



The official organ of the United Kingdom Maritime Pilots' Association

## Editorial

This year has so far been a disastrous one for shipping accidents which has regrettably resulted in an enhancement of public image of shipping as a poorly run and dangerous industry. The run of disasters started on Christmas day 2005 with the grounding of the APL *Panama* on the beach at Ensenada in Mexico where she remained stubbornly in place until finally being refloated in March. In February, the tragic capsized and total loss of the *Al Salam Boccaccio 98* ferry in the Red Sea with no survivors, coupled with deaths of seafarers in several other disasters has also served to make this one of the worst years for maritime fatalities. It may just be that I am receiving more press reports of incidents but there definitely seems to have been an alarming increase in collisions and groundings with several occurring around the UK. Despite the fact that pilotage waters are acknowledged as the most hazardous section of a vessels voyage, only a minimal number of these incidents have occurred with a pilot on board thus confirming the need to retain traditional pilot recruitment and training policies.

With no national newspaper or major media outlet having a shipping correspondent, the shipping industry is faced with an uphill battle to portray shipping in a positive light but IMPA are at least attempting to redress the balance. Building on the encouraging response to last year's World Maritime Day, IMPA President, Geoff Taylor, has been establishing contacts within the general media to hold another event this autumn. Although the programme has yet to be finalised I know that Geoff is hoping to arrange an important international media event and also to get pilots to contact their local media and try to get someone out on a ship. It is in all our interests that we highlight the essential role that shipping plays in everyday life and although I know that Geoff's catchphrase is "the sound of safety is silence" we should loudly trumpet the essential safety role that pilots play in ensuring that shelves of the retail outlets remain fully stocked. When details of the initiative are finalised, I urge you all to give it your full support.

*John Clandillon-Baker*

## Automatic Mooring Systems

*One of the highest risks to crews occurs during mooring and unmooring operations and another of the unacknowledged roles of the pilot is to ensure that the vessel is kept under control in frequently difficult and sometimes marginal conditions until the mooring operation is completed. Standing on an exposed bridge wing in a gale being lashed by a blizzard every pilot looks at the average mooring equipment and methodology of the mooring procedure and realises that the only aspect of the operation that has changed since the invention of the mechanical mooring winch in the 19th century is that there are now less crew to operate them and the whole process of stoppering off ropes and wires (yes it still happens even on brand new ships!) and turning them up on bitts takes longer than it ever did!! Even on vessels equipped with mooring winches once the ship is in position the agony is prolonged as the moorings are then slacked down and a crew man grabs an improvised metal hook and hauls the mooring through a slot on the main winch onto a secondary drum where the turns must fill the drum and not overlap. Trying to hold a vessel under control whilst the elements do their damndest to defeat you brings two thoughts to mind. Firstly, we are not paid enough for the responsibilities that we shoulder and the second is, surely there must be a better way of mooring a ship in the 21st century!!*

*Well there is good and bad news here. The good news is that I am aware that two companies are now manufacturing and installing automatic mooring systems. However, before you all get too excited, these systems are expensive and require the shore to re-design their jetty configuration and most of all take full responsibility for the safety of the vessel whilst alongside. One system also requires specialist deck fittings. So the concept is fine for regular trades such as ferries and passenger vessels but for the other berths I think that we will just be watching with envy as the freight ferry slides into position, is grabbed or sucked alongside, and rings finished with engines all in the space of a few minutes!!*

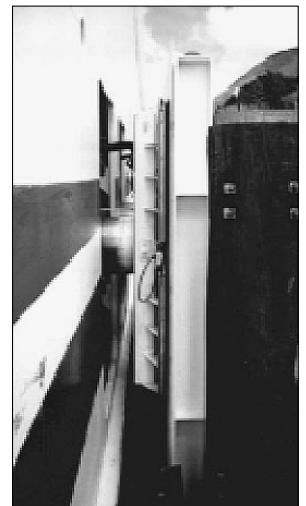
*However, it is interesting to examine the three systems currently in use provided by two manufacturers.*

### Vacuum Mooring

So far as I can ascertain the first company to establish a vacuum automatic mooring system was Mooring Systems Limited (MSL) who designed and manufactured the "Iron Sailor" vacuum system. MSL equipment has been adopted by several shipping and port companies especially in Australia and New Zealand.

### Internal flush mounted.

The first "Iron Sailor" system, was installed on the rail passenger ferry *Aratere* (150m, 12,000 grt.) and since



Aratere

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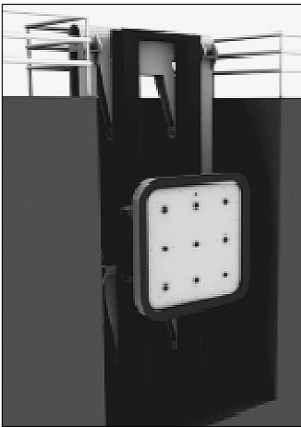
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being commissioned in 1990 it has safely handled over 10,000 automatic mooring operations. This system is a specific ship based system that comprises of 4 units rated at 20 tonnes each. The units are positioned in pairs with two units forward on the ship and two units aft. When not in use they retract to be flush with the hull and when the vessel approaches the berth they are activated from the bridge wing extending out through hull doors to attach to a steel plate on the berth.



Above: Externally mounted  
Below: Recessed



### Externally mounted

The externally mounted unit is designed to be retrofitted to existing ships. The unit is stowed at deck level (when not in use). Activated by the master the units travel down the hull of the ship and couple with a plate mounted on the shore.

### Recessed

The recessed system is designed to meet the needs of smaller craft such as barges and it permits them to automatically secure to larger vessels for transshipment operations.

It will be noted that all these vacuum systems can only attach to a flat metal surface. This obviously limits the vessel to specific berths where the shore pads can be precisely aligned with the vessel's optimum mooring position. In the latter **recessed**

**system** the barge can only use the system for mooring on the parallel flat side of a vessel which probably restricts its use on bunker barges and stores vessels which usually end up under the counter somewhere.

I have never come across any vessels fitted with automatic mooring systems but apart from the **flush mounted** ferry arrangement I would suspect that being exposed to the elements both the **externally mounted** and **recessed systems** would very shortly succumb to contact damage and sea water corrosion. I would also anticipate that the installation and maintenance costs are very high which would impact on the cost benefit analysis.

## Shore based system

This seems to be where the future lies because the vacuum pads are located on the jetty and lock onto the ship's side. The only on board equipment required is the telemetry control system on the bridge wings which enable the master or pilot to activate / de-activate the pads for remote mooring / unmooring operation.

In March 2004, Mooring Systems Limited entered into an alliance with the Cavotec Group granting them the licence for the



Cavotec vacuum "Moor Master"

manufacture, marketing and service of their products. The mooring systems are now named "Moor Master" and can be tailored to suit various berth / vessel configurations with the advantage of compact storage when not in use. This also enables the system to rest behind the maximum fender impact line during berthing. When activated, the vacuum pad support frame is extended outwards and the vacuum mooring connection is established in around 10 seconds. Unmooring takes around 2 seconds.

## How does it work?

Good question so here is the blurb from the brochure:

*Instead of a rope, the products use vacuum pads to provide the mooring attachment. Each pad has a measurable working load, providing a powerful physical attachment between ship and shore. MSL's vacuum pads have been tested and rated under the supervision of the international classification societies Det Norske Veritas (DNV) and Lloyds Register. When combined with the innovative, three dimensional supporting apparatus, the mooring units emulate the range of movement, resilience and elasticity of a line mooring. Today, MSL's standard vacuum pads can cope with extensive surface irregularities and are able to slide under extreme loads without significant seal deformation or loss of attachment. Because the mooring units attach to the ship closer to the waterline and immediately counteract mooring forces, the system has a greater mooring efficiency than angled ropes. By using sophisticated internet based control software the system permits the user to monitor performance clearly communicating all essential mooring load information in real-time. Full control mechanisms and proper load measurement combined with robust communication systems are required to avoid unacceptable risks with the vacuum couple and the overall integrity of the mooring.*

*Mooring load information is produced from the measurement of vacuum efficiencies and from monitoring athwartships and fore and aft hydraulic cylinders.*

*With a full knowledge of the mooring conditions at all times, the operator has complete control and understanding of the moored state of the vessel. MSL is currently the only company in the world to have successfully designed, implemented and proven ship vacuum mooring in a commercial environment. In this process they have discovered key elements of intellectual property relating to their designs and processes. MSL has protected these features having a number of patents pending internationally.*

So, it would appear that the system is very robust with presumably a back up vacuum pump system and power supply in case of malfunction or power failure. The whole operation is totally automatic and once the vessel is alongside the vessel is moored by pressing a green button marked "moor". Unmooring is achieved by pressing a red button marked "detach".



Just press green to moor!

## What happens whilst the vessel is alongside?

The position of the vessel is monitored constantly and if there is a rise or fall in the tide the vacuum pads are mounted on vertical rails and move up and down with the vessel. If the tide range takes the pad to the extremity of the rail travel then in less than 15 seconds the pad will automatically detach from the hull, reposition to the mid travel position and lock on again. In order that the vessel doesn't break adrift the units are programmed not to relocate at the same time. This operation can also be undertaken manually at any time from the on board control panel. When

mooring, the position doesn't have to be exact. If once the pads are locked on it is found necessary to move the vessel this can be done by the pads themselves which can also move horizontally. The master or pilot just programmes in the distance to move ahead or astern and the pads will move the vessel the required distance. Again, if this distance is greater than the rail travel length then the pads will detach in sequence and re-locate automatically.

With respect to wind effects the fact that these systems have mainly been fitted to ferries would indicate that they are capable of holding a vessel securely in high winds as claimed.

