



Company of Master Mariners of Canada

From the Bridge

The Newsletter of the Company of Master Mariners of Canada

www.mastermariners.ca

February 2009

The Company of Master Mariners of Canada is a corporation established to serve the shipping industry, further the efficiency of the sea service and uphold the status, dignity and prestige of Master Mariners.

FROM THE MASTER'S DESK

Dear Colleagues,

With winter upon us, across the country we are experiencing various weather conditions which are breaking records for snow fall, temperatures (plus and minus) and wind. We are also in the midst of something akin to a depression in our economy. This world-wide loss of confidence in the markets and financial institutes is having its effects on the marine industry. Ships are being laid up, freight rates and charter rates are being reduced, and new-buildings are being delayed. Where does this leave the seafarer? I don't have all the answers, but some are obvious: maintenance and upgrading of vessels is likely to be affected, with only essential work being carried out; older ships are not being replaced with new-buildings; and even with reduced fuel costs, economic speed is the norm for vessels.



On the brighter side, it would appear that the maritime nations of the world are taking serious action to reduce and even, hopefully, prevent the acts of piracy from taking place. It is about time. In this day and age, with capabilities for detection and identification as good as it is, piracy should be nearly nil. Instead of which, areas of the world from where pirates are known to operate are still harbouring pirates with limited containment. One of the "security companies" operating in Iraq, and who have been under frequent condemnation for their over zealous actions, have offered their services to combat piracy. I hope to heaven that no company or flag states take them up on this offer!

IFSMAs has sought the support of its Members and Associations for positions to be brought to the IMO. We have been asked for our views on two particular subjects, Dynamic Positioning (DP) Training and a proposal relating to Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention. In the question of DP Training, CMMC expressed the opinion that existing training undertaken in accordance with the Nautical Institute's standard be adopted. In the question of Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention, CMMC expressed the opinion that it was not the Master's role to undertake random testing of the crew for blood/alcohol levels, and without confirmation through blood testing it would be subject to legal challenge. The STW sub-committee of IMO met in February, and it is hoped that the deliberations will produce favourable results.

I hope you either survive the cold, or escape from it! If you are escaping, please remember to submit your annual dues before you go. Remember - membership has both its responsibilities as well as its privileges.

I wish you all good health and prosperity in 2009.

Sincerely,

Peter Turner, National Master

IMO launches 'Go to Sea' campaign. 31/12/2008

The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) is spearheading a campaign to promote the attractions of careers at sea, in a bid to tackle the worldwide shortage of seafarers.

The IMO *Go to Sea!* campaign launched in London shortly before Christmas in association with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the International Transport Workers' Federation, the International Chamber of Shipping/ International Shipping Federation, Bimco, Intercargo and Intertanko.

A document issued at the launch calls on governments and the industry, supported by the IMO, ILO and the organisations representing international shipping, to take actions within their sphere of influence to increase recruitment of new entrant seafarers.

The campaign urges the shipping industry to:

- promote itself at public events, through the media and electronic media, and among young people in schools and universities.
- financially support the establishment and promotion of training institutions
- consider shore-based education and training as time 'on duty' rather than 'on leave'
- do more to make life at sea 'more akin to life enjoyed by others ashore', through shorter terms of duty onboard, long-term contracts, more frequent paid leave, social security, improved communications including internet access, and 'more humane treatment'
- encourage women to work as seafarers
- explore the possibilities on inducing personnel from other professions that have links with the shipping industry, by means of bridging courses

Governments are called on to give greater prominence to the sea, including promoting training and encouraging campaigns that promote seafaring as an attractive and rewarding career and as a springboard to positions ashore. Additionally, the document suggests governments can do much to promote a wider take-up of a sea career through recognition of sea service instead of compulsory military service, training of jobless persons and promoting the career for women. http://www.nautilusuk.org/ngen_public/article.asp?id=348&did=47&aid=3804&st=&oaid=-1



PIRACY: There can be very few people who are unaware of the acts of piracy that are taking place so regularly at this time, particularly in the Gulf of Aden. It makes headline news frequently. Go on to the internet and google "Piracy" and you will be inundated with stories, some old and some very new. The subject appears in industry periodicals and journals too. Following are some of the items I have found. Some you may have seen, others perhaps not.

Pirate attacks continue: From "Containerisation International, November 2008".

