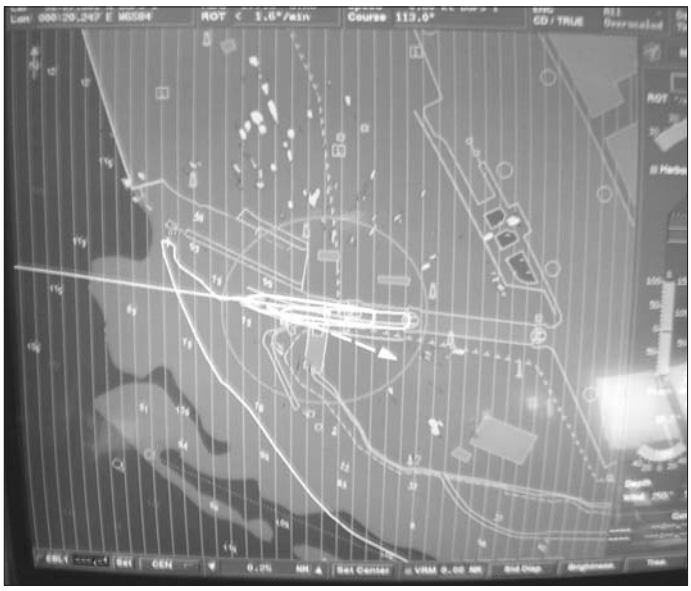
So it appears we have a situation where the ECDIS updates may not contain the latest warnings and may even be missing some altogether! I wonder just how many officers have either the time or inclination to check the printed weekly NtM's to check that their ECDIS information is complete? My estimation would be zero!

Another worrying aspect of the updating process is that, once applied these are not shown in the traditional manner associated with paper charts but with a new symbology of a polygon with an exclamation mark in it placed in the general area of the notice. The notice will only appear on the "recommended" range scale for a particular ENC so won't appear if the display is zoomed in or out! The following is again from the UKHO:

The display shows red polygons around the locations of NMs, along with the NM number. T&P NMs are shown with the NM number used in the Admiralty NM Bulletin, including the (T) or (P) designator. EP NMs are shown with (EP) in the number and using numbers that do not conflict with existing paper NMs. All NMs are linked to specific ENCs and will only display when the linked ENC is displayed. This means that as the user zooms in or out to scales at which the NM is no longer relevant, it will be removed from the screen.

Attached to each polygon is the full text of the NM, which can be viewed using the ECDIS pick report. In addition, complex NMs have an attached diagram or picture that helps explain the situation and is available directly from the ECDIS.

So we currently have a situation where the ECDIS NtM's aren't synchronised with the printed NtM's and the information is displayed in an unfamiliar format that has to be interrogated to reveal its content. Feedback from users also reveals concerns that



The striped lines on this ECDIS diplay alert the user that he is not using the "recommended" scale!

these polygons add further clutter to an already crowded display especially if they contain information not relevant to their particular vessel. The traditional practice of pasting a large correction on the chart is not possible with an ENC!

System Stability

An ECDIS is a computer and as such its stability is dependent upon the processing power available. Like all computers, over a period of time the ECDIS memory will fill up and require clearing out. As the memory fill then processing of information will slow and sometimes freeze and the ECDIS will require a re-boot. Obviously this is far from ideal if the vessel is in a busy shipping lane when such computer "issues" occur.

Additional Navigational Information

As part of an integrated system an ECDIS can be interfaced to overlay Radar and AIS data on the chart. Other items such as passage planning tools can be added to the ECDIS database and accessed as required. However, information software is not automatically supplied with the ENC so has to be purchased separately at additional cost. Examples of planning overlays are tide and weather information, sailing directions, port arrival information etc. The disadvantage of such services is that they are often produced by different software providers so the incompatibility problems associated with any computer software on different platforms can arise and of course additional software uses up memory and processing power. To combat this the ECDIS suppliers are increasingly offering such additional software packages specifically tailored to their equipment.

Training

As can be gleaned from all the aforementioned factors, the safe and efficient operation of ECDIS requires officers to not only be aware of the basic principles of ECDIS operation but they must also be fully conversant with their particular installation.

So, with an estimated 500,000 officers requiring such training before 2018, how is the Industry addressing this training issue? Well as is traditional for the Maritime world the situation is confusing because there is currently no mandatory IMO requirement for watchkeepers to attend ECDIS courses. However, under STCW95 a navigation officer must possess *"a thorough knowledge of and ability to use navigational charts and publications…"* He must show *"…evidence of skills and ability to prepare for and conduct a passage, including interpretation and applying information from charts"*.