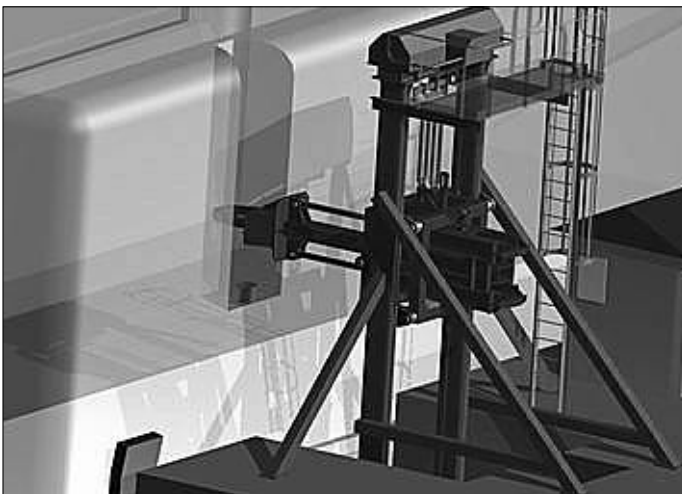
## Why are they not everywhere?

Obviously such units don't come cheap and as we are all aware berth operators are very reluctant to spend any money at all on even basic essentials such as fendering and in many cases they allow the berth to deteriorate to such an extent that when some unfortunate pilot comes alongside something falls off. The subsequent insurance claim then refurbishes the facility for a few more years! Exaggeration? Possibly but in London it has taken 4 years for a major container berth to fit sufficient bollard to moor a ship traditionally with the headlines/stern lines from two large container vessels sometimes all being placed on the same bollard and a new tanker berth was constructed with no bollards for breast ropes and these are still not present! The other factor here is liability and it is a major issue. Again on the Thames there is a facility which used to provide a shore gangway for a nominal charge. The gangway now sits unused because the berth operator has been advised that if they provide it they are liable for it whilst a vessel is alongside and if anyone is injured or killed whilst using it (the highest cause of maritime injury and death) they could be held liable. With a mooring system the berth operator is responsible for ensuring that it won't fail whilst a vessel is alongside. The majority of berth operators will therefore balk at the cost and liability aspects of automatic mooring systems so don't chuck the long-johns or balaclavas away just yet!!

## Other systems

I have discovered another company manufacturing and installing automatic mooring systems and this is a Swedish company called TTS Port Equipment who manufacture the "Automooring" system. This company has been commissioned by the Swedish Port of Trelleborg to provide mooring equipment for a railway berth. The specification demands that the system can handle a transverse load of up to 1,000 kN, for the Scandlines vessels *Skåne* and *Mecklenburg*, whilst berthed via a stern ramp.

The Automooring system comprises of a framework fixed to the quay, inside which runs a vertically rolling unit activated by



TTS hook and lug

hydraulic motor. A mooring hook is connected to the unit and automatically centred within the fixed stand. Rather than a vacuum this system uses a hook and lug arrangement with dedicated equipment along with specialist control and telemetry units ashore and on board to connect the hydraulic shore mooring arms. Again the brochure makes the following claims:

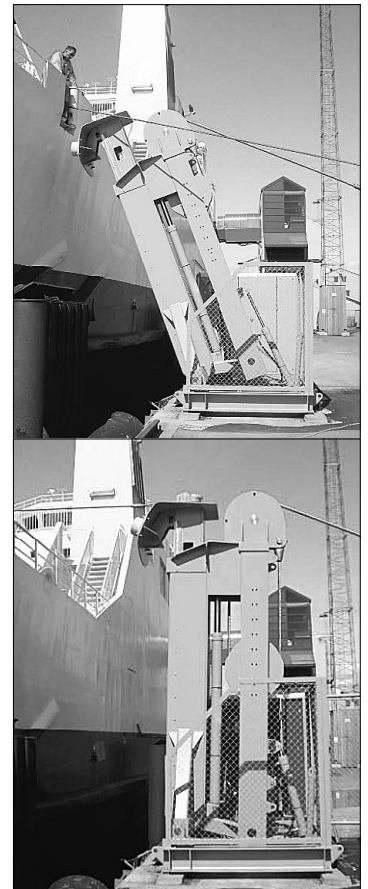
*Two hydraulic cylinders supply mooring force and the mooring systems are remotely controlled and therefore don't require any quay-side personnel. The safety and efficiency of mooring procedures are improved by the system as its performance is monitored and its status is reported to operations staff in real-time. The system will require only one operator and will be remotely controlled with its load monitoring and alarm functions relaying information to operations staff in real-time. The design permits vessels to remain securely moored, even during power cuts or loss of control signals.*

As with the Cavotec on board systems this arrangement requires a special slot and groove to be cut into the ships side which as well as being expensive will be vulnerable to contact damage and the elements.

## Semi automatic Mooring

With this arrangement the vessel still uses its own mooring ropes but the shore bollard is located on a hydraulically operated arm which tilts towards the ship permitting the crew to drop the mooring rope over it. Once the rope is attached the arm returns to the vertical and the line is tensioned in the usual manner. The bollard can be operated from the shore or from on board but again this system is only practical for use with the same class of vessel for the bollard to correctly align with the mooring point on the vessel.

TTS also manufacture a vacuum system which looks very similar to the Cavotec equipment but the illustrations don't seem to show any horizontal movement capability.



TTS semi automatic mooring

## Conclusion

Well here we are in 2006 and I am sure that in 1906 few sailors when securing their ship would have thought that 100 years on their contemporary counterparts would be using similar mooring equipment and still turning ropes up on bitts. At least some companies are developing alternatives but the day when every ship can drop alongside a berth and be all fast in 10 seconds still seems a long way off!

JCB

*My thanks to Andy Bell MNI for providing the information on the Cavotec mooring systems.*

*PS I would be very interested to hear from anyone who has experience of this equipment.*

# PENSION NEWS

## THE SECRETARIAT

Well 6 April 2006 (A-Day) has come and gone and both Richard and I appear to have survived, but it has been a dramatic change and it is clear that it will be some time before the dust completely settles. The new rules are radically different and we have a whole new set of terms and acronyms to get used to. Expressions like Benefit Crystallisation Event (BCE) and Pension Commencement Lump Sum (PLCS). Well I suppose it keeps us from becoming complacent!

## Rules & Explanatory Brochure

Benefit changes arising from the 2004 valuation as well as tax simplification have meant major revisions to the Explanatory Brochures and the Rules. We hope to be in a position to provide pilots with updated copies in the near future.

## Annual Report & Accounts 2005

The Trustees Annual Report & Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2005 has been sent out to all active pilots and pensioners of the Fund. If you have not received a copy and wish to do so please contact the Secretariat on tel. no. 01732 779460.

## Investment Strategy

The Trustees are in the process of implementing the investment strategy, as recommended by the Investment Consultant, following his review of the Fund's asset allocation. To this end on 1st November 2005 £40m was disinvested from the equities portfolio and transferred to Goldman Sachs Investment Management for investment in their fund of hedge funds, Direct Strategies II.

A further £50m is to be disinvested from equities and transferred to Quellos Europe Limited for investment in their fund of hedge funds QIP Ltd. This investment will commence from 1 July 2006.

Once the value adding assets are in place the Trustees will be turning their attention to the bonds and equity managers.

## Summary of Funding Statement

By no later than 22 September 2006 the Trustees must send to members an annual funding statement. If no scheme funding valuation has been completed prior to this date then the funding statement must be based on the most recent MFR valuation.

The statement will be the members' main

source of information on how securely their benefits are being financed and must explain the relationship between the assets and the benefits already accrued under the Fund. It should also cover the main risks to members of the Trustees' investment strategy.

The challenge for the Trustees will be to put the information in a context that is user friendly and easy to understand.

## Government White Paper

In 2002 the Government established a Pensions Commission, headed by Adair Turner, to investigate the existing 'voluntarist' approach to retirement saving in the UK. The Commission has since published three reports.

The first report set out the results of the Commission's investigation into retirement savings. It stated that unless people were prepared to work longer, pay more tax and save more they would have to accept poorer retirements.

The Commission's second report set out their proposals of how the three-pronged approach – save more, pay more tax or work longer – should be balanced. The third report was a short reply to some of the criticisms levelled at the second report.

In its White Paper, Security in Retirement – towards a new pensions system, published on 25 May 2006 the Government set out how the Commission's proposals will be put into effect. The main features of the White Paper are:-

State pension increases will be re-linked to earnings rather than prices by 2012, subject to an affordability test that could delay the change until 2015.

State second pension (S2P) will be a flat-rate weekly pension payment of £60 by 2030.

Contracting-out for defined contribution schemes will be abolished.

The proportion of pensioners on means-testing is estimated to fall from 45% to 33%.

State pension age for women will rise from 60 to 65 between 2010 and 2020.

There will be further rises for both men and women beginning with an increase from 65 to 66 in 2024, then again to 67 in 2044 and finally to 68 in 2046.

Employees will be automatically enrolled into the National Pension Savings Scheme (NPSS) at the age of 22 and will pay 4% of salary. Employers must contribute 3% while the Government will contribute 1% in the form of tax relief.

The number of years of National Insurance Contributions (NIC) needed to qualify for a full basic state pension will be cut to 30 (currently women need 39 years of contributions while men need 44).

Reduction of burdens on schemes by bringing forward legislation to allow

schemes to convert guaranteed minimum pension (GMP) rights into scheme benefits.

## Age Discrimination Regulations

On 1 October 2006 The Age Discrimination Regulations come into effect. The impact on occupational pension schemes is that there will now be a national default retirement age of 65, making compulsory retirement below 65 unlawful unless objectively justified. Employees will now have the right to request to work beyond 65 or any other retirement age set by the company. The employer has a duty to consider such requests.

## Working Past Age 65

The Government's White Paper has restored the link between the basic state pension and rises in average earnings which was broken in 1980 by Margaret Thatcher, but to fund this change the state pension age will now rise to 68.

A recent survey carried out on 243 U.K. pension providers revealed that 85% of schemes say their members do not want to work beyond age 65. Only 27% of schemes surveyed said they actively encourage members to stay on after the age of 65. And of the individuals questioned only 11% intend to retire at an age older than 65 with nearly two-thirds looked to retire before that age.

Given the results of the survey you have to wonder if the Government really knows what Joe Public wants.