International shipping is under threat as pirate attacks in the Gulf of Aden, off the coast of Somalia, continue. While relatively few containerships appear to have been caught up in the incidents so far, their potentially valuable cargo makes them highly vulnerable and ocean carriers so worried. There are also growing concerns about the nature of the attacks with the Somalian pirates in particular, stripping the ships and crews of easily pilferable valuables and then holding the latter to ransom.

While it is difficult to get reliable figures on the amounts paid out by shipowners to get their assets and seafarers released, research by the UK's independent "think tank", Chatham House, suggests that between US\$18 million and US\$30 million has been paid this year (2008) alone.

At the end of September, according to InterManager, the International Ship Managers' Association, more than 200 seafarers were being held against their will by pirates off the coast of Somalia. Meanwhile an estimated 93 attacks had been reported as taking place so far in 2008. Worryingly, the number of incidents involving the use of guns has increased dramatically with the International Maritime Bureau citing well over 260 incidents in 2007. This was up about 35% over the previous year.

Guy Morel, General Manager of InterManager, has called for urgent action to be taken. He wants the authorities and international bodies involved in shipping and security to pull together and for a "highly visible presence" to be established that protects vessels using one of the busiest shipping channels in the world.

At any one time, for instance, an estimated 300 ships are sailing in the Gulf of Aden region, most of them heading to or from the Suez Canal. Guy Morel said, "It is unacceptable that our crews are obliged to face this kind of danger while their ships are carrying essential goods, including food and commodities, to all of the world's people.

Other organisations, such as BIMCO, want similar action and at a meeting of the International Maritime Organisation's Marine Environmental Protection Committee, a statement was actually issued on piracy.

Largely this stemmed from the high profile incident involving the ro-ro ship *Faina* destined for Mombasa with 33 T-72 tanks on board and hijacked by Somalian pirates. The statement called for:-

- A commitment to increase the number of warships in the area.
- A toughening of the UN Security Council's resolution on repressing piracy.
- An international agreement on establishing a legal jurisdiction to identify and punish pirates.

Meanwhile the International Transport Workers' Federation, which represents seafarers, has agreed a deal with shipowners that crew should be paid double while in the "dangerous" Somalia region.

Piracy hits record levels <http://www.breakbulk.com/> Jan 19 2009

Piracy on the high seas reached record levels in 2008 with 49 ships hijacked and nearly 900 crew taken hostage, according to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB). The total 293 attacks on shipping grew from 263 in 2007, the London-based IMB said in an annual report from its piracy reporting centre in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. A further 46

vessels reported being fired on, with 32 crew members injured, 11 killed and 21 missing or presumed dead. Guns were used in 139 attacks, up from 72 in 2007.

"The pirates boarding vessels are better armed and prepared to assault and injure the crew," the IMB said. The surge in attacks "is due primarily to the situation in Somalia and the Gulf of Aden with a total of 42 vessels hijacked and 815 crew taken hostage," said IMB Director Pottengal Mukundan. As of Dec. 31, Somali pirates were holding 13 vessels for ransom and 242 crew hostage. In 2008 Somali pirates were responsible for 111 of the attacks off Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, an increase of nearly 200 percent on 2007, with the attacks peaking in September through November. "All types of vessels, with varying freeboards and speeds have been targeted and attacked," the report noted.

Nigeria ranked second with 40 reported incidents, including 27 vessels boarded, five hijacked and 39 crew members kidnapped. There were 28 attacks in Indonesian waters adjacent to the heavily transited Malacca Straits.

The IMB urged governments to step up security patrols in their territorial waters and called on ships' masters and owners to be vigilant against attacks. "With the world economy in its current uncertain condition, there is a possibility of piracy increasing," it advised. <http://www.breakbulk.com/content/?p=420>

Piracy attacks in the Far East: From "Sea Breezes, May 1983"

Pirate attacks on merchant ships are on the increase in the Far East, particularly in the area of the Philip Channel off Indonesia and Singapore. One of the leading P&I Clubs said recently that a "piracy season" seemed to have evolved in the area starting March/April and continuing to October/November. At its height there is an incident every seven to ten days, most of which are the work of armed marauders in small sea borne groups. The Pacindat Mutual P&I Association has warned that, following a recent high court judgement, normal marine insurance or P&I cover might not apply to crew injuries, loss of personal effects or cargos arising from pirate attacks.

