The Porthole

Volume 23 No. 09 **September 2023**

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

Branch Master's comments

Good day to all once more.

It looks like Spring weather has finally come to stay, and perhaps the more pleasant clime can persuade more of our members to turn out to our meetings .....?

On the subject of our monthly meetings, though we have postponed our September meeting for a week so that the Governor can fit her attendance with us into her busy schedule, we will still be holding our usual October meeting at the usual last Wednesday of the month. I urge everybody who is able to attend this meeting as we are getting very close to the end of the financial year, and we must have a serious discussion about the content of the Branch Court for the coming year. There will be several positions to fill, and so we are fairly desperate for nominations.

I have had very little contact with the Federal Court since our last on-line meeting, with the exception of a couple of e-mails; one regarding the presentation of plaques to honour both our life and honorary members, to which I have agreed, and the other to let us know that the updated version of the Company's Constitution is complete and been accepted by ASIC.

As you all know, the next SA Branch monthly meeting will be held on 4th of October at the slightly advanced time of 1145 at the Largs Pier Hotel, with guests to be seated by 1220. Her Excellency the Hon. Frances Adamson will be attending at 1230.

Until then,

Happy sailing.

Bob W (SABM)

The next Branch meeting will be held at
the Largs Pier Hotel, 198 The Esplanade, Largs Bay,
on Wednesday, 4th October, 2023, at 1145 for 1200, when there will be a short meeting.
As HE the Governor will be attending at our invitation, it is important that all attending the lunch should be in their places at 12.15, before her arrival at 12.30.
Please confirm your attendance at the lunch or register your apology
before 12:00 on Monday, 2nd October 2023
with Bob Westley (0427 644 947) or Ian Dickson (0418 807 788)

The Company of Master Mariners of Australia Ltd. is a Company established to promote and further the efficiency of the Sea Service generally, and uphold the Status, Dignity and Prestige of Master Mariners in particular.

In this issue

Tunnel vision

By Michael Grey

Holidays are nearly over and the thousands marooned overseas, because of the glitch on the UK air traffic control must surely have got back home, driving their friends crazy with lurid tales of their ordeals. It made a change from the travails caused by striking French air traffic controllers, but those affected would not have appreciated the difference. But with these regular and almost predictable disruptions to holiday plans, it always occurs to me that those operating alternative modes of transport, such as ferries, miss a trick.

If I was in charge of DFDS or Stena, I would, as the holiday period with its inevitable chaos approached, have crack teams of marketing executives standing by, ready to rush out the attractive alternatives to sleeping in an airport departure hall for several days or queuing for ten hours to be told your flight has been cancelled. At the height of the disruption, there was a rail travel expert putting the case for her favoured mode of transport so poetically, it almost brought tears to my eyes while I was washing up the dishes. All that was missing from her paean of love for the iron road, was its logical conclusion of the train arriving alongside the ferry berth, with a handsome ship alongside.

But all is not sweetness and light in the ferry business. We heard just today that the Shetland Island Council, so fed up at progress in the replacement of its inter-island ferry fleet, much of which is getting long in the tooth, is seriously contemplating connecting some of their islands with tunnels. You have to be slightly suspicious here, as it was only a month or so ago that news came from these northern islands that there was a serious movement to break away from the United Kingdom and join with their ancestral cousins in Norway. Norway is mad keen on tunnelling – they are even building one as a short cut for ships, and doubtless there will be enthusiastic Norwegian civil engineers booking hotel rooms in Lerwick this week.

It is almost pointless to repeat here a sort of litany in favour of ferries when compared to fixed links, because there is an unfortunate fascination about the latter, that leads the authorities into spending eyewatering sums on bridges and tunnels, where ferries would have been infinitely cheaper, quicker to deliver at (usually) the contracted price and of pleasingly variable capacity. If the demand outstrips supply, just build bigger or more of them. What could be simpler? But invariably the beguiling tales from the civil engineers, offering employment, ease of travel and the thrill of ordering up millions of tons of concrete, will persuade the hapless decision-makers.