*Debbie Marten  
Debbie@pnpf.co.uk*

## Retirements

*February 2006 to April 2006*

<b>MJ Clark</b>	<b>Poole</b>	<b>Jan</b>
<b>IB Hodge</b>	<b>Wisbech</b>	<b>Apr</b>

## Pensioners Deceased

*February 2006 - April 2006*

<b>JM Chrisp</b>	<b>London-West</b>
<b>KP Cumpstey</b>	<b>Liverpool</b>
<b>A MacDonald</b>	<b>Heysbam</b>
<b>A MacDonald</b>	<b>Forth</b>
<b>JR Peterson</b>	<b>Forth</b>
<b>J Spall</b>	<b>London-North</b>
<b>FB Stewart</b>	<b>Forth</b>
<b>J Towell</b>	<b>Tees</b>

## SECTION COMMITTEE Who'd be Chairman?

As you will all know, Les has been on sick for a couple of months now, and it is unfortunately beginning to look as though he will have to retire on ill-health. Part of Les' problem has been due to the amount of work that he took on. I can sympathise with him – every day I do something concerned with pilotage, whether it is just replying to e-mails, writing letters, phone calls, meetings or even my day job. Section committee members give their time freely for the sake of UK Pilots. My wife asked me the other day why I do it, when there are some people who do nothing, except their job. There is no easy answer, but I am just one of a team, and I guess we do it in an effort to preserve the job that we like, and for the future of pilotage.

Recently I was to travel to London at 0700 for a meeting, but was on duty the night before. As such I did a couple of ships and finished [early] at 2100. Down to London on the 0700 train, and into the office for a couple of hours, had the meeting, then back to Teesside on the 1700 train, arriving home at 2000. Back on shift the next day!

A couple of days later a colleague remarked that "he had had to do 4 ships

whilst I was socialising in London". Had he forgotten the month earlier, where in similar circumstances I did 6 ships on a night watch, finishing at 0330, and then set off for the Clyde at 0800, for 2 days?

That's the moan over, but the point is that those pilots on committees, be it national, international or local do give up a lot of their own time. We all realise that to do it we rely on the support of our colleagues whilst we are at meetings and not actually piloting.

Past Chairmen of the UKMPA have spent a lot of time, days on end, in the office in London – I, if I am elected Chairman next year, do not intend to. Firstly I can see little point, and, secondly, it would probably mean [another] divorce. Yes, there will be occasions when it is necessary, however section committee can do a lot of work these days by e-mail – we have yet to try video-conferencing, but it is coming. (Please note; probably the quickest way to contact me is by e-mail). There is so much information forthcoming from the plethora of meetings we each attend, it is easy to spend hours working at a computer. It is a bad world out there, and there are some people who do not have our best interests at heart.

I can see the value in having a "figure head" paid for by the Association, as do IMPA and EMPA. Such a person –

President, General Secretary, or whatever would be able to man the London office on a regular basis, carry out some of the secretarial work, and be the first point of contact for most queries. An opportunity has arisen for us that I shall be discussing with section committee in August.

Monica does a great job on our behalf, and although "pilots come first", she does have another job within the T&G. You may be aware that the T&G are in the throes of an amalgamation – who knows what the future holds? No other section of the T&G has the autonomy that we have.

**Humber:** ABP have now appointed a QC to defend their case. We still await their Disclosure of Documents.

**Kristian:** It is with regret that I have to report that Kristian lost his appeal for unfair dismissal (see page 10).

**Belfast:** A contract for services was drawn up, and terms agreed, however, almost on the eve of signing, the CHA altered the terms. As such it is back to negotiation for now.

**Boarding & Landing Code:** We have entered discussion with the British Ports' Association regarding the code (our version and theirs). Hopefully, as there is much common ground, we are close to adopting one code (see page 6).





**Insurance:** I have had several phone calls relating to incidents "some time ago" where nothing was written down. It is imperative that you keep records, even if the incident appears to be trivial.

**Pension:** The PNPf Trustees meet on July 17th to make a formal reply to the offer regarding the deficit, made by the Association. Recent changes to pensions may mean that some districts, self-employed, will have to look at their terms or contracts. I expect to be able to expand on that after the next trustee meeting.

The new web site is up and running, and is somewhat different. I intend to make much more use of this in the hope that a lot of paperwork can be avoided. Most local secretaries will have been receiving e-mails from me recently and many thanks for the replies. Those that haven't had an e-mail please note – it's because I don't have your e-mail address (hint). It is not the intention to bombard you with megabytes of information, but to advise you that new information/circulars are available on the web site. How you advise your colleagues will be up to you. Those that don't want the electronic notices will be able to get the paper versions. A circular will be sent shortly.

Best wishes to all, and safe piloting.

Joe Wilson  
Vice Chairman

<p><b>WARSASH MARITIME CENTRE</b> <i>over 50 years serving the maritime industry</i></p> <h1>Professional Development for Pilots</h1>		 <p>WARSASH MARITIME CENTRE</p>
<p><b>SHIP HANDLING COURSES</b></p> <p>Utilising the 7 scaled manned models, we offer specialised courses designed to develop the skills and understanding of ship handling techniques.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scaled models of up to 300,000 Dwt</li> <li>• Radio controlled model tug</li> <li>• 10 acre lake with many miles of channels and 30 berths</li> </ul>	<p><b>COMBINED COURSES</b></p> <p>Using a distinctive combination of the manned models and bridge simulator.</p> <p><b>ADVANCED SHIPHANDLING</b></p> <p>A customised course utilising the manned models to further enhance existing knowledge and skills.</p> <p><b>Warsash Maritime Centre also offers further courses including ARPA updating and VTS training. Please visit our website for more details.</b></p>	 <p>SOUTHAMPTON INSTITUTE</p>  <p>FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING RESEARCH AND CONSULTANCY REG. NO. 926387</p>
<p><b>SIMULATOR COURSES</b></p> <p>Extensive use is made of the bridge simulator by pilots both for area knowledge and Professional Development Courses. The wind, current and visibility conditions are set to operational requirements.</p> 		<p><b>Warsash Maritime Centre</b> Newtown Road, Warsash, Southampton, SO31 9ZL Tel: +44 (0)1489 556215 Fax: +44 (0)1489 573988</p>
<p>Please e-mail us on <a href="mailto:wmc.thepilot@solent.ac.uk">wmc.thepilot@solent.ac.uk</a> or visit our website: <b><a href="http://www.solent.ac.uk/wmc">www.solent.ac.uk/wmc</a></b></p>		

# Technical & Training

*The T & T Committee met for the 62nd time on the 27th April at Transport House.*

**RNLI:** John Nurser was able to bring us up to date with the integration of the new Tamar class lifeboat of which two are now in service. A new Atlantic RIB is also undergoing testing. At 8.5m long it has a carbon fibre hull, better seating, improved communication and is powered by 2 outboards providing 115hp and a speed of 40 knots was achieved on trials. The RNLI are also working on a new boat to replace the beach launch Mersey class lifeboat. The FCB2 will be powered by water jets which have been tested on sand and shingle and the boat will be launched from a new tractor/trailer combination to make this dangerous operation safer. The FCB2 will have the same controls as the Tamar in order to standardise training courses. In case you have wondered what happens to the older lifeboats they are sold to sister organisations around the world.

**PPE POLICY:** The Committee took the opportunity to review the contents of the Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment Policy which was originally written in October 2001. A copy of the PPE policy will be placed on the new UKMPA Website when it is up and running but until then if you would like a copy please let me know and I can email you one. It was agreed that the subject of hard hats is one which should be dealt with at local level. A number of Districts have moved away from using the SeaSafe jacket preferring instead a waterproof coat and life preserver. If you are one of these Districts we would be interested to hearing what equipment you are using. Again your attention is drawn to the PPE Policy which outlines the standards that should be met by such equipment.

**PILOT BOARDING & LANDING CODE:** This subject is one that is currently on the agenda of the Port Marine Safety Code Working Group chaired by the MCA. You may recall in 2001 the Ports Associations issued a 'new Code' without consultation with the UKMPA. The T&T Committee had serious safety reservations about certain sections of this 2001 Code. As a result the UKMPA issued our own Boarding & Landing Code which has recently been updated to include changes in legislation. This UKMPA Code is now being tabled with the MCA and the Ports and it is hoped that agreement will be reached soon and once finalised the code will be placed on the website. The topic of

man-overboard exercises was raised and your attention is drawn to MGN 50 – Manning of Pilot Boats and particularly sect. 1.3.1 which says CHAs should require man-overboard retrieval exercises to be conducted by each Pilot boat crew at intervals of not less than six months. This requirement is put in for our safety so please could you let us know if your crews are complying with the MGN.

**PILOT TRAINING:** The whole issue of Pilot Training is under discussion now that Port Skills and Safety Ltd. seems to be working towards a national Pilot qualification. The Committee has been asked by Section Committee to review the National Occupational Standards with respect to the competencies required for Working with Tugs.

**E-NAVIGATION:** You may have read recently that the Shipping Minister, Dr. Ladyman, called for the UK to take a global lead in the introduction of e-navigation systems. It has been defined as *the transmission, manipulation and display of navigational information in electronic format*. The Minister suggested that AIS is an essential step towards e-navigation and the MCA has committed £2.7m towards installing a shore AIS infrastructure. E-navigation will be delivered by use of GPS through onboard devices such as ECDIS and replicated on shore with shore based monitoring and intervention capability.

**AIS:** While AIS underpins e-navigation, problems have been experienced through contamination of radar and ECDIS displays by the tug's AIS. The close proximity of the tug results in continual collision alarms being displayed by the radar and gives two vectors, that of own ship and tug, as to lead to possible misinterpretation. If anyone has experienced similar problems we would like to hear about it.

**MARNIS (Maritime Navigation & Information Service: [www.marnis.org](http://www.marnis.org))** is a European funded project in which EMPA is playing a key role in the development of a Port Operational Approach Docking Support System (POADSS). As mentioned in previous issues of The Pilot such a system is based on the lap top or Portable Pilot Unit (PPU) which is currently being used in some Ports. The main objectives of POADSS are to improve the safety and efficiency in ports and approaches, improve fairway usability, exchange of information with VTS and other port users and help to prepare and then execute the dynamic passage plan. EMPA's contribution is being managed by the Dutch Pilot Company, NLC, and the UK is being represented by the Technical &

Training Committee who have co-opted Nigel Allen of Southampton to help out with this time consuming role. Nigel has already attended several meetings. I hope the importance of the MARNIS project can be appreciated when seen alongside the concept of e-navigation and the need to keep control of the navigation on the bridge of the ship. There are a number of these navigational tools being used by colleagues around the Districts and it was interesting to read the MAIB report into the grounding of the Lerrix in the Baltic Sea which was published on the 11th April 2006. During the investigation it emerged that the master was using a portable GPS connected to a personal laptop running a pirated navigation package as his primary source of navigation. The pirated programme, obtained from the internet in 1999, had not been updated and the alarms were inoperative. The report recommends that Rix Shipping Ltd establish a policy to guard against inappropriate use of personal nav aids carried by crew members.