PIRACY! Time for the Q-ships return? http://www.shippingtimes.co.uk/item_10143.html

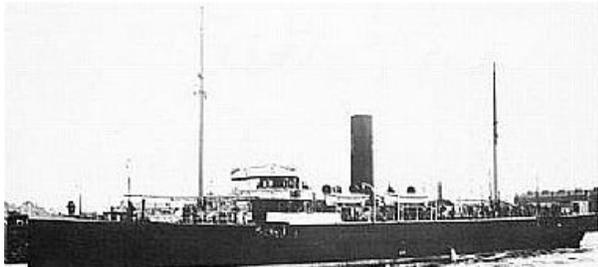
Guest writer Bill Redmond ponders on a solution from WW1... Dec 2nd 2008

Piracy in East African and Middle Eastern waters has reached such alarming levels that if effective action is not taken soon many countries in the region will suffer serious economic consequences. Moreover, shippers themselves and their customers are already struggling as charter rates crash at an unprecedented pace and ships re-route via the Cape of Good Hope rather than risk a Suez Canal transit. Such a diversion could raise commodity transport fees by more than 30%, claims General Ahmed Fadel, head of the Suez Canal Authority.

The latest outrage, an unsuccessful attack on the cruise ship, *MS Nautica*, in the Gulf of Aden on December 1st, will undoubtedly encourage cruise ships to remove East African and Middle Eastern ports of call from their itineraries, thus depriving developing countries of badly-needed foreign currency. Egypt could be a major loser as fewer ships transit its canal and there are already signs that its canal charges are falling in response to the piracy problem. In its latest fiscal year, Egypt earned \$5 billion from canal dues, its third biggest revenue source, and so can ill afford to lose a large slice of this income in a country where 20% of its 76 million population live on \$2 a day.

Almost as disturbing are the doubtless huge sums paid to pirates and their Somali war lords for the release of ships and their crews, some of which could be used to buy sophisticated weapons like hand-held guided missiles, the mere threat of their use being enough to make even the biggest and fastest ships heave to. Some of the ransom money could also be used to finance international terrorism.

Naval personnel on Q-Ships were successful against U-boats



So far the authorities' response to the problem, involving warships, has met with only marginal success, partly for the obvious reason that warships stand out like sore thumbs, and their positions are almost certainly reported by innocent-looking fishing vessels to their piratical colleagues planning attacks. One possible solution worth consideration is to send in Q-ships, a successful ruse first used in WW1 in response to the U-boat menace. These wolves in sheep's clothing were responsible for sinking about 10% of all U-boats sunk in that war but they damaged many more. Innocent-looking tramp steamers travelling alone, Q-ships were typically armed with four-inch guns hidden by drop-down flaps but there is no suggestion that such heavy armament should be fitted to today's merchant ships.

Instead, as a modern variation of the Q-ship concept, heavy machine guns and other weapons could be installed and disguised on slow-moving ships travelling alone and seemingly easy meat for prowling pirates. The weapons could be manned by naval personnel masquerading as merchant seamen. This would be a much cheaper solution than using many warships to patrol a vast sea space, and it would keep the pirates guessing.

New transit lane for Gulf of Aden David Osler - Wednesday 28 January 2009

SHIPOWNERS and maritime unions have changed the small print of the deal under which many seafarers are entitled to double pay danger money for serving in the piracy-prone Gulf of Aden, following the introduction of a new transit lane system from next Sunday. As of February 1, the existing Maritime Security Patrol Area — introduced by coalition navies last year as a safe passage corridor — will be replaced by two separate five-mile wide eastbound and westbound, separated by a two-mile buffer.

The shake-up comes on account of the increase in number and repositioning of warships in the region, and is also designed to reduce risks of collisions.

As a result, the eastern and western boundaries of the so-called high-risk area, agreed by the joint owner-union International Bargaining Forum last October, will be adjusted accordingly.

Seafarers sailing within the high-risk area will still enjoy many of the conditions that have traditionally applied in war risk areas, including a bonus worth 100% of basic wages, double the normal rate of death and disability compensation, and the right to sign off a ship to be repatriated at company expense where a vessel does not use routes designated by western navies.

The high risk area agreement will be reviewed at the end of next month.