It could also be something of a ploy to stir the Scottish government in Edinburgh into some positive movement on Shetland ferries, by reminding them of the need to consider the age and infirmity of these useful and important little ships. Mind you, one suspects that just mentioning the word “ferry” to a member of the SNP government will have them rushing to the door, such are the frightful associations it will bring to mind. The ill-fated Calmac duo at Fergusons shipyard on the Clyde seems destined to cause endless embarrassment, and firm delivery dates have once again receded. But this should not be considered typical in the ferry construction world.

But the Shetland need for newer and better ferries emphasises once again the requirement for all island communities to be properly served by decent shipping. The Scottish islands fleet ought to justify a regular rebuilding programme, properly funded, rather than a sort of “make and mend” policy of not doing anything until the situation is absolutely desperate.

It was some months back that a very sensible proposal, involving the Australian designer Stuart Ballantyne and various Scottish associates, was to organise the replacement of the considerable number of island ferries on a more systematic basis. It was suggested that the number of ships which were needed would more than justify a modern, local, construction facility, with ships built under cover, in series. Such a successful specialist operation would surely also be able to bid in confidence for export business. It was a well thought out scheme, but did not proceed any further, which might be thought typical these days. There is, regrettably in too many areas, a proliferation of tunnel vision.

Michael Grey is former editor of Lloyd’s List

Source: Maritime Advocate 838

—oo00oo--

Electric vehicle safety

There are growing concerns within the shipping community, including marine underwriters, about fires breaking out on car carriers and roros with the assertion that many of these fires are attributable to electric vehicles. In response, the International Union of Marine Insurance (IUMI) has researched these claims and published recommendations on the safe carriage of electric vehicles (EVs).

Lars Lange, IUMI Secretary General, explains: “Our paper draws on a body of scientific research which demonstrates that fires in battery EVs are not more dangerous than fires in conventional vehicles, nor are they more frequent. Although statistics continue to be gathered, they currently estimate that, in general, there are fewer fires from EVs compared with fires from conventional vehicles when driven over the same distance.”

Research also proves that there is only a minor difference between total energy released during an EV fire and one that is related to an internal combustion engine vehicle (ICEV). Once established, vehicle fires are largely (approx. 80%) fuelled by the car body and interior parts rather than the propulsion system. However, the potential for thermal runaway (when the battery suffers an unstable chemical reaction) exists for EVs whereas it is not a consideration for ICEVs. Thermal runaway makes fires hard to extinguish, hence mitigation measures such as boundary cooling must be employed rapidly. Moreover, the risk of re-ignition is higher for an extended period of time.

In the paper, IUMI makes important distinctions between roros and pure car and truck carriers (PCTCs) noting that many roros will stow cars on open decks where air flow makes fire-fighting more challenging. Ropax vessels (where passengers are also carried) present additional issues such as passengers wanting to charge onboard and the possibility of cars being loaded that are

older and potentially less safe. Conversely, PCTCs tend to carry vehicles tightly packed leaving little room for emergency access and facilitating the rapid spread of a fire.

In light of this, IUMI concludes:

- Early fire detection and verification/confirmation is critically important to reduce the time between detection and firefighting response to a minimum. Options, in addition to the conventional systems, could include thermal imaging cameras and AI powered systems.
- Drencher systems are effective for fire-fighting onboard roro and ropax vessels both for EV and ICEV fires and should be installed alongside video monitoring systems.
- CO2 extinguishing systems, if applied quickly, are successful in fighting PCTC fires and their capacity should be doubled. High-expansion foam fire extinguishing systems have also proved to be effective to prevent heat transfer from one vehicle to another.
- Early detection, confirmation and a short response time are crucial to fight a fire successfully. On board PCTCs, fixed systems should always be applied before manual fire-fighting is employed.
- A clear policy is required on which cargo is accepted or rejected. Vehicles should be screened with used vehicles being checked carefully for hidden damage.
- Charging onboard ropax vessels should be permitted subject to relevant risk assessments and control measures. Safety mechanisms built into EVs are usually activated during charging.

The IMO's Sub-Committee on Ship Systems and Equipment (SSE) will start work on the "Evaluation of adequacy of fire protection, detection and extinction arrangements in vehicle, special category and ro-ro spaces in order to reduce the fire risk of ships carrying new energy vehicles" beginning in March 2024.