In an annexe to the STCW95 requirements ECDIS is classified as a "chart" so under the ISM code ship owners have an obligation to ensure that their officers are trained to use ECDIS. Consequently, there is a requirement that all the watchkeepers serving on board any ship which has replaced its paper charts with an approved ECDIS system must have been formally trained in its use. Despite not formally requiring training, the IMO have proposed a syllabus for ECDIS courses and the major navigational institutions are now offering generic ECDIS courses but these currently vary in length between two and five days. Considering how traditional chartwork formed such a major element of a navigator's training there is increasing concern that the existing courses are woefully inadequate for a watchkeeper to practically comply with the STCW95 requirements. These concerns are enhanced by the generic nature of these courses which cover the basic principles of ECDIS but cannot possibly provide an officer with the necessary competencies required to operate a particular manufacturer's ECDIS. Since the regulations leave the manufacturers free to decide how the SENC information is displayed and the multitude of functions accessed, we are entering the age of ECDIS with a similar incompatible and confusing variety of operating systems as currently exists with the myriad of radars found on today's bridges!

The IMO are currently proposing that ECDIS training will be a specific requirement in the revised STCW code, scheduled for adoption this year but again this will be generic rather than type specific and so will probably just serve to formalise the existing ad-hoc training courses.

The best ship owners are addressing these issues by sending their officers on type specific courses under their ISM compliance requirements but even such well trained officers may not be fully competent to use another manufacturer's equipment if he transfers to another ship or company.

Other ship owners are sending officers for the basic training but passing the buck back to the ship by issuing ISM instructions that watchkeepers must familiarise themselves with the ECDIS using the manufacturers handbook. Since some of these can be over 500 pages in length and not easily understood, even by officers who have the advantage of English as a first language such training methodology is unlikely to provide the requisite competency. However, the vast majority of ship owners are awaiting the mandatory carriage dates for their fleets and somewhat unsurprisingly there is a growing concern that the authorised training establishments will not be able to cope with the inevitable last minute rush! I am already aware of one company which having purchased a coastal tanker from an owner who had fitted an ECDIS system had placed paper charts on board rather than incur the cost of sending the new officers on a training course. Another reason might have been that his crew agency were unable to supply ECDIS trained officers who, if available at all, are no doubt currently at a premium!

Given the track record of some crew supply agencies I think that we can expect to see a lot of forged ECDIS certificates appearing in the near future.

What about pilots?

Given all the complexities of ECDIS and the myriad of different operating systems the advice to pilots is that an ECDIS should never be used as the primary navigation tool for pilotage.

Finally my thanks go to Harry Gale of the Nautical Institute for permission to freely use information from the NI publication "From paper charts to ECDIS" which is the best publication on ECDIS available at this time. See my review in the April 2009 issue.

JCB

PS This article has been compiled from a wide variety of different sources and so my interpretation may not be totally correct. Please let me know if you find any errors in order that I can correct them accordingly.

PENSIONS NEWS

I cannot believe another year has come and gone and that it is 2010 already. May I take this opportunity to wish you and yours a healthy and happy new year.

THE SECRETARIAT

Alternate Trustees

The last quarter of 2009 saw the appointment of a new Alternate Trustee Director. The Association has appointed Captain Robert Baker, Chief Harbour Master of Forth Ports plc.

Benefit Statements 2009

We are currently in the process of obtaining and confirming year end earnings for active members and should be in a position to send out benefit statements by the end of February.

2010 Pension Increases and Calendars

Just before Christmas all pensioners and widows were sent letters confirming the percentage increase they would be receiving from 1 January 2010, as well as a calendar for the year. If you have not received yours please let us know at the Secretariat and we will put another in the post.

Pensions Payroll

Although it should not affect pensions in payment, just to let you know, we are doing a parallel run during the January payroll as we are changing our BACs provider and bringing the BACs transmission in-house. The parallel run should highlight any teething problems so we should be fine when flying solo in February.

Overseas Pensions Payments

The Bank of Scotland has decided to terminate its overseas payment facility (probably due to cost cuts) from 1 January 2010. So we had to look around for another provider that would not cost an arm and a leg. No mean feat with so few overseas payments. The good news is Loretta has found one, the bad news is they could not take us on until March. This means we are paying January and February by cheque, unless requested to pay into a UK bank account. Apologies for any inconvenience this may cause.

Retirements

August 2009 to October 2009

CJB Pyper	**Dee**	***July***
LR Smart	**Southampton**	***July***
A Wymark	**Bristol**	***September***

Expression of Wish Forms

Just a brief reminder that active members whose personal circumstances may have changed should review the contents of their Expression of Wish form as they may wish to make a new one. If so, please let the Secretariat know and a new form will be sent to you for completion.