The IBF deal formally covers tens of thousands of seafarers on thousands of ships, effectively setting the going rate in the industry for pay and conditions. <http://www.loydslist.com/ll/news/new-transit-lane-for-gulf-of-aden/20017612611.htm>

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Molotov Cocktails <http://www.shiptalk.com/newsletter.html>

Mind you, sometimes the answer in a crisis is staring you in the eyes, especially if you are partial to the odd beer and cigarette. Yes, smoking and drinking...never has an answer to piracy seemed so straightforward.

Perhaps we have been overcomplicating the whole piracy thing. In order to guard against pirates, it would seem, you supply a ship with a load of beer, the crew drink the contents then save the bottles and fill them with fuel to create their own Molotov cocktails.

This actually happened last month, when the Chinese crew of the crane carrier "Zhen Hua 4" fought back with petrol bombs when pirates attacked the vessel in the Gulf of Aden.

Dramatic photographs of crew members preparing home made incendiary bombs made from beer bottles filled with fuel emerged in the aftermath of the four-hour attack. While the fireworks kept the pirates at bay, it didn't stop them eventually boarding. That's when cunning plan No.2 came into play. When the Pirates got onboard the 26,100-dwt heavy-lift vessel, the 30 man crew simply locked themselves in the ship's accommodation, refusing to come out and not allowing the bad guys in. The attackers eventually fled when a Malaysian helicopter and two warships came to the assistance of the Chinese ship. This security lark doesn't have to be complicated you know...just effective!

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Insurers say pirates should be treated as 'vermin.' Jerry Frank - Wednesday 28 January 2009

PIRATES are "vermin" and a scourge of modern shipping that requires a concerted response from the international community, top marine insurers remarked at an industry meeting in London.

Fritz Stabinger, the International Union of Marine Insurance's (IUMI) liaison officer with the United Nations, said pirates need to be viewed by the wider public as common criminals.

"Pirates are vermin. I would not want to retract one single word," Mr Stabinger said after IUMI's winter meeting in London. IUMI's secretary general, a former senior underwriter with Swiss Re, said the issue of piracy figured large in the executive committee's behind-the-scenes discussions in London this week.

Representative from the marine insurance industry also raised their concern over the criminalisation of seafarers and support for the two Indian officers of the *Hebei Spirit* on trial in Korea.

At its annual talk shop, scheduled to take place in Bruges in September, IUMI intends to set-up a workshop committee to focus on how its members can tackle the problems raised by piracy.

Mike Davies, chairman of IUMI's cargo committee and the head of insurer Axa's Asian marine business, said that Gulf of Aden piracy was an additional burden for cargo underwriters as they grappled with the world trade downturn.

IUMI committee members also raised concern over the increasing number of piracy attacks elsewhere, including off Nigeria, on merchant shipping and offshore installations.

Lloyd's marine underwriter Peter McIntosh, chairman of IUMI's ocean hull committee, added that "Over-stretched naval forces could only have limited effect in the fight against the threat of these attacks off the Horn of Africa. The long-term solution for this situation off Somalia has to lie onshore".

Deirdre Littlefield, IUMI's president and a director at New York-based Starr Marine, said that the continuing threat of piracy could also hamper efforts to attract sufficient numbers of high-quality recruits to sea.

"Recruitment going forward remains a huge problem when seen against the threat of piracy and the criminalisation of mariners," Ms Littlefield said.

<http://www.loydslist.com/ll/news/insurers-say-pirates-should-be-treated-as-vermin/20017612692.htm>

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Piracy update – LPG tanker seized Feb 2nd 2009 <http://ports.co.za/news/articles.php>

No sooner had a US navy officer made the claim (last week) that pirate activity was slackening in the Gulf of Aden as a result of heightened naval activity, than the pirates hit back in no uncertain manner by seizing a German LP tanker from the midst of an escorted convoy.

The Bahamas-registered but German-owned *Longchamp* (3,415-gt, built 1990), with a crew of 13 made up of 12 Filipinos and an Indonesian, came under attack on Thursday (29 January) while sailing in convoy with other ships and being escorted by naval ships.

The method employed by the pirates was simple but effective - to divert the naval forces away from the *Longchamp* by staging dummy attacks on two other ships in the convoy, which left the German ship vulnerable. Once the pirates were on board the matter was all but over, with naval ships now unable to do anything to rescue the crew or re-take the ship.