Lars Lange concludes: "The regulatory process will be an opportunity to improve safety requirements making them fit for the new reality of large numbers of alternative fuel vehicles being carried on board vessels. IUMI will continue to contribute to this debate."

The full IUMI paper is available at https://iumi.com/opinions/position-papers

An IUMI podcast on this subject was recorded and features Martti Simojoki from IUMI's Loss Prevention Committee and Hendrike Kühl, IUMI's Policy Director. The podcast is available at https://iumi.com/news/podcast

Source: Maritime Advocate 838 —oo00oo--

Malaysia still stuck with charred remains of abandoned *Pablo* tanker

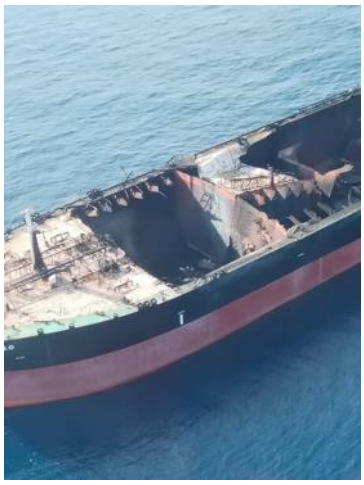
Sam Chambers September 6, 2023

It is now 128 days since the *Pablo* aframax exploded in Malaysian waters, killing three crew, with the stricken tanker remaining alone, untended, with the authorities at a loss with what to do with the wreck, a warning of the hugely damaging threat posed by the growth of the so-called dark fleet.

MarineTraffic data shows the ship remains at anchor off the coast of Malaysia today.

The 1997-built *Pablo*, a ship which has changed hands three times in the last couple of years, issued a distress call on May 1 after a blaze was detected. Malaysian authorities were able to rescue 25 of the 28 crew.

Without any confirmed insurance, and with owners impossible to contact, the Malaysian authorities have been left in a quandary regarding what to do with the wreck. Multiple shipping databases list the ship's insurance status as 'Withdrawn'.



Officials from the Malaysia Maritime Enforcement Agency have yet to reply to questions sent by *Splash*.

According to the ship's captain, Lepyoskin Oleksandr, a fire broke out on the upper deck. The vessel was empty of oil, but the buildup of gas was enough to blow up its entire deck. Bunker fuel subsequently washed up on nearby shorelines.

Since 2018, TankerTrackers.com evidenced this vintage ship transfer 16m barrels of Iranian oil on 29 occasions.

The exponential rise of the so-called dark fleet has been one of the big maritime trends in the 18 months since Russia invaded Ukraine, with a swathe of tonnage joining the likes of ships linked to Venezuela, North Korea and Iran in being excluded from the mainstream tanker trades.

In recent months, however, the acceleration in scale of the dark fleet has slowed. The latest data from TankerTrackers.com, one of the world's foremost observers of global tanker trades, shows there are 610 active sanction violators, made up of 116 handy tankers, 35 panamaxes, 143 aframaxes, 108 suezmaxes and 208 VLCCs.

"It seems to be holding steady here with no big surge," said Samir Madani, the founder of TankerTrackers.com, discussing the size of the dark fleet with *Splash* today.

"The fleet carrying Russian cargoes is still growing, albeit at a slower rate," commented Ioannis Papadimitriou, senior freight

analyst at Vortexa, a commodities tracking platform.

Sales registers also suggest a slowing appetite for vintage tonnage. Tanker sales were slow last month. Data from VesselsValue showed tanker sales dropped 58.3% between July and August with just 10 confirmed sales.

Values weakened across the tanker sector in August, in particular the aframax and LR2 sectors where 20-year-old, 105,000 dwt vessels fell by 3.65% from $30.71m to $29.59m, according to VesselsValue.

German insurer Allianz's annual ship casualty report, published in May, noted that vessels belonging to the dark fleet tend to be older ships, operating under flags of convenience with lower maintenance standards.

Reports indicate there were at least eight groundings, collisions or near misses involving tankers carrying sanctioned oil products in 2022 – the same number as in the previous three years, the Allianz report noted.