SNOW DAYS

I have to apologise to our members in that there have been a couple of occasions when the office has not been manned recently due to adverse weather conditions (I sound like British Rail!), but if any of you know Sevenoaks the only way to get in by road is via a long hill and although Tom has managed to get me in most days there was one occasion when we did not make it. I know how irritating it is to be on the other end of an unanswered phone and can only say Sorry.

PENSIONS 2010

So what can we look forward to in 2010 for pensions on a legal and regulatory front?

Personal Accounts

2010 will be a year of law-making in respect of personal accounts. Areas likely to be covered are employers' duties and automatic enrolment, the establishment of a personal accounts scheme as well as a scheme administrator.

State Pensions

There will be changes to the State pension system, in particular, the number of 'qualifying years', ie number of years the full National Insurance contribution was paid, required to obtain a full Basic State Pension will drop from 44 years for men, 39 years for women to 30 years for both sexes.

Minimum Pension Age

From 6 April 2010 the earliest age from which a member of a pension scheme may take a pension (other than on ill-health grounds), without higher tax charges applying, will rise from age 50 to 55.

Default Retirement Age

The government has announced that 2010 will see a review of the 'default retirement age' of 65. It is expected that this age will either be raised or abolished.

PRE BUDGET PLEDGES

Public Sector Pensions

The full liability in respect of the unfunded public sector pensions will be calculated and disclosed for the first time in the 2009/10 'Whole Government Accounts'. These schemes will have employer contributions capped to limit the liability to us, the taxpayers, and high earners are expected to pay more. In theory, these reforms will save £1bn. a year.

The State Pension

The state pension will rise by 2.5% in April compared to a September Retail Price Index inflation of –1.4%. Do you think the Government is trying to buy the 'grey' voters?

Tax Relief

Individuals who earn more that £130,000 and pay pension contributions of more than £20,000 pa will now be caught by the restrictions on pension tax relief.

IN BRIEF

Equitable Life

Equitable Life will reverse last year's cuts in policy values and award with-profit holders a 3.5% interim bonus due to improvement in investment returns during the second half of 2009.

Centenarians

The number of people over the age of 100 is set to almost double from 12,000 to 20,000 over the next ten years. By 2050 the number could soar to 280,000 when the total number of pensioners will be around 16 million compared to 12 million today.

Branding

The Personal Accounts Delivery Authority has renamed personal accounts, following nine months of research. They will now be known as the National Employment Savings Trust (NEST). Let us hope these live up to their new name.

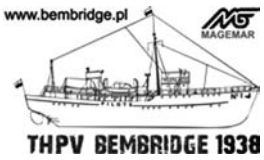
Debbie Marten
Debbie@pnpf.co.uk

Pensioners Deceased

August 2009 - October 2009

AH Acason	***London Channel***
GR Cockram	***Liverpool***
JD Reynolds	***Manchester***
GB Robinson	***Tees***
DL Sparling	***River Thames***
PB Watson	***Portsmouth***

THPV BEMBRIDGE: Pilotage Heritage Saved!



A valuable part of UK pilotage heritage is being preserved by the restoration of the 1938 Trinity House cruising pilot cutter *Bembridge* for use as a head office and museum by the Polish shipping logistics group Magemar based in Szczecin. Having been unable to locate a suitable riverside property for the company, Magemar Manager and shipping enthusiast Rafal Zahorski discovered the old *Bembridge* rapidly rotting away on the river Medway after plans to convert her into a floating restaurant had been abandoned. Although engineless and in a very poor state internally, the hull was still basically sound and Magemar purchased her in February 2009 after which she was towed across the North Sea to Poland by the Polish tug *Argus*. Despite encountering a gale on the North Sea passage the *Bembridge* arrived safely in Swinoujscie after a five day passage but was then nearly lost whilst being towed the short distance up river from Swinoujscie to Szczecin where an ice floe holed the bow.