The latest seizure indicates again the need for a rethink by international naval forces operating in the region and a revised 'rules of engagement' – at present except for the ships of Combined Task Force 151, none of the naval units are authorised to take aggressive action against the pirates but rather to act in a defensive mode. This makes their task that much more difficult and fallible.

It is also likely to swell the number of shipping companies that have opted to divert their vessels away from the Red Sea and to take the longer route around the Cape.

Longchamp was sailing from Asia to Europe at the time of the attack. Her cargo of flammable gas makes any attempt to rescue the crew or ship highly unlikely.

At a recent IMO-attended meeting held in Djibouti, coastal states affected by acts of piracy in the Gulf of Aden and Somali coastal regions as well as other hot spots along the East African coast have agreed to establish three information centres. These will be used to co-ordinate anti-piracy activities and will be centred in Mombasa, Dar es Salaam and Sanaa, with a regional training centre in Djibouti.

Japan, which last week announced it is sending navy ships to provide anti-piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden region, has instructed its navy to draw up rules of engagement for its warships on patrol. The Japanese decision to send navy ships to Africa drew considerable interest last week because it extends beyond Japan's pacifist doctrines set in place at the end of World War 2. However the Japanese government explained that Japanese ships and crew were at risk and the action of sending ships into another ocean was being regarded as a defensive one. The Japanese ships would only protect Japanese cargo and Japanese-flagged ships, said a spokesman.

Intertanko Launches New Piracy Clauses Friday, 06 February 2009

INTERTANKO's Documentary Committee has responded to the need for a model piracy clause. The association says the clause was produced in December for both voyage and time charters and is being well received and widely used and accepted by brokers and charterers. Intertanko says that many current charterparties will not have anticipated the possibility of the vessel being hijacked. Owners should therefore check the terms of their existing charters and bills of lading before, for example, taking any decision to re-route the ship. Re-routing may expose an owner to claims for breach of charter - for example a failure to prosecute the voyage with 'due' or 'utmost despatch', and also to claims under the bill of lading – for example for deviation and late delivery. Owners should also check their war risk clauses, some of which permit a deviation in appropriate circumstances. For new fixtures, Intertanko's Documentary Committee has produced clauses which address the main issues involved in transiting the Gulf of Aden and/or re-routing the ship. <http://www.mglobal.com/news/dailystorydetails.cfm?storyid=9619&type=2>

And then there was the story of a different kind of piracy: Pirates raided in Dubai.

Publication: [Software Industry Report](#) Date: [Monday, July 4 1994](#)

The Business Software Alliance says the Government of Dubai conducted a series of raids last month against computer resellers for suspected software piracy. The raids followed the presentation of a complaint by BSA on behalf of their member companies Autodesk, Lotus, Microsoft and Novell.

The raids were the first actions in the United Arab Emirates, which include Dubai, against resellers for copyright infringement. During the raids at MY Computer and SUCO Enterprises Trading, over 5,000 illegal copies of software programs were uncovered in both English and French. Counterfeit copies of software manuals were also seized.

<http://www.allbusiness.com/technology/computer-software/446599-1.html>

Avoiding Seasickness – Before Getting Underway

Do not drink alcohol the night before.
Get a good night's sleep.
Do not embark on an empty stomach.
Eat a light breakfast: nongreasy, nonspicy, and non-acidic food, more carbohydrates rather than fewer.
Go easy on the coffee.
Fortify yourself with anything made with ginger: ginger candy, ginger ale, ginger cookies etc.

Avoiding Seasickness – While Underway

Avoid engine fumes, especially diesel fuel and tobacco smoke, especially that of cheap cigars.
Keep your eyes on the horizon.
Avoid enclosed spaces; rather position yourself in the open, fresh air, in a shady spot.
Stay physically occupied (steer the boat).
Do not read or use binoculars, or study instruments for extended periods
Eat saltines or soda crackers and drink colas.
To avoid a sympathetic reaction, stay away from people who are already sick.

From the pages of "The Mariners Book of Days". www.sheridanhouse.com

Largest Potential Lakes Project in a Generation. <http://www.businessnorth.com/briefing.asp?RID=2776>

The United States Congress is considering the possible funding of the construction of a new lock at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. It is a half-billion dollar undertaking that would rank as the largest navigation infrastructure project on the Great Lakes in a generation. Construction of a new lock at the "Soo" would bring up to 250 jobs annually to northern Michigan and continue for a decade. Estimated cost of the lock is about \$475m. One economist has likened the economic impact of lock construction to opening an automobile plant in Michigan. The new lock has been in the planning stage for two decades, but now is ready to move forward once funding is secured. The need for a second "Poe-sized" lock is critical. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers considers the *Soo Locks* the single point of failure that could bring Great Lakes shipping to a standstill. The new lock was first authorized more than 20 years ago.