Source: Splash247 230906

—oo00oo--

Philippines Resupplies Troops In South China Sea Atoll

SOUTH CHINA SEA, Sept 9 2023 (Reuters)

The Philippines has completed a supply mission for troops stationed in a rusty World War Two-era ship, but not without a usual cat and mouse chase with Chinese vessels in the South China Sea.

A China Coast Guard ship is seen approaching a Philippines Coast Guard vessel escorting a resupply mission for Philippine troops stationed at a grounded warship, in the South China Sea, September 8, 2023. REUTERS/Jay Ereno

Reuters went onboard one of the Philippine Coast Guard's vessels escorting the mission to the Second Thomas Shoal on Friday and witnessed how the Chinese Coast Guard and maritime militia vessels tried to chase and block the Philippine contingent from reaching their destination.

China said the vessels entered the waters without its permission.

During the mission, two Chinese ships blocked two Philippine coast guard vessels. In another instance, a Philippine ship was surrounded by a Chinese coast guard vessel and three maritime militia vessels.

One of the Chinese ships was also seen heading dangerously close to the Philippine vessel which Reuters was onboard, while several Chinese militia vessels tried to block its path.

"We always encounter dangerous manoeuvres, shadowing activities, blocking not only from China coast guard vessels, but also from China militia vessels," Philippine Coast Guard commanding officer Emmanuel Dangate told reporters after the mission.

"It is imperative that the supplies be delivered to BRP Sierra Madre to support our soldiers stationed there."

The Philippines intentionally grounded the warship in 1999 as part of its sovereignty claim to the shoal, which is located inside its 200-mile exclusive economic zone.

China's coast guard said on Friday two Philippine supply boats and two coast guard ships had entered the waters adjacent to the shoal without permission from the Chinese government.

China claims that the Philippines is bringing construction materials that reinforces the rusty warship and violates China's sovereignty in the shoal. The Philippines says it is taking water and food to its troops.

A U.S. Navy plane was also spotted overhead during Friday's mission.

In a radio message to its Chinese counterpart, the Philippine coast guard warned that the Chinese actions would affect relations between the two countries.

The actions are "illegal, aggressive and destabilizing," it said.

It was the second successfully completed resupply mission since Aug. 5 when China's coast guard used a water cannon to deter the Philippine ships.

In 2016, the Philippines won an international arbitration award against China, with the tribunal invalidating Beijing's sweeping claim to sovereignty over most of the South China Sea. Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei, Taiwan and the Philippines have various claims to certain areas.

(Reporting by Jay Ereño, Writing by Neil Jerome Morales, editing by Clelia Oziel)

Source: gCaptain 230911

—oo00oo--

Hapag-Lloyd races ahead of the likes of Ferrari, Maersk and Shell in 2022 profitability survey

Sam Chambers September 7, 2023

Shell, BP, luxury brand Hermes and the prancing horse that is Ferrari have all been left in the tracks of a certain German liner in a new survey measuring the most successful European Union companies by profit per employee.

Remarkably, Hamburg's Hapag-Lloyd made more than £1m ($1.25m) per employee last year in

a new survey carried out by Search Intelligence in partnership with global fintech group Plus500. The survey looked at the top 100 companies in Europe by market cap, looking at profit in 2022 – a year of stellar, record financial figures for liner shipping – and dividing by the number of employees that work within the company.

Rolf Habben Jensen-led Hapag-Lloyd earned £1,058,898.94 per employee last year, which is almost triple that of energy giant Shell in second place.

Maersk made it into sixth spot in this unique European survey, scoring £233,163 per employee.

Sea-Intelligence experts have estimated the liner sector as a whole made earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT) of $208bn last year, outpacing the stars of the internet such as Facebook, Amazon, Netflix and Google who collectively are known by the acronym FANG.