Bembridge *in service* *Photo: A. Adams' collection*

Fortunately salvage pumps were able to cope with the ingress of water and for the last year she has been undergoing a full restoration/conversion. A full survey revealed serious corrosion in many places and some of the hull plating and most of the deck have been replaced but having been sand blasted, primed and coated, the *Bembridge* is now back in the water being fitted out. With the exception of the office which is to be located in the old engine room, Rafal has been scouring the world for authentic fittings to ensure that the rest of the vessel will look as original as possible. This has not been an easy task because the interior has been totally altered since her Trinity House days and despite searching the archives of both Trinity House and Smith's Yard, where she was built, Rafal has been unable to locate any original plans for the vessel. With the aid of photographs and the assistance of retired pilots Andy Adams and Hugh Fergusson the external appearance is now correct and by retaining the port of Registry as London she will still fly the Red Ensign and the hull will be

Bembridge *rotting on the Medway*

Bembridge arriving in Poland *Photo: Magemar*

painted the original black with a white stripe with PILOTS and No1 painted on the sides. As a result of his painstaking research and dedication Rafal is gradually accumulating fittings for the wheelhouse and deck and late last year located and purchased what are probably the last two remaining boarding boats in existence. Rafal's search is not just limited to items and records relating to the *Bembridge* but because he has been absorbed by the history he is planning to house a small museum on board devoted to Trinity House pilotage and is also seeking records and memorabilia of Trinity House in general. Can any of you help? Do you have any old photographs log books or even just stories? You can contact Rafal directly or join the blog exchanges on the Ships Nostalgia website via the links below.

History of the THPV *Bembridge*

Bembridge was designed by Sir William Reed in early 1938 for Trinity House as their first purpose built twin screw diesel engined pilot cutter and as such, a lot of care had been put into the design. She was built by Smith's Dock Company Co. Ltd. in Middlesborough and launched on 14th July 1938. She was 142 ft (43m) LOA and was commissioned at Cowes on 6th October 1938 for use as a cruising pilot cutter for Isle of Wight/Southampton District operating at the Nab and the Needles stations where she served throughout the war. In 1941 she received a direct hit from a bomb but fortunately it failed to explode and passed harmlessly through the bow.

In 1947 *Bembridge* was transferred to the London district where she worked as the cruising cutter, alternating service between the Dungeness and Sunk boarding grounds.

In 1968 a launch service operating out of a new, purpose built, pilot station at Folkestone replaced the cruising cutter and she returned to the Solent operating as a Mother ship and communications vessel until finally being withdrawn from Trinity House service in 1970.

In 1971 she was purchased by Arundel Priory for use as a training ship preparing under-privileged children for a seagoing career. That project was short-lived and in 1972 she was bought by Cosag Marine Services and fitted out as a survey ship for North Sea oil exploration. Much of her accommodation was removed for this work which she continued to undertake successfully until 1976 when she was sold to the Essex Yacht Club for use as their clubhouse at Leigh on Sea. The conversion to a clubhouse saw the removal of the engines, generators, funnel and deck machinery and other alterations resulted in very little of the interior remaining recognisable.

In 2004 the Essex Yacht Club purchased the GRP minehunter HMS *Wilton* and *Bembridge* was towed to the Medway where plans to convert her to a floating restaurant failed to materialise.

Becoming aware of her existence in 2006, Magemar purchased her in February 2009.

At the time of writing, the hull and decks have been restored and fitting out of the interior is underway. Magemar hope to have the restoration complete by early summer this year. I'm sure that you will join me in wishing Rafal and Magemar all the best with this important restoration.

During his research Rafal has accumulated a wealth of information, not just about *Bembridge* but also Trinity House in general and the Smith's Yard and he has placed all the information and links on the Magemar website at the following link:
www.bembridge.pl

There is also a vast amount of additional interesting information on the Ship Nostalgia site at the following link:
www.shipsnostalgia.com/showthread.php?t=24193&highlight=bembridge

In the absence of any museum in the UK housing Trinity House memorabilia, Rafal is keen for the *Bembridge* to fill this gap in our maritime heritage. If you are interested in helping him to realise this vision please contact him directly: Rafal Zahorski
<rafal.zahorski@bembridge.pl>

or write to him
c/o Magemar Polska Sp. z o.o.
70-603 Szczecin ul. Bytomska 7;
Tel: +48 91 430 88 91
Fax: +48 91 430 88 93

JCB

Ready for fitting out: December 2009 *Photo Rafal Zahorski*

CRIMINALISATION OF THE MARITIME PILOT

I*n previous issues I have covered the alarming trend of criminalising seafarers and pilots and despite the protestations from IMO General Secretary Efthimios Mitropoulos, criminal prosecutions for maritime accidents, especially those involving pollution are on the increase. The following is a a paper on the issues relevant to pilots presented to IMPA by French pilot and Maritime lawyer, François Laffoucrière. Although it would appear from this paper that in the UK only the Captain and ship owner would be prosecuted for pollution, the 1991 Water Resources Act (WRA) establishes offences of polluting controlled waters, the main offence being* "to cause or knowingly permit any poisonous, noxious or polluting matter or any solid matter to enter any controlled waters". *There have been many reports of accidents during cargo operations resulting in minor pollution where the ship has been detained whilst the hapless Captain has been arrested and fast tracked into a local magistrate's court and fined under the WRA prior to the vessel being released. Contrast this with the situation when a shore installation causes pollution where Company Directors are never arrested and the company may eventually face a token fine!*

The UKMPA has been concerned for many years that in the case of an accident involving pollution the pilot, being the one who has conduct of a vessel, could face criminal prosecution under the WRA for the same reasons that the French pilots are concerned over their Code de L'Environment. The limitation of libility contained within the Pilotage Act would not apply in any such case so pilots should take careful note of this paper.