This picture shows the existing *Soo Locks*. Looking upstream toward Lake Superior are, from the left, the *MacArthur Lock*, the *Poe Lock*, the *Davis Lock* and the *Sabin Lock*, connecting Lake Superior with Lake Huron. A project to replace the *Davis* and *Sabin* with a "Poe-sized" lock is "shovel-ready" and can start as soon as funding is allocated. A failure of the *Poe Lock* would bring Great Lakes shipping to a standstill, and the new lock was authorized 20 years ago. President Barack Obama's proposed economic stimulus bill is expected to provide immediate funding for this \$457 million project. <http://www.dredgemag.com>

The *Soo Locks* connect Lake Superior to the lower four Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway. The locks handle more than 80 million tons of iron ore, coal, grain, and other cargos each year. The benefits of Great Lakes shipping are extraordinary for raw materials-dependent industries across the region and nation. By one estimate, shipping via the Lakes annually saves customers \$3.6b compared to the next least-expensive transportation mode. If the *Poe Lock* is incapacitated for a lengthy period of time, America's steel mills won't have access to Minnesota and Michigan iron ore. Great Lakes power plants won't be able to receive clean-burning, low-sulphur coal. The entire American economy is at risk. The new lock has been authorized at full Federal expense. Groundbreaking could begin immediately.

The locks are necessary because the only connection between Lake Superior and the rest of the Great Lakes is the St. Mary's Canal. The St. Mary's Canal, at the Lake Superior end, has a 21 foot waterfall between Lake Superior and the lower lakes. The locks permit deep draft ships to travel around the St. Mary's Waterfall and manage the 21 foot difference in water levels. Before the locks were built, early pioneers portaged their canoes, small boats and then larger boats around the waterfall and refloated them in Lake Superior. In 1797, the Northwest Fur Company built a lock 38 feet long on the Canadian side of the river for small boats. This lock remained in use until it was destroyed in the War of 1812. Freight and boats were again portaged around the rapids until another lock was built.



The Poe Locks from a postcard dated 1905.

Congress passed an act in 1852 for the construction of 2 new locks which were completed in 1855. Within a few years, commerce through the canal had grown to national importance, and the need for new locks became clear. The funds required exceeded the state's capabilities and thus, in 1881 the locks were transferred to the United States government under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps has operated the locks since that time. Recently the Lakes had a preview of the disaster that awaits if the *Poe Lock* fails. A mechanical failure closed the *Poe Lock* for a brief period and three vessels had to go to anchor. An entire industry was crossing its fingers. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was able to resume lock operations quickly, but that may not always be the case.

The Box takes off on a Global Journey: The Box is an ambitious and unique year-long project for *BBC News* to tell the story of international trade and globalization by tracking a standard shipping container around the world. It is a project which plans to deliver content for television, radio and online audiences - telling the individual stories behind what makes the global economy tick.



The container belongs to NYK Line but it is branded as a BBC container. Bolted to it is a GPS transmitter so that its progress can be followed. "The Box" began its odyssey in September 2008 and will hopefully reach the USA, Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Africa and when it does, BBC correspondents are there to report on who is producing the goods and who is consuming them.

Early in February 2009 it had arrived in Santos, Brazil. Prior to that the container had travelled from Britain to China with a consignment of Scotch whisky. From China it carried cargo to the west coast of the USA then continued by rail to the east coast. That is where it was loaded with household goods for Brazil.

The BBC called the project "**The Box**" from a fantastic book of the same name by Marc Levinson (see "From the Bridge" November 2007, Page 7), which tells the story of how the humble shipping container

changed the face of world trade. Why don't you follow the progress of the container? You can see the reports at:-

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/business/2008/the_box/default.stm

HMS Victory, the legendary British warship that was the predecessor to Lord Nelson's *Victory*, sank during a storm in 1744, taking more than 1,000 sailors to their deaths. The ship's location remained a mystery despite numerous searches, until *Odyssey Marine Exploration* discovered the wreck in May 2008.