Rank	Company	Market Cap (£)	Share Price	Profit (£)	Number of employees (2022)	Profit per employee (£)
1	Hapag-Lloyd	31,350,000,000	155.51	14,930,475,000	14,100	1,058,898.94
2	Shell	161,740,000,000	2376.00	31,393,526,000	86,000	365,041
3	BP	81,760,000,000	478.83	21,975,475,600	67,600	325,081
4	ENI	40,420,000,000	24.09	10,438,343,084	32,188	324,293
5	Rio Tinto	77,360,000,000	4611.40	16,095,288,806	53,726	299,581
6	Maersk	26,540,000,000	1563.84	24,248,848,000	104,000	233,162
7	Ferrari	42,573,000,000	244.81	1,035,870,384	4,556	227,364
8	Ørsted	175,207,000,000	20.20	1,735,036,050	8,027	216,150
9	Hermes	144,993,000,000	1606.95	3,892,355,292	19,686	197,722
10	British American Tobacco	56,470,000,000	2,519.80	8,257,906,440	50,937	162,120

Source: Search Intelligence and Plus500

The sensational results saw many carriers lavish previously unheard-of bonuses on their staff. In Taiwan, for instance, the three carriers – Evergreen, Yang Ming and Wan Hai – dished out bonuses that ranged from 12 to 60 months of average salaries.

While the peak of the market is now well passed, experts still believe container shipping will post solid results this year.

John McCown, whose Blue Alpha Capital quarterly liner profit reports have become essential reading during box shipping's record earnings run since 2020, has forecast liner shipping will make a combined net income this year of $43.2bn.

Hapag-Lloyd reported a net profit of $1.1bn for the second quarter, a 78% drop from a year ago. Operating profits slipped below $1bn for the first time since Q1 2020, at $888m.

"Weaker demand and lower freight rates are having a very noticeable impact on our earnings,"said Habben Jansen, CEO of Hapag-Lloyd, at the company's interims last month.

Source: Splash247 230907 —oo00oo--

First capesize non ice-class bulk carrier transit of the Northern Sea Route to China

Mike Schuler September 12, 2023

The bulk carrier *Gingo* has become the first capesize ship to sail the Northern Sea Route, according to Russian media reports. Separately, a non ice-strengthened tanker is currently conducting a transit—marking another first.

A photo of the capesize bulk carrier Gingo taken from an Atomflot icebreaker

The *Gingo* departed the Port of Murmansk on a 13-day eastbound voyage to China carrying 164,600 metric tons of iron ore concentrate, marking the largest single cargo to be transported via the NSR. The ship was assisted by two Atomflot icebreakers.

Ship traffic along the Russian-controlled Northern Sea Route is increasing due to warmer winters and longer navigation seasons, with Russia even looking to conduct year-round navigation through the route.

According to Russia's Minister for the Development of the Russian Far East and Arctic, freight traffic along the NSR has increased from 4 million tonnes in 2014 to 34 million tonnes in 2022, having become a major transport corridor for the export of oil, LNG, mineral fertilizers, metals and other products. Russia is looking to increase

the capacity of the NSR to up to 100 million tonnes by 2026 and 200 million tonnes by 2030.

In a separate but related event, a report today from High North News indicates that Russia has sent a non-ice class Aframax oil tanker, the *Leonid Loza*, on a voyage through the Northern Sea Route from Murmansk to Ningbo, China, as Russia seeks to boost crude oil shipments to China. The report said the voyage marks the first time a conventional oil tanker will use the Arctic route, calling it a "watershed" moment for shipping through the Arctic.

"Even in this day and age, a fully laden crude oil tanker is probably the last type of ship that should be sent through the NSR without any ice-strengthening," Aker Arctic wrote in a post published to "X". Aker Arctic is a leading builder of icebreakers.

Source: gCaptain 230913 —oo00oo--

Russian Drone Attack Hits Danube Port Infrastructure – Ukraine

September 3, 2023(Reuters)

Russian drones hit Danube River port infrastructure that is critical to Ukraine's grain exports, injuring at least two people in the attack on southern parts of the Odesa region on Sunday, Ukrainian officials said.

Grain warehouses heavily damaged by a Russian drone attack are seen at a compound of a port on the Danube, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Odesa region, Ukraine August 16, 2023. Press Service of the Operational Command South of the Ukrainian Armed Forces/ Handout via REUTERS

The Danube has become Ukraine's main route for exporting grain since July, when Russia quit a U.N. and Turkey-brokered deal that had given safe passage to Kyiv's exports of grains, oilseeds and vegetables oils via the Black Sea.