What does "criminalisation" mean?

It is a process consisting in transferring the qualification of damage from a different category to a criminal one. For the Pilot, it means that in the past another person was prosecuted – either the Captain or the Ship-owner – or no prosecution was carried out – minor offence or less pressure - or else the qualification upheld was civil – what mattered was repair. From civil liability requiring damage directly linked to a cause, criminalisation establishes penal liability for which a material fact, the *actus reus* – a law infringement even without any damage – must be accompanied in principle by a psychological element, the *mens rea* – intention or recklessness. Even in a criminal offence of "strict liability", which is normally minor, some elements of the crime require *mens rea*.

A judgment of the Piraeus District Tribunal dated the 28th of January 2008, in the case of the *Grande Europa*, sentenced the Pilot and the Captain of the ship for the negligent infringement of the Collision Regulations. The ship had only hit an unchartered underwater obstacle, but the Tribunal, without having stated which rule was not complied with, decided that the men were guilty.

Why is criminalisation happening?

This is due to a general context resulting from a lesser level of acceptance by the general public when faced with maritime pollution. Since the accident of the *Exxon Valdez* in the USA in 1989, and the accidents in Europe of the *Erika* in 1999 and of the *Prestige* in 2000, polluters must be punished no matter what. Criminalisation is also the consequence of a political will to prevent such pollution from happening again by deterring unacceptable behaviour and by eliminating "rogue" operators. To this, the 9/11 syndrome has to be added.

What is the process leading to criminalisation?

It can be sighted at three different levels. The first one, international, involves the rules 4.2 – formerly 11(b) – of Annex I and 3.2 of Annex II of the MARPOL 73/78 Convention. These rules refer to the Captain or the Ship-owner only, and solely for pollution damage they wilfully caused, or due to "recklessness knowing that such damage will probably occur". Article 230 of the Montego Bay Convention only allows for fines to be inflicted unless the pollution caused in the territorial waters is intentional and severe. Pollution, even a black tide, is not enough to be made a criminal offence and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, as well as the European Convention on Human Rights and fundamental freedoms, ensures the principle that a person is innocent until proven guilty.

At the Community level, the European Directive 2005/35/EC transposes MARPOL into Community law, disregarding M. Mitropoulos' remarks. The Directive clashes with International law on two accounts because it adds the gross negligence as a psychological element of the offence that can now be attributed to more people than just the Captain or the Ship-owner. A major change occurred with two judgments by the ECJ giving the EC legislative competence in criminal matters. The proposal for a directive, COD(2008)/0055, amending Directive 2005/35/EC, sets minimal sanctions and the EP's 1st reading report even suggested amending the text from gross negligence to negligence. Simple negligence would suffice to be criminally sanctioned. In addition, with the proposal for a Directive COD(2007)/0022, Member States would have to impose criminal sanctions for certain acts causing serious damage to the environment.

At the national level, according to a 2006 BIMCO study, France, with its "Code de l'Environnement", has the most severe regime in Europe. Pilots in that country are concerned with the possibility that its Article L218-19 could be applied to them. Should the pilots in France be considered as actually having the conduct of the ship, they would be criminally sanctioned as direct actors of the damage if accidental pollution occurred. If not, the pilot could still be considered as an indirect actor, but then in order to establish guilt it would be necessary to prove that he/she deliberately violated a specific obligation of prudence or safety provided by a related act, or that he/she committed a legally defined error which put others at a particularly serious risk that he/she could not ignore.

What are the effects of criminalisation?

One of the possible effects mentioned by Mr. Mitropoulos is the deterrent effect on people wanting to embrace a maritime career. It would be catastrophic as the industry is already facing a shortage of officers. The maritime world is basically unanimous on this aspect. Another devastating effect is the impossibility for the offender to be insured for the consequences of criminal liability when this possibility is offered in the case of civil liability. P&I Clubs usually pay the fines inflicted on Captains when there is an absence of will in the offence, but there is little chance to see this happening for pilots. This could lead to over cautiousness with a damaging effect on the fluidity of the traffic which in turn would have negative economic consequences.