The Florida-based firm found the site 330ft under the English Channel, nearly 100km from where the ship was historically believed to have been wrecked, near the Channel Islands.

Jason Williams, executive producer of *JMW Productions*, which filmed the discovery, said: "Reports from the time say that the ship was carrying four tonnes of gold, around £400,000 sterling, which it picked up from Lisbon on its way to Gibraltar. Today this has a bullion value of £125 million, but that is just its raw weight. That means it is worth about a billion dollars."

The Ministry of Defence has given the company permission to go back down to the wreck to try to find the treasure. The British Government will legally own any gold that is recovered, but Greg Stemm, chief executive officer of *Odyssey Marine Exploration*, said he was in negotiations and would expect to be rewarded for the find. Mr Stemm said: "The money is not as important as the cultural and historical significance of the discovery. It is a monumental event, not only for *Odyssey* but for the world. It is probably the most significant shipwreck find to date. *HMS Victory* was the mightiest vessel of the 18th century and the eclectic mix of guns we found on the site will prove essential in further refining our understanding of naval weaponry used during the era."

The discovery exonerates Admiral Sir John Balchin, who came out of retirement aged 74 to command the ship, on what was meant to be his final voyage. Historians believed the ship was lost due to poor navigation on the Casquets, a group of rocks north-west of Alderney. But the wreck's location, 62 miles away from the rocks, suggests Sir Balchin was not to blame. His ancestor Sir Robert Balchin said: "A piece of my family history and of national history has come alive."

"As a family we have always been proud of Sir John but this confirms what a fantastic Admiral he was."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/4445783/HMS-Victory-and-cargo-of-gold-found-in-English-channel.html>

ECDIS Alert - 16 January 2009

The UK's sea safety body has warned that computerised navigation systems are steering large vessels into dangerous shallows because officers have insufficient training in their use.

The Department for Transport's Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) sounded the alert after over-reliance on an incorrectly used Electronic Chart Display Information System (ECDIS) resulted in the temporary grounding of the cargo ship *Performer* on Harborough Sand on its way to Grimsby in May 2008. A subsequent investigation by MAIB warned: "The use of ECDIS has steadily increased in recent years, and it is disturbing that the number of accidents resulting from the incorrect use of ECDIS and ECS [Electronic Chart Systems] through poor system knowledge has also risen.

(ECDIS allows not only route recommendations and position tracking but also provides automatic alarms to warn of dangers such as grounding or prohibited areas. www.ecdis.info/). "ECDIS will soon replace paper charts as the primary planning and monitoring media onboard most vessels, but the system can only realise its potential benefits to maritime safety if all mariners who are expected to use the equipment at sea are properly trained."

Many ships' officers, including the master of *Performer*, were only formally trained in the use of paper charts, although many have used electronic aids. An ECDIS installed in 2007 was *Performer's* primary means of navigation, but none of her bridge watchkeeping officers had been trained in its use.

MAIB cited a number of accidents in recent years in which misuse of ECDIS or ECS has been a contributing factor, including a cross-Channel ferry that headed for shallows in 2004 without its ECDIS issuing a warning because it had not been correctly set up. And in January last year a vessel hit a submerged wreck near Dover, severely damaging her propellers, because the wreck was not shown on the ECS display.

"The need for mandatory training in ECDIS is compelling," said the MAIB report.

Proposed international regulations require ECDIS in most large new passenger vessels and large cargo boats and tankers, and its retro-fit over time to existing vessels. Ship Talk Jan 19 2009 <http://www.shiptalk.com/newsletter.html>

GL Releases Guide for Ship Lay-Ups December 19 2008, Germanischer Lloyd Group

Germanischer Lloyd (GL) has developed a guide outlining major methods and procedures involved in ship lay-ups. The guide gives technical assistance to shipowners focussing on the maintenance of class, ship's safety as well as the maintenance of operability.

Deactivating vessels in an effort to save costs requires planning and investment in the process. It is imperative that ships are laid up technically correctly to reactivate the ship successfully when the economic conditions are more favourable. "With our guide we offer technical consultancy support for the shipowners. On request, Germanischer Lloyd will also carry out surveys serving purposes such as consultation and cooperation in applying the necessary measures", explains Carsten Beese, Head of Competence Centre Fleet Service Management at Germanischer Lloyd. "The most important question the owner has to clear is: How long will the vessel be laid up? Consequently, the owner has to take a decision on whether to opt for a hot or cold lay-up."