**UK SAFETY OF NAVIGATION (UKSON):** The MCA are about to embark on a study into the misuse of AIS so you may find yourself being asked to take part in this study. The Sunk Working Group are coming to the end of their work on the proposed changes to the traffic separation scheme around the Sunk Lightship and the proposed changes are to go before IMO. A new TSS is to go ahead at The Minches in 2007.

**PILOT FATIGUE:** An issue that is very much to the fore at the present time. There is now a Pupillometer available on the market to help test for fatigue. The correlation between pupil response and helping diagnose, amongst a number of things, chemical/substance abuse and human fatigue has been known for some time. An American company from Illinois, MCJ Eyecheck [www.mcjeyecheck.com](http://www.mcjeyecheck.com), have now developed a Pupillometer that resembles a pair of binoculars which measures the contraction and dilation of the pupil when subject to flashes of light. This method is currently being used by Belgium Pilots to measure fatigue and is also being considered for use by the Swedish Coastguard.

**SOLAS:** The meeting heard of a situation in which the MCA considered prosecuting a Pilot for sailing a vessel without a working gyro. It is a SOLAS requirement that all ships over 500grt should have a gyro compass, or other means, to determine and display their heading by shipborne non-magnetic means and to transmit heading information to radar and AIS.

Gareth Rees: [dcg.rees@nthworld.com](mailto:dcg.rees@nthworld.com)

## MEESTER PILOT WHERE ARE YOU?

All pilots know that the pilot boarding and landing area is one fraught with hazards, not least because whilst awaiting their pilots many vessels' masters appear to forget about navigation and seamanship, either in their desire to be first in the queue or because once they see the pilot cutter they relax their guard. Collisions and near misses are regrettably not infrequent. IMO resolution A960 and the boarding and landing code detail the need for such areas to be placed where there is adequate sea room to manoeuvre but there have recently been two serious groundings as a result of Masters failing to wait a safe distance off the port and proceeding past the charted pilot boarding area into disaster. These groundings involving the vessels *Cape Flattery* and *APL Panama*, occurred despite there being no other vessels navigating in the vicinity to restrict their ability to manoeuvre and both highlight how poor navigation, coupled with a loss of vigilance by the bridge team, can, in a few moments result in claims running into tens of millions.

Whilst the report into the *Cape Flattery* has recently been released, the report into the grounding of the *APL Panama* off Ensenada has not yet been concluded but there is sufficient evidence to point to a total failure of the bridge team during the approach to the port.

### **M.V. *Cape Flattery*: Barbers Point Harbour. Oahu, Hawaii.**

The 170m long bulk cargo ship *Cape Flattery* loaded with around 27,000 tonnes of cement went aground on a coral reef about 4 cables from the harbour entrance on the morning of February 2, 2005. The ship remained aground for nine days until enough cargo was removed to refloat it and the damage to the ship is estimated at around \$21 million. Fortunately no one was injured and there was no pollution but the reef was badly damaged and the restoration costs of this will be considerable.

The Coast Guard investigation of the incident concluded that the grounding was caused by negligence by the captain and he was condemned for:

- Not waiting for the Honolulu-based pilot to board prior to entering port as required by port rules.
- Failing to respond to the pilot's radioed advice that the vessel was standing into danger and that he should alter course.
- Not using radar, not paying heed to channel lights and markers, and not following the charted course for the harbour entrance.

The investigation also faulted the ship for not having a functioning echo depth-sounder and not having enough ship's officers on the bridge.

In his defence the Chinese Captain told Coast Guard interviewers that he had expected Aloha Tower to inform him if he needed to wait for the pilot and the report also states that he also was angry that neither the Coast Guard or Aloha Tower had warned him that he was in dangerous waters!!

### ***APL Panama*: Ensenada, Mexico.**

Although the official report into this grounding will not be released for some time there is a wealth of comment on this disaster on the Internet mainly because the vessel found its way onto a popular tourist beach on Christmas day where during the



*APL Panama taking a Christmas vacation on Ensenada beach!*

next 80 days it provided an interesting spectator event as containers were offloaded by helicopter, a temporary roadway and quay was constructed and an increasing number of tugs arrived to try to save the vessel. The vessel was finally towed clear on 10th March following the construction of a special dredged channel!

In an almost identical set of circumstances to the *Cape Flattery* grounding the vessel failed to stop and wait near the pilot boarding position. It is alleged that although the pilot was booked for 1900 the Master had advised his agent that he would be at the pilot boarding position at 1800 and was annoyed that the pilot was not there to meet him. There are several press reports which indicate confusion and failure of the bridge team, but whatever actually happened on the bridge the result was that the *APL Panama* ended well up the beach indicating a high speed grounding. The pilot was on his way out to the vessel and saw the impending disaster unfolding. The following is an extract from The San Diego Union-Tribune. "*Capt. Fernando Ramirez Martinez (the allocated pilot) said he and a co-pilot were leaving the port to meet the vessel about 6pm Dec. 25 when they spotted the 880-foot vessel heading across the harbour's entrance channel and aiming straight for the shore.*"

"*I saw the lights and I couldn't believe it, I just couldn't believe it. I told the tugboats, 'Leave the port, because the ship is about to run aground. I suggested to him that we get the tugboat Coral and send it a line so that it could try to keep (M/V APL Panama) at that position. The captain said he didn't want to give the line, that he couldn't because that would mean it was salvage and would prompt a host of legal problems*". The report goes on to state that half an hour passed before the Captain agreed to pass a line to the tug but by then it was too late. The Newspaper also consulted experts on the possible claims that would be made which they listed as follows:

Delay expense, salvage operators, equipment rental, lost cargo bookings, lost revenue, security, vessel rotation disruption, cargo claims, environmental claims, lawsuits, legal expense, environmental clean up expense, increased insurance premiums, fines, penalties, lost manufacturing time, product delivery delays, bribes and crane expense for pizza delivery up to the crew. (*They are probably still liable for the pilotage charge as well!! Ed.*)

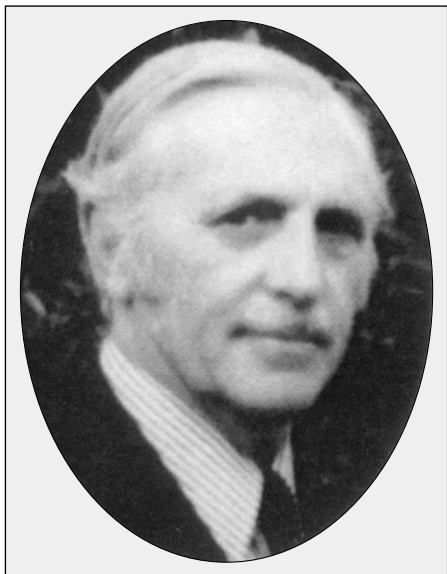
Despite these two dramatic cases there are still those who feebly argue that compulsory pilotage is a waste of money and restricts free trade!!

An on-line weblog with some excellent photos cataloguing the whole saga can be found at:

[www.cargolaw.com/2006nightmare\\_apl\\_panama2.html](http://www.cargolaw.com/2006nightmare_apl_panama2.html)

Loads of other interesting links there as well.

## Alfred William Venn



My father died just six weeks short of his one hundredth birthday. He was the last known survivor of the Bristol Channel Sailing Pilots.

At the height of the industrial revolution, the new coal ports of South Wales became boom towns – the Silicon Valleys – of their day. Great wealth was created and commerce from Swansea to Newport, and good Welsh coal was shipped to the four corners of the world to fuel the new era. Even the great port of Bristol, once the second city in England, was overtaken by the convergence of rail, canal and the inevitable melding of coal, steel, iron and the mighty machines it brought forth.

Central to the sea-going operation were the one hundred and fifty or so pilots long heralded as master of their calling. The Bristol Channel is one of the most difficult bodies of waters in the world to navigate, with violent seas, the second most powerful tides and attendant currents, and endless changing mud and sandbanks. To qualify for admittance to the ranks of pilotage took half a lifetime, and the boats matched the same degrees of excellence to which the men aspired.

Of these craft much as been written, indeed whole books have been devoted. In essence – they were 40 to 50 feet overall, beam 10 to 14 feet and carried a draft of 7 to 10 feet. Ballasted with concrete between deck and sometimes movable pig-iron bars. They had a number of innovative features including a retractable boom, and roller-reeling called “Appledore”. The decks were clear of skylight or other obstruction which might impair the handling of gear or the boarding punt. Daylight below was provided by glass prisms fitted flush to the deck.

These boats were considered the most advanced fore-and-aft craft of the period and even today they are held as the finest

designed cruising boat, fast and able in all weathers by yachtsmen who see the full length keel an essential feature in seaworthiness and ease of handling. In spite of the fact that they were called, and rigged, as cutters, they were known as “skiffs” by the pilots. The all important dinghies that dropped and picked up the pilots, rejoiced in the somewhat frivolous name of “Punts”. Although the Bristol boats started the name of “skiffs,” the Welsh boats, at least for a time also used the term “Yawls” even though it was usually only Swansea who opted for two masts. As they would now say, “go figure!”

It was into this world that my father was born in December of 1906. He was the eldest son of his namesake – Pilot Alfred W. Venn of Newport, his skiff was the *Dorothia* named after his eldest daughter. In those days piloting was much a family business, and in spite of fierce competition once at sea, there was a good deal of socializing and even intermarriage between piloting clans. My father’s youngest sister, Joan, married into one of the most famous pilot families – the Rays of Bristol, then Wales. One of the early Rays assisted the explorer John Cabot as he left to explore the new world in 1497. Since that time, many generations of Rays had distinguished themselves in the service.