One solution: legal protection cover

The only realistic solution for pilots at present, since they are faced with this wave of criminalisation, is to recourse to legal protection insurance. The possibility to gain access to a renowned and efficient lawyer is becoming the only way for him to get out of a situation where he should have never been put in the first place. The funds required to enable him to get proper defence are not of the kind an uninsured pilot can afford. Therefore, legal protection cover becomes the pilot's lifeboat.

François Laffoucrière

François Laffoucrière will be giving a presentation at the UKMPA Conference (see page 13).

PEC & TRIPPING PILOTS: PROCEDURAL ADVICE

What is the status of a pilot when a trainee pilot or PEC trainee is undertaking the pilotage of a vessel? The view of the UKMPA is that the pilot must have the "conduct" of the ship, although the Master retains command. The following identifies the key factors relevant to the "tripping" situation and is edited from an opinion provided to the UKMPA by ***Barrie Youde****.*

Can a Competent Harbour Authority legally instruct an authorised pilot to lend out the conduct of the navigation to an underdraught or unlicensed pilot or any other person at any time?

• The powers of a Competent Harbour Authority (CHA) are created by the 1987 Pilotage Act. By Section 2 of the Act a CHA has the duty to provide pilotage services which it considers necessary, including the power to impose compulsory pilotage. The duty of a CHA in pilotage is limited to that of providing a duly authorised and qualified pilot.

• Although the CHA has both the statutory duty and the power to provide an authorised pilot, it has neither the duty nor the power to provide an unauthorised pilot.

• In previous cases the Courts have identified the principle that a pilot is an independent professional who serves as a principal. Also identified is the principle that no man can serve two masters. Thus, when a pilot is engaged by a shipmaster to serve a ship, there is nobody who has the power to relieve the pilot against his will, save only the shipmaster who has engaged him.

• Section 17(3) provides that if an unauthorised person pilots a ship within a harbour knowing that an authorised pilot has offered to pilot it, he shall be guilty of an offence. It follows that if a CHA were to order/arrange/suggest/propose to an unauthorised person that he should conduct the pilotage of any ship which an authorised pilot has offered to serve, then the CHA would be inciting a criminal offence. This provision applies in any harbour, whether pilotage might be compulsory or not.

• For all of those reasons, a CHA has no power whatsoever to order an authorised pilot to "lend out" the conduct of the navigation to an under-qualified, under-draught or unlicensed pilot or any other person.

Would an authorised pilot be acting outside the law if he were to give the conduct to somebody else without the agreement of the Master?

• During the course of training it is common practice for an authorised pilot to hand over the conduct to a trainee pilot. The basis on which he does so is one of supervision so the authorised pilot retains the conduct the whole time. In those circumstances it is a matter of courtesy for a pilot to mention the matter to the master.

• If, however, the authorised pilot were to hand the conduct to the unqualified trainee and then to absent himself from the navigation altogether without the master's permission, then he almost certainly would be acting unlawfully.

• The legality or otherwise of handing the con to a trainee depends, therefore, upon the extent to which the authorised pilot in fact maintains a proper supervisory role. Provided, that the pilot retains a proper supervisory role over the trainee, ready instantly to intervene, then it cannot be said that the authorised pilot acts unlawfully.

• A point to note is, however, that if damage might be done or if an incident might arise at a time when a trainee has the con, under proper supervision or not, it would be the authorised pilot who would be answerable both to his CHA and to the shipowner.

UKMPA meet with DfT

On the 18th January, following an invitation from the DfT, the UKMPA had two meetings with Civil Servants and others to discuss the draft Marine Navigation Bill (DMNB). Apparently there are indications within government circles that the DMNB may possibly be considered in the next parliamentary session. For the first meeting Don Cockrill (London) met with Ian Timpson, Roy Cahill and Cameron Clarke from the DfT and Tim Reardon and Saurabh Sachdeva from the Chamber of Shipping were also present. Discussion centred around the DMNB proposal to extend the scope of eligibility for PECs which the UKMPA continues to rigorously argue against on very strong grounds.

A second meeting was held in the afternoon and UKMPA Chairman, Joe Wilson, was joined by Don for a one to one meeting with the Ian Timpson. This constructive meeting, again relevant to the DMNB, brought the DfT up to date with the appalling lack of progress over the last 10 years in properly utilising the National Occupation Standards (NOS) and progressing towards the desired national Pilotage Competence Certificate which was supposed to have come into being on 1st January 2010. Joe and Don provided Ian with anecdotal evidence from members that a Class 1 Certificate of Competency combined with a Pilotage Authorisation is considered to be broadly equivalent to a Master's degree and emphasised that a pilot's qualification should therefore be at least equivalent to that standard. It was a pleasure to be able to advise the DfT that last month our Training and Technical committee had completed a review of the NOS. The new team at Port Skills and Safety (PSS) are keen to progress the matter (as we have heard more than once before over the years) but as a result of this meeting with Ian Timpson, the UKMPA should be meeting with PSS soon to determine the specific strategy to be adopted in order to finally bring this outstanding, post *Sea Empress*, goal to fruition.