Sunday's attack took place the day before Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Turkish counterpart Tayyip Erdogan are due to hold talks in the Russian Black Sea resort of Sochi. Turkey has been pressing to revive the grain deal.

Ukraine's South Military Command said on social media that at least two civilians were injured in the early morning attack on what it called "civil infrastructure of the Danube."

The Ukrainian Air Force said air defence systems shot down 22 of the 25 Iranian-made Shahed drones launched by Russia.

Officials did not give details of which port facility was hit but some Ukrainian media reported blasts in the Reni port, which along with Izmail is one of Ukraine's two major ports on the Danube. The military said a fire that resulted from the attack at the facility was quickly extinguished.

The Russian Defence Ministry was quoted by Interfax as saying that a group of Russian drones successfully struck fuel depots at the Reni port used by the Ukrainian military.

Reuters could not independently verify the reports.

Reni and Izmail have been repeatedly attacked by Russian drones in recent weeks.

"Russian terrorists continue to attack port infrastructure in the hope of provoking a food crisis and famine in the world," the Ukrainian president's chief of staff Andriy Yermak wrote on Telegram.

He posted a photo of a firefighter directing water at the burning ruins of concrete structures.

The Black Sea grain deal, reached in July 2022, aimed to alleviate a global food crisis. Ukraine is a major producer of grains and oilseeds and the interruption to its exports after the outbreak of war in February last year pushed global food prices to record highs.

Russia has complained that under the deal its own food and fertilizer exports faced obstacles and that not enough Ukrainian grain was going to countries in need.

(Reporting by Lidia Kelly in Melbourne, Pavel Polityuk in Kyiv Editing by Edwina Gibbs, William Mallard and Frances Kerry)

Source: gCaptain 230904 —oo00oo--

Chevron LNG Workers go on Strike, Threatening Global Supply

Sept 8 2023 (Reuters)

Workers at Chevron's liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects in Australia went on strike on Friday after talks broke down without a deal, sending British and European gas prices surging.

The dispute is over wages and conditions at Chevron's Gorgon and Wheatstone operations, which account for over 5% of global supply.

Chevron had been negotiating with the workers for weeks alongside Australia's Woodside Energy, which had managed to avert the strikes last month after reaching a deal.

The workers are backed by the Offshore Alliance (OA) – which combines the Maritime Union of Australia and Australian Workers' Union.

Here is a sequence of events leading up to the strike action:

Date	Development
Aug. 9	Workers at Woodside's liquefied LNG facilities in Australia vote for industrial action.
Aug. 10	Chevron and Woodside say they are holding talks with union to avert any potential action by the workers.
Aug. 11	Australia's labour regulator, the Fair Work Commission, allows workers' union to hold a ballot of employees to decide if they wanted to make a decision on taking industrial action at Chevron's Gorgon and downstream Wheatstone LNG facilities.
Aug. 15	Negotiations between Chevron, Woodside Energy Group and Australian unions continue but a source with knowledge of the matter tells Reuters that the talks are unlikely to yield results for days.
Aug. 16	Woodside says "positive progress" was being made on talks with a union alliance on disputes over the wages of workers.
Aug. 16	The Offshore Alliance says during the negotiations Woodside was "well off the pace on key bargaining issues including job security and remuneration."
Aug. 18	Voting opens in Chevron's facilities to let workers decide if they want to strike due to disputes over wages and working conditions.
Aug. 20	Unions at Woodside's North West Shelf offshore gas platforms announce plans to strike as early as Sept. 2.
Aug. 22	Woodside CEO Meg O'Neil says the company has had "constructively addressed" several concerns of workers but said it also has a duty to shareholders to be able to run the business.
Aug. 23	Woodside and unions meet for another round of talks to avoid the strikes.
Aug. 23	Chevron's Australian unit says it would increase domestic gas production capacity at its Wheatstone facility.
Aug. 24	Woodside reaches an in-principle agreement with unions to avert strikes.
Aug. 24	Workers at Chevron's Gorgon and Wheatstone downstream facilities vote to allow unions to call for a strike if necessary.
Aug. 25	Unions at Chevron's LNG facilities in Australia warn that work stoppages could cost the U.S. energy major billions in exports if workers' demands on wages and conditions were not met.
Aug. 28	Workers at Chevron's offshore Wheatstone facility grant unions the power to call strikes on their behalf.
Aug. 28	Unions representing workers at Chevron's two major Australian LNG complexes say that they will take industrial action from Sept. 7.
Aug. 29	Chevron's workers release details of industrial action including potential work stoppages of up to 10 hours.
Sept. 1	Chevron workers reject a company pay and conditions offer.
Sept. 1	The offshore alliance says no meetings have been scheduled between unions and Chevron.
Sept. 4	Mediation talks to avert strikes at Chevron's LNG facilities in Australia begin once again.
Sept. 5	Chevron workers announce plans for total strikes from Sept. 14 if their demands were not met.
Sept. 5	Some employees of Chevron's Wheatstone LNG facility in Australia offer to work during industrial action in a bid to avert domestic supply disruptions, the Offshore alliance says.
Sept. 6	Workers at Chevron's LNG facilities agree to pause planned strike action for one day until Sept. 8.
Sept. 7	Chevron's LNG workers agree to delay the strike until 1 p.m. local time in Perth (0500 GMT) on Sept. 8 from the earlier scheduled start at 6 a.m. in Perth.
Sept. 8	Workers at Chevron's LNG project begin strike as talks between the company and the unions fail to yield any results.