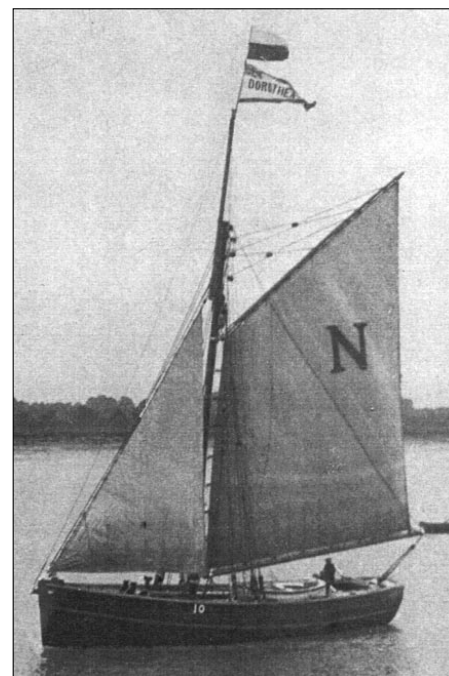
Born at the end of the Edwardian age, his early memories threw a light on that era. He remembers riding in a hansom cab in London, seeing American “doughboys” in WWI in their cowboy campaign hats, and the memorable day he was taken, mid week, to chapel to a memorial service for “a liner that hit an iceberg mid-Atlantic, and the souls of the poor crew and passengers who drowned.”

When he became a teenager, he was taken to a marine outfitters, bought a pair of seaboots, oilskins and a southwester, and signed articles as an apprentice with his father. On the pilot boat there were usually three crew, the master, the pilot himself (sometimes called “Boss” by the crew to his face or “the Old Man” at other times.) The man-the-boat, a person of infinite talents and a jack-of-all trades. Lastly the apprentice, usually called “Boy,” or sometimes stronger expressions at a time that the sensitivity of the young was not given much account. He was, like all who find themselves beholden to others for their advancement and instruction, the general dogsbody, with multiple duties from hauling casks of water to fill the 60 gallon tanks, to repairing or even making sails, cooking a hearty meal on the iron stove, and taking a turn at the tiller. But tiring and tedious as these duties may have been, there was one in particular that tested his skill and courage. That was the dropping or picking up his pilot using the punt. About ten feet long, four and a half

beam with a narrow keel, square stern, and a full midship section, the punt was reported to be very light and a splendid sea boat. The punt was always sculled with a single ten foot oar, and she was stored in her chocks, right way up, on the port side. When it was “out punt” it was manhandled over the side. The Bristol boats had a bulwark that could be removed for this purpose. The actual process of bringing it alongside the lee of the larger vessel was, as always, very demanding on the seamanship of the apprentice, or whoever was doing the skulling, and at night, or with any sort of sea running, it could be a dangerous and skillful venture. My father said that even though cork lifejackets had to be available it was considered “sissy” to be seen wearing one. This pride cost a number of lives.

As I mentioned, competition was fierce! There were three types of Bristol Channel sailing pilots – there were the so-called “Cinchers”, who seemed to be a forerunner of dock pilots and who worked around the river mouth, and served the deep-loaded ships that went to the various wharves in the river. Secondly, there were the most amusingly called “Crack of Dawn Boys” from mainly Barry. They set sail at dawn for a chance at a ship slipping through the net and missed by the last class of pilots – the so-called “Westermen,” These were considered the cream of the crop since they went after the bigger ships, and might end up in Liverpool or Belfast, or even Dungeness in their relentless quest for work.

The aim of this game was to be the furthest west of your rivals in order to win the right of getting the job. Sometimes this became a battle of wits; sailing without



Pilot skiff Dorothea



Belle Vue

navigation lights, rowing the skiff with big sweeps in a flat calm night. Anything that got you to be the most westerly boat! My grandfather had a friend who was a ship's butcher, and he got many a tip-off of what ships were due and when.

Of course, being an apprentice was not without its fun either. One game the lads invented was "Mid-Channel Football". There was a sand bar that only surfaced at low tide for an hour or so. They would row out, set up the pitch, and play until the water reached their ankles at which point the match would be concluded the referee's whistle and the pitch would return to the bottom of the Channel!

The pilot skiffs were moored in what is, even today called "Pilots Pill". A "Pill" being the local name for a tidal creek. With a 40 foot tide at low water the boats would sit in the mud on their "legs," during which time the apprentices did what my father described as "a fair bit of skylarking".

After serving his five years there came the required deep sea time. In those days a "ticket" was not required as a qualification, so my father shipped out "before the mast", but was rated as a quartermaster, so learned ship handling on an intensive basis. During the next few years he traveled to Australia, America, India and in particular, the far east.

When he finished his obligation the depression began to set in. Jobs in general were few and far between and since piloting was a matter of waiting to fill "dead men's shoes", he faced years of waiting until his chance came. My grandfather suggested he work as a boatman on the River Usk at Newport which he did, thus becoming more familiar with the enormous tides and currents which served him well when many years later he was responsible for the safe passage of ocean-going ships in that area.

In 1933 he married Edna Barrett, whose

maternal grandfather was Pilot Will Evans. They were married for 54 years during which time my mother was never in good health. She had one of the first open-heart surgeries in the country. My father was devoted to her, and performed many household tasks without complaint. With a child on the way, he got a job as a rigger, and was quickly promoted to supervisor at Newport Docks.

When WWII arrived, he was very disappointed to find himself too old to serve. He had hoped to help man

one of the air/sea rescue launches which were run by the RAF. So, in order to "do his bit", he volunteered for the Royal Observer Corps. It is important to recall that personal telephones were almost unknown and therefore to report to the fire brigade after an air raid, the solution was to station three observers on high building and through a system of "triangulation" advise authorities as to the location of fires. He spent many hours upon the famed Transporter Bridge and St. Woloos Church tower but by 3am, the Germans would have beat it back to France before daylight, and he could go home. As he had Special Constable status, he had the benefit of a lift home in a police car. My mother used to worry what the neighbours would think about him arriving home in this form of conveyance in the wee small hours!

Father also did some work with the tugs. On one memorable trip they towed a very strange concrete craft with a well set-up cabin below. At first it was thought to be a floating crane platform, but when they towed it up river they found dozens of such platforms. They were, of course, part of the Mulberry Harbour.

During all this time, the pilotage in the Bristol Channel underwent a cataclysmic change that would alter their lives forever.

This is a long, sad and complicated story that happened over a few years. In today's terms, its description would include such catch phrases as "bottom-line", "outsourcing", "in-house" and "market forces". Briefly, what happened was that at the end of the First World War, a couple of major steamship companies

decided to contract with individual pilots. This destroyed a well-versed system of free lance operation that had been in place for hundreds of years. Violence erupted and one of the "chosen" pilots was tarred and feathered by the angry wives of the affected men. There seemed to be only one solution – amalgamation. This had been tried years before but had come to no avail. Now, however, there as added impetus of financial discipline plus the introduction of steam craft, and the possibility of the fledgling radio to simplify the task of a joint venture. One pilot, in listing the pros and cons, simply stated as his own con – "I will lose my independence." Even down the years I was aware of this debate, and recall my father, who had a liberal disposition, making the case for amalgamation against those of a more perhaps romantic and nostalgic out look of the past.

So it was my father who was an apprentice in the two eras, from sail to steam. (It might be of some interest that my own son became an engineer on a US Navy nuclear submarine, so our family went from Scottish flax sail cloth to nuclear fission in three generations!)

When the Bristol Channel pilots amalgamated, overnight a fleet of these splendid skiffs became redundant, discerning yachtsmen snapped up many but sadly many were left as rotting hulks in creeks and on mud banks.

In 1952 my father finally realised his ambition! At 46 years old he was called to take the examination before the Pilotage Board. I was in school at the time, but recall my grandfather and him pouring over charts on the kitchen table as they sailed invisible ships in an endless variety of states of tides by the quickest and safest route. Passing his exams, he obtained his license that gave him the right to pilot from Lundy to Caerleon Bridge. By now the Newport cutter was stationed at Barry Roads, and in spite of the loss of freedom, he was compensated by a warm bedroom,



Alfred Venn (left) with the Panama Canal pilots

a full time cook and a fast vessel to whisk him to his charges.

He used to say that the Bristol Channel has a nice muddy bottom, so it avoided a problem of never going aground. However, he had one nightmare, and that was running aground in the river with the ship's bow on one bank and the stern on the opposite, then, with a 40 foot tide the ship unsupported would "break her back". It never happened.

"About the shipwreck," he would say, and then recount the night that the cutter in a violent storm went on the rocks at Barry. In the dark, the crew jumped aboard the life boat and hauled away out to sea to relative safety. My father coming on deck on the port side looked through the rain and darkness and saw below him a rock, so he slid over the side. Finding a sort of pathway, my father made his way up to what seemed to be a lighted building. It turned out to be the local coastguard station, where, so he said, "They made me a nice cup of tea." Meanwhile, the rest of the crew, now realizing he was missing, feared he may have perished. Afterwards he had difficulty living this down!

Once he was contacted by the BBC wanting to know if the pilot boat could take a camera crew out to film the *Nonsuch*, a 17th century replica of an explorer's ship. They found her off Lundy Island in a howling gale. My father told the somewhat famous TV presenter that he was about to see something few people had witnessed – a 17th century ship riding out a full gale while still at sea. But alas! All the TV people spent the trip with their heads over the side and thus missed their chance of a lifetime!

One of his saddest jobs was taking ships on their last voyage up to Cashmores, the famous ship breakers up the River Usk. It didn't matter what she was: coaster,

warship, liner, even once a submarine, it was always a sad moment when "Finished With Engines" was rung down.

One of the most difficult moments in piloting (or so I understand) was bringing a ship into the lock-gates of Newport Dock. Located at the mouth of the Usk River there was a strong cross current, and to fit in the locks required allowing for sideways tendency of slippage. In docking the largest ship ever to enter Newport, there was only 18 inches on each side of the ship to fit the lock. My father said it was a good job he had brought his shoe horn with him that day!