OBITUARIES

George Richard Cockram

George Cockram, who died in September 2009 at the age of 97, was the grandson, son, and father of a Liverpool Pilot. Altogether, the family has provided a pilot to the port for an unbroken period of nearly 148 years. For a service that has been in existence since 1766, it is quite a remarkable achievement and is a record, one imagines, destined to stay unchallenged.

George joined HMS *Conway* in 1926 and was selected for the Pilot Service two years later. He did sea time with Lamport & Holt before joining the cutters in 1930, as an apprentice. Three years later, he was awarded the Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society's Silver Medal for bravery. This was for two incidents that took place at the Bar during the previous winter; one for jumping in after a colleague who had fallen overboard and a second for pulling out a trapped apprentice, when the punt had been capsized by a ships belting.

George gained his 2nd Mates Foreign going ticket in 1937, after a second spell deep sea with Henderson's, and soon after qualified as a 3rd Class Pilot.

In November 1939, in storm conditions, *No 1* Pilot cutter grounded on Ainsdale Beach and although 10 were saved, 23 pilots and crew lost their lives. One of those was George's father, Tom.

Pilots of the war era were remarkable seamen, working in almost impossible conditions during air raids, with little or no lights or communications and having to adapt to the ever increasing convoy system and the huge increase in traffic. Suffice to say that they seldom, if ever, talked about their war, but it is on record that the Liverpool Pilot Service claimed between 200 and 300 lives saved from wrecked and mined ships and many acts of gallantry were performed.

In 1953, George was appropriated to Clan Line, a position he held with distinction until retirement in September 1972.

He and his wife Glenda had a wonderfully happy and healthy retirement. Married for over 70 years, he leaves a widow, three children and numerous grand and great grandchildren.

He was a sunny, relaxed colleague, a joy to work alongside and a man who will be sadly missed.

David Hopkinson

Ralph Bird (1942 - 2009)

Further to the feature on the Pilot Gigs of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly in the October 2007 issue it is with sadness that I have to report the death of Ralph Bird who almost single handedly ensured that these wonderful historic craft were not only preserved and restored but by also creating competitive racing of them his enthusiasm and dedication has resulted in gig clubs being established not just in the traditional waters of SW England but increasing world wide.

Ralph Bird was born of a Cornish family in 1942 in Fish Hoek, Cape Town, South Africa. Following the death of his father he spent his first birthday aboard a ship returning to Britain where he was brought up in Cornwall by his mother and his grandfather.

After attending school and technical college he trained as a shipwright through an apprenticeship with Falmouth Boat Construction. Once he had perfected his skills his interest in the traditional Cornish pilot gigs motivated him into dedicating his life to the restoration and preservation of the craft, many of which were lying rotting and abandoned.

In 1981, Ralph, with a handful of other enthusiasts, borrowed a few historic gigs and set up the Truro Three Rivers Race. Within five years, four pilot gig clubs had been established and this led to the Cornish Pilot Gig Association being formed in 1988 with Ralph as President. The Association introduced a standard design for all racing gigs and it was agreed that the *Treffry* should be the gig used for this standard. Built by William Peters in 1838 and owned by the Newquay gig club, *Treffry* is still racing today and is considered to be the finest example of the craft.

Ralph Bird's coffin being towed through the streets of Truro. Photo: David Barnicoat

Between 1986 and 2007, when he retired due to ill health, Ralph built 29 gigs and on October 6, 2007, in a remarkable feat of logistics, all of these were brought together on the beach at Newquay for the christening and launch of his last gig which he had built for the Porthgain club in Wales. Porthgain named it *Ralph Bird* in his honour. Despite suffering from cancer, Ralph took an oar on the the *Ralph Bird* for a pre retirement row around Newquay harbour and all the crews raised their oars in honour of his achievements.

Sadly, Ralph finally lost his battle against cancer and passed away on the 2nd November 2009. His coffin, draped in the Cornish flag of St Piran, was towed to Truro cathedral aboard the gig *William Peters*, which he built for Roseland in 1987, and gig rowers formed a guard of honour on the cathedral steps with raised oars as the coffin was carried in. For the service, the cathedral was packed with nearly one thousand people, many wearing their club's gig colours providing a final tribute to this remarkable man.