(Reporting by Sourasis Bose in Bengaluru; Editing by Maju Samuel)

Source: gCaptain 230908 —oo00oo--

Crowley to develop nuclear power ship concept

Mike Schuler September 20, 2023

Crowley has announced a memorandum of understanding with Virginia-based nuclear power company BWX Technologies to develop a ship concept that includes a microreactor for generating zero-carbon emission nuclear power for shoreside applications.

Illustration courtesy Crowley

The ship would supply small-scale nuclear energy to shoreside locations, providing power to military bases, backup utility grids, and other situations where traditional electricity sources are not feasible.

The vessel concept combines Crowley's logistics and marine capabilities with BWXT's nuclear expertise, aiming to support sustainable energy sources and the U.S. Department of Energy's nuclear energy technology goals. The MOU will allow both companies to jointly pursue and develop opportunities relative to the design, engineering and development of new shallow-draft hull ships.

Maritime Industry Explores Nuclear Power for Ships as Technology Opens up

"Our cooperation with BWXT will move Crowley for the first time into the nuclear energy sector, a key part of our commitment to sustainable, alternative energy sources. This concept supports the U.S. Department of Energy's goal of maintaining U.S. leadership in nuclear energy technology as well as many the U.S. Department of Defense's strategic goals for operational energy," said Shiju Zacharia, senior vice president and general manager, Crowley Government Solutions.

The concept vessel, measuring 378 feet, aims to provide high levels of safety and security with in-house vessel design and nuclear components, fuel, and services. The ship will combine traditional propulsion with a modular reactor that can be activated and deactivated as needed. It can deliver power to shore using buoyed power delivery cables and has shallow draft hulls for manoeuvrability in military activities or during disasters when harbor access is limited.

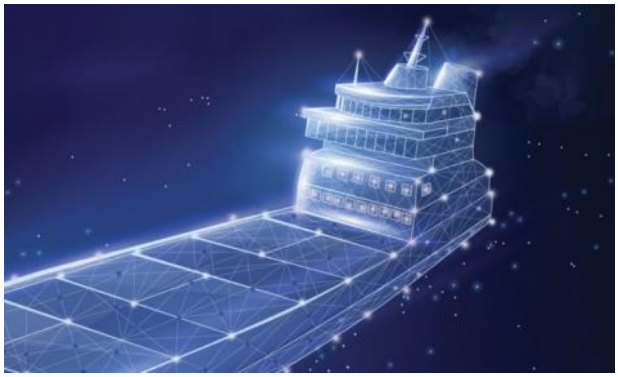
"We are excited to work alongside Crowley to leverage our ongoing reactor development and demonstration programs, advancing nuclear technology into new and novel markets to deliver zero carbon emissions energy generation to strategic locations," said Joe Miller, president of BWXT Advanced Technologies LLC.