During this period I had emigrated to Canada and I eventually moved to California to start up and eventually manage the financial service operation of a federal bank in San Francisco. Both my parents were regular visitors, then when my mother died, my father spent three months each winter at our home on the San Mateo Coast, where he loved to walk around the local harbour chatting to the local fisherman and generally being a member of the unofficial "dock committee". We made a number of trips. Once to Death Valley, one of the hottest places on earth. My father would consider himself naked if he was not in a "collar and tie" and a local ranger told me it was the only time he had seen a man in a tie in years! Another memorable trip was a cruise to the western Caribbean. In all his travels he had never touched the Panama Canal, and he was delighted when the captain sent for him and invited him up to the bridge to meet and observe the canal pilot at work. It appears most of these pilots were Canadian. My father said he had to bite his tongue he had such a desire to take over just one last time! At one point he whispered to himself, "Just a touch of bow thrust," when the pilot repeated the

order almost simultaneously. My father had not lost it!

For many years he was a very proud member of Rotary, and later one of the founder members of Probus. His good humour, natural modesty and teller of stories made him popular with all who met him. No doubt he found the fellowship he had long enjoyed be it in the saloon of the cutter or the foc's'le of a steamer. When asked how he had lived so long, he would tell people he had never drank or smoked and that he always had a big door at home. He would wait for this to sink in and then when asked why, he would say "to let my halo in!"

In his last years he would like to be driven down to the moor below Newport. There he would look over the channel and say "look, not a ship in sight!" and shake his head.

When it became too much for him to fly to California, my wife and I, now retired, were able to spend a lot of time in frequent visits to the UK. It became obvious as he approached his centennial he would require more around the clock medical attention, so he entered a nursing home where in December of 2005 he finally died just short of that centennial. Like a lot of old sailors, he used a number of nautical phrases. Groceries, for examples, were called "stores". After he died I found a piece of paper in his jacket pocket. It was headed "Stores for next Friday". I had to find a suitable verse to put on the memorial cards we were having printed. The verse I choose was what Shackleton said to his men as they looked about them at an appalling disaster with nothing but a frozen and lingering death thousands of miles from any hope. Shackleton simply said to them: "Ship and stores gone – so now we will go home."

G Barrett Venn

## Kristian Pedersen's Unfair Dismissal appeal against ABP

Despite Barrie Youde's very best efforts the UKMPA failed in their case against Kristian Pedersen's dismissal (*Pilot passim*). We have as yet only received a truncated verbal version of the reasoning that let the tribunal to this decision but it appears that the tribunal was of the opinion that, as a point of law, because Kristian had an expectation to be asked under his contract with ABP to be told to over carry and that ABP had an expectation that he would consent to such over carriage, then section 19 did not give Kristian the right to refuse to consent to an order to over carry.

We have off course to await the full written judgement before we can assess the implications, if any, this has on pilotage in general, but it would appear on the face of it to drive a coach and horses through whatever little protection pilots thought they had from the Pilotage Act.

***Kristian has asked for the following to be printed in the magazine:***

*I would like to take this opportunity to express my most sincere and grateful thanks to you and the section*

*committee, to the South East Wales pilots, to all the members and especially to David Devey and Barrie Youde for the generous and unwavering support I have received throughout this somewhat trying period.*

*Barrie has been a rock, my faith in him has never faltered and watching him in action has been a privilege. I cannot recommend him highly enough.*

*I know that this case has been a serious drain on scarce resources and it is with the deepest regret that I am unable to bring you better news.*

*I am off back to Nigeria on 2nd August, but will maintain contact in case there is anything at all I can do to help you in the future.*

*I would be very happy for you to publish this letter in The Pilot should you think it appropriate.*

*Stay safe,  
Regards  
Kristian Pedersen*

# Port Skills Safety Limited (PSSL)

As reported in the April issue the UKMPA are now a consultee group within PSSL on pilotage standards and training issues and has sent representatives to two events. On May 10th I attended the Launch of the Safer Ports Initiative 2 as UKMPA representative. Hosted by the Chairman of PSSL, Des Crampton, the key part of the launch was a speech by Dr Stephen Ladyman, the shipping Minister which was followed by speeches by, Bo Lerenius (CEO ABP Holdings), Bill Callaghan (Chairman H&SE Agency), John Astbury (CEO of MCA) and Hugh Robertson (Senior Policy Officer TUC). All speakers emphasised the need to ensure on-going focus on maintaining the improving safety record of UK ports and the need to ensure that ports could attract the well trained and skilled personnel essential to the success of a modern port. Such statements tie in with the UKMPA's own agenda for any future developments in pilot recruitment but we do have some concerns over the proposed Maritime Foundation Degree (MFD) which we feel, unless supplemented by some vocational training and experience, will fail to provide the fundamental understanding of how ships handle and behave in a variety of conditions. I was able to make this point informally to several of the PSSL members prior to the first formal meeting which was held on the 25th May where Brian Wilson attended for the UKMPA. That meeting appeared to be positive for pilots and the following is extracted from Brian's report:

## PSSL meeting - 25th May

*PSSL are looking at the Foundation Degree (FD) as a qualification for the ports industry. The key advantage of an FD over traditional degree qualifications is that there are grants available!*

*What is a Foundation Degree? – Basically it is a points based standard of education which is set as an equivalent to a Higher National Diploma (HND) with both having a points rating of 240 points. FDs are more workplace based than a HND and are currently taken up by the more workforce skills groups such as cleaning, hair dressing etc. There is little or no take up in transport, law or most of the professions. However, the rules state that there must be a follow on course from a FD to a full Honours degree and it therefore should not be dismissed as a relevant qualification for pilots especially since it is intended to issue pilots with a certificate of competence. Already new intake cadets (now to be known as "trainee officers") will be following a Foundation Degree course from September. However, we would like to see the follow through structure to a Masters, certificate and what it is worth etc.*

*At the moment, although it could be used as an entry level qualification for pilot recruits coming through an "in house" training program, I doubt if the FD will be enough to suffice the ETCS standard of STCW 95 equivalency which will be the EU requirement for compliance with IMO A960.*

*Having stated that, it is of relevance to note that those who hold the new style Master's certificate and have worked in pilotage for some years, should have the equivalent of about 340 Education credit points. This is 20 points short of a Post Graduate Honours Degree (PGHD) but it is probable that an additional course such a Bridge Resource Management course for pilots would probably provide the necessary additional points to achieve a PGHD and this would bring us into line with the European view that pilotage is a Honours degree qualification.*

*There were concerns about the impending shortage of foreign labour as the existing Eastern European employees are returning home rich and able to jump in and make large*



SP12 Launch - HQS Wellington

*sums of money from their countries of origin. There is therefore a desire to make the ports profession attractive to new entrants at home.*

## What did the meeting achieve?

The National Occupation Standards (NOS) were accepted as the standards for Pilots, Harbour masters, VTOSs and Harbour managers. The pilots' NOS are in line with ETCS so this is a positive development. A steering group has been set up to oversee the progression and to incorporate minor changes needed since they were written. We have a seat on this group.

## Conclusion

It is encouraging that we seem to be entering a new relationship with the ports and the PSSL members listened to our position viewpoint which is a positive development. The DfT and MCA also appear supportive of our views on training and standards and appear eager to conclude the NOS issue.

The PSSL website is now fully operational and has useful links and several documents (including the pilots' NOS) freely available for download at: [www.portskillsandsafety.co.uk/](http://www.portskillsandsafety.co.uk/)

JCB

## UKMPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2006

Conference dates will be: **15th & 16th November**

Venue: **TGWU Centre, Grand Parade  
Eastbourne, E Sussex BN21 4DN**

Costs will be inclusive and yet to be advised

*Further information will be supplied to your local Secretary*

### UKMPA PRE-CONFERENCE GOLF EASTBOURNE DOWNS GOLF CLUB

**Tuesday 14th Nov 2006 – TEE OFF AT 1100 – Cost £20 (Pay on the day)**

BREAKFAST AVAILABLE FOR EARLY ARRIVALS

Open to all UKMPA members even if not going to Conference

SEE [www.uk-golfguide.com/england/47903.html](http://www.uk-golfguide.com/england/47903.html) for details of venue.

CONTACT MIKE FAWKE (Medway Pilots)

silver.greys@homecall.co.uk • Tel 01303 243365

CLOSING DATE FOR BOOKING MONDAY 30TH OCTOBER 2006.

## OBITUARIES

### Jeffrey Spall

14 June 1933 - 3 March 2006



Born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Jeff left home at the age of 16 and took an Apprenticeship with the Hain Steamship Company of London. Obtaining his Master's Certificate in 1959 at the age of 27 he rose to the rank of Chief Officer.

Whilst on leave at his then home in South Shields, he met Margaret who he married in 1962. Home life then became more important to Jeff and after the births of Tony and Alex, he went ashore and took up a post as Seamanship Instructor at Wellesley Nautical School, in Blyth.

In 1968 the family moved to Harwich, where he became a Licensed Trinity House (North Channel) Pilot in 1969. In 1988 Jeff transferred from Trinity House to the Port of London Pilots and very shortly thereafter he retired.

Jeff's spare time was very much reflected in his love for the "Sea". Family holidays were of the nautical theme, having boats on the Thames, the Norfolk Broads, and spending holidays by the Coast – never far from the water!

He was a member of the Royal Naval Auxiliary Service, serving 18 years and was awarded the Good Conduct and Long Service Medal. His most memorable exercise was at the Spithead Fleet Review for the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977 where he was Skipper on the RNXS Minesweeper *Thakham*.

During his retirement he became an active member and President of the Harwich & Dovercourt Sailing Club, where he moored his boat *Dolphin*. He moved on to purchase a Fisher Catamaran on which he spent many happy hours. Moving on to the tranquillity of the Inland Waterways of England, Jeff and Margaret

enjoyed much fun on their narrow boat, *Millpond*.

However, Jeff always had a second boat in 'dry-dock' – in the garage at home – just in case there should ever be a flood in town!