Shutting down a ship is a complex technical process. Additional to the technical challenges, the coordination with local and national authorities is important in the lay-up process. Lay-up conditions are determined by any local authority which has permitted vessels to be anchored off its coast. "The nature and extent of preservation required are governed by criteria such as duration of the lay-up time, place where the ship is laid up and corresponding climatic conditions, as well as general condition of the plant", Beese points out.

A hot lay-up is used to deactivate a vessel for a limited number of weeks. Reactivating a ship from a hot lay-up can be comparatively quick. The hot lay-up is achieved by having a small crew onboard the vessel in order to maintain full-time fire, leakage, moorings and security watch of the vessel with the minimum of machinery running. This ensures that the machinery, electrical and electronic systems are kept within tolerable temperature and humidity conditions by a crew that is familiar with the vessel. "Moisture is the main challenge with laying up a vessel with its complex software and circuitry", says Beese. "The guide recommends that air is kept de-humidified, as the consequences could be costly."

In addition, onboard inspections can be easily achieved as access is good, lighting is operational and it is relatively easy to find a berth for short term lay-up. There are scenarios for hot lay-up, where vessels are out of service for up to six months with reduced crewing levels but adhere to flag and class rules in order to be ready for quick reactivation.

For vessels that will be off the market for an extended period, the most likely scenario is a cold lay-up with a range of conditions placed on the vessel. "Effective reactivation from this type of deep lay-up can take anything from three weeks to three months, in the case of a five-year lay-up. Cold lay-ups can save more money but the vessel is out of service for at least a few months. Reactivation, in this case, could take weeks", explains Beese. "For that reason, many shipowners opt for a hot lay-up while they assess market conditions." [More at Germanischer Lloyd Group >>](http://www.worldmaritimeneews.com/article/Equipment/12613/gl-releases+guide+for+ship+layups+)
<http://www.worldmaritimeneews.com/article/Equipment/12613/gl-releases+guide+for+ship+layups+>

Story Poo Poohed. Just checking – but you're not eating at the moment are you? Well if you are, may we suggest you put the Custard Cream down for a second, as the next story involves something rather distasteful.

Actually we are underselling it, as it's distasteful, deadly and exploding! An explosion on the warship *HMS London* in 1665, which claimed 300 lives, might have resulted from a build-up of methane from rotting faeces in the bilges.

Richard Enser came to the conclusion that the "heads" might have been the real cause of the fire following a 20-year study of another 17th-century warship, *Lennox*, which was launched a decade after the *London* exploded.

He said the men on board, generally, tended to relieve themselves into the deepest recesses of the ship, resulting in a build-up of methane which in turn could have been ignited by a candle below decks.

The study was prompted by a rather unfortunate accident onboard the *Lennox*, an archetypal ship of the period. Among her records was an account of the ship's lieutenant falling down "the well" while the vessel was laid up. (The well was an opening running from the top deck beside the mast to the bottom of the hold, through which the crew could pump out the bilges). It appears that the crew had been using the well as a lavatory, rather than relieving themselves over the side, as they would have done at sea. When two sailors were sent to find the fallen lieutenant, according to the report, "they were rendered in a manner dead by the stench". In essence they were knocked unconscious by the build up of methane. This led the researchers to reassess the loss of the *London* and surmise that dirty bilges could have sent the whole thing sky high..."When you have that concentration of methane, all it would take is someone being sent down there with a lantern to set it off. The powder room is in the hold as well," Enser said.

So next time you visit the "smallest cabin on the ship", best keep those ports wide open!

<http://www.shiptalk.com/newsletter.html>

It looks like I have not left much room for comments. I stuck with items on piracy for quite a while because I'm sure it is a concern to all of us. My Cadet Journal reminds me of the time in 1956 when the Master stopped the ship to offer water to the crew of a becalmed dhow (I'm sure it was a dhow) somewhere in the Celebes Sea. Would he do it today?

Do you have any comments or anything to contribute? **May 10th 2009** is the cut-off for submissions to the next edition. Please send them to me at **13375 14A. Avenue, Surrey, B.C. V4A 7P9** or e-mail to **whitknit@shaw.ca**

Sincerely, **David Whitaker**