Ralph's remarkable legacy is that there are now 53 affiliated clubs and 141 registered gigs and with other gig builders working to Ralph's standard continuing the tradition, the sport continues to grow in popularity. The annual World championships held in the Isles of Scilly have attracted teams from London, the Netherlands, France, USA, Australia and the Faeroe Islands. From the first race in 1981 involving three gigs it is now estimated that more than 7,000 people participate in gig racing at more than 300 regattas around the South West each summer. Thousands more enjoy watching these amazing craft in action.

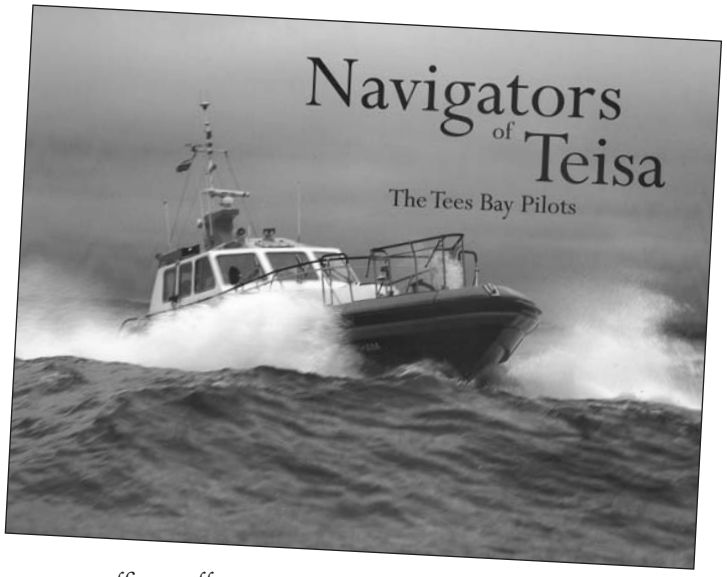
As pilots we all owe a debt of gratitude to Ralph Bird for recognising the importance of these remarkable craft which has ensured the preservation of this important part of pilotage heritage.

JCB

BOOK REVIEW

NAVIGATORS OF TEISA

by David Jack Jones



As independent professionals, maritime pilots are autonomous and are normally alone with the ship's bridge team when undertaking their vital role of conducting ships in and out of port. One consequence of such autonomy is that pilots at work are rarely documented so very few outside our profession appreciate what we do. Whilst maritime publications occasionally feature articles on pilotage any photographs are usually standard images of pilots on pilot ladders embarking or disembarking.

It was therefore with interest that I obtained a review copy of *Navigators of Teisa* which is a book of photographs documenting the Tees pilots at work which captures the atmosphere of everyday piloting.

There are no bright, sunny office staff tripping days out here! Leaden skies and gloomy cold wet weather dominate the images and David Jones has successfully captured the tension and occasional loneliness of our career within the 50 pages. There are no captions which I personally find beneficial since the images speak for themselves. A comprehensive introduction by Teesbay Pilots' Chairman, Brendan Richardson details the pilots role and the type of ships and their cargoes which is all that's required. At the end of the book all 32 pilots serving in 2009 are named within their relevant watches.

Although Tees specific this book provides a unique insight into the daily work of the pilot and in addition to the pleasure gained from viewing the photographs it can also be useful to any pilot wishing to explain our role to outsiders.

JCB

Navigators of Teisa (ISBN 978 0 9563066 0 9) by David Jones is available priced £14.99 from **www.davidjackjones.co.uk**

2010 UKMPA Conference

The 2010 UKMPA Conference will be held at the Village Hotel in Swansea

Provisional Programme

Wednesday 12 May 2010
- Section Committee meeting
- Pilots' golf match
  Venue: Fairwood Park Golf Course, Upper Killay, Swansea
  Cost 25.50 includes lunch.
  Meet 12.30 for 13.00 and tee-off 1400
  Contact Steven Daniel: 07767 233443
  Or email: steven.daniel@ntlworld.com
- Informal welcome buffet meal in the evening

Thursday 13 May 2010
- PNPF and UKMPA business
- Informal Dinner and dance in the evening
  (Dress: lounge suit)

Friday 14 May 2010
- Guest Speakers
- Pamper day for wives

The hotel is a short walk from Swansea Maritime Quarter and the city centre. There is easy access to the hotel from the M4. Swansea has excellent rail links with the station a short taxi ride away. The nearest airport is Cardiff.

For any further information please contact Swansea pilot, Gordon Harries:-
email: gordon.harries@talktalk.net
or call him 01656 662608 or 07977 091743.