When not at sea, he served the Harwich and Dovercourt community in numerous organisations. A member of the Harwich Town Council for 21 years and representing the Council at various Committees – Jeff was very honoured to have been elected Mayor of Harwich in 1978 and 1979, with the support of Margaret, always at his side as Mayoress. These were memorable and hectic days, juggling work, family life and service to the community. Both their commitment and hard work was acknowledged when Jeff and Margaret were invited to a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.

Ten years were served as a member of Tendring District Council and serving on five sub-Committees, he was Chairman of the Housing Committee for seven years. Jeff also took an interest in our younger generation, as President to Parkeston Scout Group and founding Trustee to the Harwich Free-School Exhibition Foundation. Only recently he resigned as School Governor to St Josephs Roman Catholic Primary School having served for over twenty years.

Up until his illness Jeff was an active member of the Conservative Association, Tendring Sports Council Committee, The Harwich Society and Royal British Legion. Very close to his heart, was the Merchant Navy Association Harwich Branch of which he was the President and Treasurer. He would always take pride in marching at ceremonial Parades and had great delight in participating in the Queen's Golden Jubilee Parade in London. He eagerly looked forward to seeing the foundation stone laid for a Merchant Navy Memorial to be erected later this year on the Harbour side in Harwich.

A committed Christian throughout his life he regularly worshipped at St Nicholas Church, Harwich. He fulfilled many roles within the Church and served as Church Warden. He represented the Church as a Trustee for the Kings Church Lands Charity, Chairman of Wimbourne House, and founding member of the Shaftsbury Society North District Committee. In the Christmas of 1980 Jeff had the privilege of representing the Vicar of Harwich and travelled by helicopter to deliver Christmas gifts to the Lightship Crew's surrounding Harwich Harbour on behalf of the Mission to Seafarers.

His wife Margaret and his Son Tony, Daughter Alex and their respective partners and offspring, will sorely miss Jeff

His boundless energy and determination, despite his failing health at times, leaves us all reeling in his wake wondering what we have achieved in comparison.

*Mike Richardson  
Retired London (North Channel) &  
Harwich Haven Authority*

### Archie MacDonald



Archie MacDonald always wanted to go to sea. Born in 1917 in Greenock, Scotland, he was the youngest son of a boat builder. His elder brother John was indentured as an engineer apprentice so unfortunately when Archie became old enough to go, there was not the money to buy an apprenticeship. He was set in his direction of career and so sailed on deck with a view to progressing to an officer's position in due course. His first experience at sea was on board the sailing vessel *Sir Thomas Lipton* in 1933. Having moved through the ranks to become a master, he found himself involved in the second world war. I would like to relate details of his exploits and experiences during this period but being a very private man he rarely talked of it. This seems to be the norm for so many who found themselves serving in the services at this time. It is only since his death in February that I have been doing some research and have found out more information. Until this, the only mention was when I was watching the legendary

film about the *San Demetrio*, an Eagle Oil tanker attacked by a surface raider which having being abandoned was later re-boarded and subsequently made her way back to Scotland. He commented, "I was on the sister ship". He was off the beaches on D-Day+2 on a tanker which was either the *Empire Lundy* or *Settler*, and he remembered that every time the deck gun was fired the galley filled with soot.

After the war he continued to serve with Eagle Oil, a company that looked after their crews well. He continued with them until he met his wife to be. He then began to look for a position ashore, finishing his seagoing career as Master of the *Helmsley 1*, a coastal tanker.

He became a Trinity House Pilot in Barrow-in-Furness in 1951. At this time it was a thriving port with a busy iron ore and shipbuilding trade, with Vickers Armstrong constructing merchant and warships. There were ten pilots who also served the port of Heysham across the bay. He continued to work in Barrow and Heysham, becoming the dedicated Vickers pilot, meaning that he attended to all

launches and movements of these ships. Over the years he has stood on many well known vessels as they made their first entry into the water. The *British Admiral* for BP, the largest tanker of its type at the time, submarines such as the *Dreadnought*, cruise ships and later on HMS *Invincible*.

As Barrow's trade slowed, pilots retired and were not replaced and in the later part of his career there would only be three. By this time Pilot MacDonald was also the dedicated pilot for British Nuclear Fuels. Following retirement in 1988 he remained as the dock pilot and continued in this role until 1990. His retirement may not have been so well received at the local golf club where he could now spend more time and he supplemented his pension with regular 5p birdies.

Golf remained a large part of his life, and he played until just a year prior to his passing.

Since his death I have been sifting through the large amount of boxed paperwork that he had kept. All the monthly pilotage returns since the early sixties until his retirement were stored.

Pictures of ships he had piloted and sailed on and many books on piloting and shipping companies, some of which I have been glad to pass on. I even found his second world war watch duffel coat. There was also, carefully folded up in an old wallet, a cutting from a Gourock newspaper. This told of the return of Captain Archie MacDonald for a period of leave having had his ship sunk from under him, he had never mentioned this to anyone.

Archie MacDonald was a dedicated and well respected pilot, I worked with him numerous times as a pilot boat coxswain and captain of small tugs in Barrow whilst I was on leave. I have been approached several times over the years asking if I would like to apply for the position of pilot in Barrow. In recognition of his skill, patience and understanding and perhaps to the relief of many shipmasters, I have decided to stay at the other end of the tow rope, I could not follow in my father's footsteps.

Martin MacDonald

## Tour pour la mer



Forth Pilots Team



IMPA Team

To commemorate their 150th Anniversary the Mission to Seafarers held a cycle rally on 12th May called "Tour pour la Mer"

The event was organised by Mark Stokes of V Ships, Tim Wilkins, of Intertanko, and Nick Brown of ABS with the aim of raising funds for the charity. The route was from Greenwich to Le Touquet via Chatham dockyard to make a total distance of 200 km. Around 270 cyclists from all sectors of the maritime industry participated and pilots were represented by Tees pilot and IMPA President Geoff Taylor along with Nick Cutmore and Caron James from the IMPA head office. Joining them at Greenwich for the start were also five pilots from the Forth. Both groups left Greenwich by the "Cutty Sark" at 0900 and although the IMPA team arrived in Dover at 1700 the Forth pilots rode like the wind to reach Dover in a mere 5 hours. After crossing the channel by P&O ferry (major sponsors of the event) the pilots were greeted on French soil by Federation Francais des Pilotes Maritimes (FFPM) President, Claude Huaut. After an overnight stop in Calais the teams continued to pedal to Le Touquet where the event ended with a celebratory prize-giving dinner in the evening hosted by the Mayor of Le Touquet where the Forth pilots proudly wore their kilts. The teams returned home by coach on day 3 followed by a fleet of lorries carrying the bikes and luggage!

The event was considered a great success by the Mission and participants and further Tours may be arranged. Watch this space.

At the time of going to press donations had reached an amazing £130,000 with several sponsorships still to be collected. To donate to this worthwhile cause contact:

[www.missiontoseafarers.org/howtohelp.php?page=Donations](http://www.missiontoseafarers.org/howtohelp.php?page=Donations)  
or telephone: 020 7248 5202



le Touquet

# LETTER

Dear Sir,

May I express my concern about the remarks made by the Vice Chairman in *The Pilot* 285 about the PNPf? Mr Wilson states that the "situation With the PNPf moves ever closer to a court case" (he feels) and seems surprised that QCs give differing opinions.

Of course different QCs always give differing opinions. They are paid handsomely to argue their opinions out in court, secure in the knowledge that someone else will pick up the bill.

Surely, bitter experience should have taught pilots to avoid litigation at all cost? The "situation" with the PNPf is reasonably optimistic.

As the stock market slowly recovers, and as long term bond yields rise due to continuing inflationary pressure, then the Fund should gradually move back into balance, followed by eventual surplus again sometime in the next decade.

The one thing guaranteed to wreck the PNPf is litigation. The whole disaster at Equitable Life was caused by the Directors turning to the law to find out their legal position, instead of using common sense and adjusting their bonus policy to meet their actuarial liabilities.

Similarly, the litigation embarked upon by the leaders of the Humber Pilots was not conspicuous by its success, but was wholly consistent with Dickens' phrase "The Law is an ass".

I hope the Trustees of the PNPf use their best judgment to keep the Fund on an even keel, and avoid litigation like the plague.

RA Eades  
Retired Liverpool/ Humber Pilot

*I undertand that since writing this letter Mr Eades has discussed this issue with PNPf Trustee Richard Williamson. Ed*

## Chairman: Les Cate

As Joe Wilson has mentioned in his report on page 5, Chairman Les Cate went down with an infection in February from which he has been struggling to recover. His doctor has ordered him to take a complete rest and this has resulted from his withdrawal from the activities of Chairman.

As you are all aware, Les was at the forefront of not just the UKMPA but also of EMPA where he lobbied on behalf of pilots at the EU Parliament and following the tragic death of EMPA Chairman, Gianfranco Gasperini, last year led the important MarNIS and ECTS projects. In the UK, most weeks saw Les in the London office and attending the pilotage

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Transport House, 128 Theobald's Road, Holborn, London WC1X 8TN  
Tel: (020) 7611 2570/71 Fax: (020) 7611 2757 Email: ukmpa@tgwu.org.uk  
Website: www.ukmpa.org

*President* Lord Tony Berkeley

*Honorary vice-Presidents*

Messrs F Berry, OBE, DI McMillan, T Morgan, C Wilkin, OBE

*National Secretary*

Graham Stevenson 128 Theobald's Road, Holborn, London WC1X 8TN

*Chairman of the Section Committee*

Les Cate 35 Elmcroft Place, Westergate, Chichester, W Sussex PO20 3XL (01243) 544428  
Email: cateles@hotmail.com

*Secretary/Treasurer*

J Pretswell 13 Ladylands Terrace, Selkirk, TD7 4BB (01750) 21173  
Email: john@pretswell.fsnet.co.uk

*Section Committee*

J Wilson 34 The Orchard, Broom Hill, Ingelby Barwick, Stockton-on-Tees TS17 5NA  
Email: joe.99@btinternet.com Tel/Fax: (01642) 750395

D Cockrill 29 Edith Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 8SD (01795) 537310  
Email: don.cockrill@tesco.net

D Devey Brackenwood, Altami Road, Buckley, Flint CH7 3PG (01244) 540775  
Email: davedevey@liverpoolpilot.wanadoo.co.uk

P Haysom 9 The Street, Blundeston, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 5AA (01502) 731356  
Email: paul@haysom.co.uk

John Pearn The Grange, Hill Mountain, Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire SA73 1NA (01646) 601556  
Email: john@pearn.co.uk

P Wylie 48 Fox Howe, Coulby Newham, Middlesborough, TS8 0RU  
Email: peter.wylie@ntlworld.com

*Chairman, Technical & Training Committee*

G Rees 2 Benenden Green, Alresford, Hampshire SO24 9OF (01962) 733075  
Email: dcg.rees@ntlworld.com

*Europilots Representative*

Captain CJA Hughes Tumblehome, 5 Orchard Close, Felton, North Somerset BS40 9YS  
Email: chairman@europilots.org.uk

*Auditors*

- Hawdon Bell & Company, North Shields

*Editor of 'The Pilot'*

- John Clandillon-Baker Canterbury Gate House, Ash Road, Sandwich, Kent CT13 9HZ Tel: 01304 613020  
Email: john@pilotmag.co.uk

*Secretary*

- Monica Brown 020 7611 2571 • Email: mobrown@tgwu.org.uk

*PNPF*

- Debbie Marten Tel: (01732) 779460 • Fax: (01732) 779464

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fora and his dedication to the cause of pilotage, building on the essential ground-work started by Norman McKinney, following the Humber dispute has resulted in the UKMPA being accepted as a partner to Port Skills and Safety Ltd (PSSL) [see page 11] and the Association being respected as a highly professional organisation. Les' departure from the "front line" obviously leaves a gaping hole to be filled and Joe Wilson and the other members of section committee have

taken on additional work as a result. All members should fully appreciate that most of the work of Section Committee is undertaken during their spare time between full time piloting duties and that the UKMPA subscription is gaining influence at the highest levels for a very modest rate. I am sure that you will all join me and the members of the Section Committee in wishing Les a full and speedy recovery from his illness.

JCB

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# United Kingdom Maritime Pilots' Association

District	Name	Address and Telephone Number	
<b>Aberdeen</b> .....	PG Williams .....	Aberdeen Harbour Pilots, North Pier, Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire	01224 597000 x 7113 (O)
<b>Barrow</b> .....	Graham John Wood	Sea Mill, New Biggin, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 0RJ	01229 869261 (O)
<b>Belfast</b> .....	W Esler Esq .....	"Ramoyle", 17 Corran Manor, Larne, Co. Antrim BT40 1BH	028 905 53504 (O)
<b>Boston</b> .....	R Williamson .....	Boston Pilot's Association, Boston Dock, Boston, Lincs, PE21 6BN	01205 362114 (O)
<b>Bridgwater</b> .....	PH Lee .....	1 Grove Road, Burnham on Sea, Somerset, TA8 2HG	01278 782180 (H)
<b>Bristol</b> .....	Capt A Wymark ...	'Hinakura' Greyfield Road, High Littleton, Bristol BS39 6XX Email: awymark@clara.co.uk	01761 470601 (H) 07753 692626 (M)
<b>Clyde</b> .....	David Blair .....	4 Sandringham Terrace, Esplanade, Greenock, PA16 7XL Email: dbb@quista.net	01475 724822 (H) 07719 676206 (M)
<b>Cowes</b> .....	Rod Hodgson .....	c/o Harbour Office, Town Quay, Cowes, Isle of Wight PO31 7AS Email: dhmc@cowes.co.uk	01983 564290
<b>Crouch</b> .....	D Enever Esq .....	23 Glebe Way, Frinton on Sea, Essex CO13 9HR	01255 677330
<b>Dartmouth</b> .....	D White .....	Sunny Bank, West Town Meadow, Bishopsteignton, TQ14 9SF	01626 772034
<b>Dover</b> .....	Nigel Stokes .....	Dover Harbour Board, Harbour House, Dover, Kent CT17 9BU Email: nigel.stokes@doverport.co.uk	01304 240400 Ext 4522 (O)
<b>Dundee</b> .....	S Campbell .....	Burnside house, Roundy Hill, By Glamis, Dundee, DD8 1QD	01575 575530
<b>Europilots</b> .....	Capt CJA Hughes ..	Tumblehome, 5 Orchard Close, Felton, North Somerset BS40 9YS Email: chairman@europilots.org.uk	
<b>Falmouth</b> .....	Phil Bush .....	42 Old Well Gardens, Penryn, Cornwall, TR10 9LF	01326 377982
<b>Forth</b> .....	Robert Watt .....	Maryville, Glasgow Road, Bathgate, West Lothian EH48 2QR Email: r.m.watt@btinternet.com	01506 636682
<b>Fowey</b> .....	C Wood .....	The Secretary, The Pilot Office, Par Harbour, Par, PL24 2BD Email: charlie@foweypilots.com	01726 815929
<b>Gloucester</b> .....	CR Merry .....	Martins, Lancelot Court, Churchend, Slimbridge, Gloucestershire GL2 7BL Email: carl@merryc.freeserve.co.uk	01453 890726
<b>Haven Ports</b>			
(Harwich) .....	Ian R Simpson ....	Haven Pilots Secretary, c/o Harbour House, The Quay, Harwich, Essex CO12 3HH	
<b>Heysham</b> .....	Capt J Millross ...	Sandside Cottage, Fluke Hall Lane, Pilling, Preston, Lancs PR3 6HP	01253 790058
<b>Humber</b> .....	D Fortnum .....	Humber Pilots, c/o 41 School Lane, Kirk Ella, Hull HU10 7NP dave@humberpilots.karoo.co.uk	01482 627755 (O) Fax 01482 671700
<b>Inverness</b> .....	Capt K Maclean ...	"Corsten", 12 Beaufort Road, Inverness, IV2 3NP	01463 715715 (O)
<b>King's Lynn</b> ....	R Havercroft .....	King's Lynn Conservancy Board, Harbour Office, Common Staith, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE30 1LL	01553 671697 (H)
<b>Lerwick</b> .....	N McLean .....	Kinnoull, Levenwick, Shetland, ZE2 9HZ	01950 422387
<b>Liverpool</b> .....	D Boardman .....	Liverpool Pilotage Services Ltd, 4 Woodside Business Centre, Birkenhead, Merseyside, CH41 1EH	0151 949 6811
<b>Londonderry</b> ...	DP McCann .....	(Foyle Pilots), Upper Road, Shrove, Greencastle, Co Donegal, Ireland	00 353 7781036 (H)
<b>London</b> .....	NT Lee .....	21 Park avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1QY	01795 559545 (H)
<b>Lowestoft</b> .....	RD Mountney Esq .	17 Foxborough Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 4SN	01502 516242
<b>Manchester</b> ....	JC Mahoney .....	Manchester Pilots Ltd, Queen Elizabeth II Dock, Eastham, Wirral, Cheshire CH62 0BB	0151 327 1233 (O)
<b>Medway</b> .....	S Nichols .....	2 James Close, Lyminge, Folkstone, Kent CT18 8NL Email: selwyn_nichols@hotmail.com	01303 862946
<b>Milford Haven</b> ..	John Pearn .....	The Grange, Hill Mountain, Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire SA73 1NA Email: john@pearn.co.uk	01646 601556
<b>Orkney</b> .....	IJ Waters Esq .....	Lansdowne, 25 Royal Oak Road, Kirkwall, Orkney KW15 1RF	01856 875237
<b>Perth</b> .....	I Henderson .....	34 Lorne Crescent, Monifieth, Dundee, DD5 4DZ	
<b>Peterhead</b> .....	GD Geyton .....	43 Blackhorse Terrace, Peterhead, Aberdeenshire AB42 1LQ	01779 474281 (O)
<b>Poole</b> .....	Brian Murphy .....	The Pilot Office, The Quay, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HA Email: brianmurphy@phc.co.uk	01202 666401 (O)
<b>Portsmouth</b> ....	P Fryer .....	21 Montserrat Road, Lee on the Solent, Hants PO13 9LT	02392 297395 (O)
<b>Scilly Isles</b> .....	J Phillips .....	Rose Cottage, The Strand, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly, Cornwall TR21 0PT	01720 422066
<b>Shoreham</b> .....	Dave MacVicar ....	The Pilotage Service, c/o Shoreham Port Authority, The Harbour Office, Albion St, Southwick, Brighton, BN42 4ED	01273 592366 (O)
<b>Southampton</b> ...	Capt Matt Winter ..	159 Olivers Battery Road South, Winchester, Hampshire SO22 4LF Email: matthew.winter5@ntlworld.com	01962 855157
<b>South East Wales</b>	WP Barnes .....	Verber, Victoria Park Road, Cadoxton, Barry, S Glamorgan	01446 742637
<b>Sullom Voe</b> .....	J Leslie Esq .....	"Cliona", 4 Lovers Loan, Lerwick, Shetland	01595 695856 (H)
<b>Swansea</b>			
inc Port Talbot ...	GP Harris .....	c/o ABP Harbour Office, King's Dock, Swansea, SA1 1QR	01656 662608 (H)
<b>Tees Bay</b> .....	Peter Lightfoot ....	18 Regency Park, Ingelby Barwick, Stockton on Tees, TS17 0QR Email: katieandpete@hotmail.com	01642 760447
<b>Teignmouth</b> ....	M Swallow .....	22 Livingstone Road, Teignmouth, Devon TQ14 8NL	01626 774902
<b>Tyne</b> .....	<i>There is no appointed Secretary. Communication should therefore be to:</i>		
	Tyne Pilots Ltd, Pilot Watch House, Lawe Rd, South Shields, S. Tyneside NE33 2AH	Email: tyne.pilots@virgin.net	Tel: 01914 555656 Fax: 01914 566514
<b>Weymouth</b> .....	PM Runyard .....	14 Netherton Road, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 8SB	01305 773118
<b>Wisbech</b> .....	B Knight .....	29 New Road, Sutton Bridge, Lincs PE12 9RA	01406 350838
<b>Gt Yarmouth</b> ...	Paul Haysom .....	9 The Street, Blundeston, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 5AA	01502 731356 (H)