Source: gCaptain 230922 —oo00oo--

What life will be like onboard at the start of the next decade

Splash September 21, 2023

Nick Chubb, founder of UK maritime tech consultancy Thetius, gets creative, giving readers a guided tour of a methanol-powered ship traversing the world's oceans in late 2030.



The *MT Zero* is a dual-fuel methanol carrier. It can carry 200,000 cu m of methanol and trades between the Gulf of Mexico and the European Union. The words 'Powered by Methanol' are plastered across the side of the vessel and the owners talk proudly of the ship's green credentials. Unfortunately, in reality, it hasn't run off methanol since sea trials.

The global methanol shortage has been a good thing for the fleet. Any ship that can carry methanol is constantly in demand, and the charter rates are sky-high. But it's such a precious commodity that it can never be used as a ship's fuel.

Since methanol became the primary feedstock for sustainable jet fuel the price has skyrocketed. While it's highly profitable to carry methanol, it's incredibly expensive to burn it. At the same time, as the world has moved further away from fossil fuels, heavy fuel oil has become the commodity that no one wants.

Even with the various carbon taxes in place around the world, it has so few industrial uses that shipping companies are practically being paid to burn it.

This issue has become so pervasive that even the International Maritime Organization (IMO) is involved. At MEPC 94 earlier this year, the committee had to admit that the industry has missed every target set in every greenhouse gas strategy to date. We all expected the EU ETS to kick the IMO into action, but the international market-based measures that were promised in previous iterations of the GHG strategy still haven't materialised.

It has become such a big issue that the EU is responding by exploring a heavy fuel oil ban from 2035. Until that happens, every newbuild ship rolls out of the yard with a 'net-zero ready' certification and then happily continues to burn cheap and dirty heavy fuel oil.

Apart from the 'Powered by Methanol' credentials, the only other major advance in ship design is the explosion in wind power.

Most newbuild deep-sea ships today have some kind of sail. With rotors, kites and wings filling the skies, the modern fleet is far more interesting to look at than it used to be.

On the bridge, the latest autonomy technology is in use. The ship is not just capable of running with an unmanned machinery space but an unmanned bridge. It doesn't make any difference to the number of crew carried, but it allows those who are still onboard to get better rest.

The IMO's 2026 Autonomy Framework requires operators to get an exemption from both flag and class for unmanned bridge operations. The exemption takes months to be approved and only applies to a single voyage corridor. Each exemption allows the crew to pass navigation and watch keeping duties to an approved shore control centre during the open sea passage. Instead of watchkeeping, the crew onboard can rest or take on maintenance tasks, but they need to be ready to step in at any time in case of traffic or if the ship needs to deviate from its approved corridor.

All of this is made possible by the mandatory rollout of the Voyage Data Exchange System (VDES). VDES has replaced AIS for all newbuild vessels. Anyone with a VDES receiver can see the ship's intended route information, plus nearby ships receive notification if the ship intends to deviate for collision avoidance.

VDES combined with the rollout of LEO networks have made communication between ships and with shore teams much easier. The team onboard can dial into daily stand ups with the shore-based team to discuss live issues and there is a constant channel of communication between the bridge and the shore control centre.

Just because the crew onboard aren't watch keeling doesn't mean they aren't working hard. *MT Zero* is a modular ship. This design philosophy was popularised in the late '20s. It makes it possible to swap out the fuel, engine, propulsion, cargo pumps, and navigation systems with new equipment in a standard drydock period. The aim of this is to futureproof the vessel against emerging technologies or alternative fuels becoming economically viable or mandatory.

Modular ships are more expensive to build, but the expectation is that the hull and superstructure will last for a century and the vessel will go through four to five modular upgrades in its lifetime. This reduces the lifetime carbon footprint of the ship, but it means the crew have to be much more proactive on maintenance.

The good news is there is plenty of technology available to help them. Though high bandwidth connectivity between ship and shore has been pervasive for some time, wireless connectivity between compartments onboard the ship has only recently become widely available. Not having to run cables for every device means it's now possible to connect thousands of sensors into one system for very little investment.

Data gathered by these sensors feeds an AI-driven maintenance system that prioritises jobs for the crew. For visual inspections and simple repair jobs they have access to a range of drones that are capable of either flying into compartments or crawling across the hull. For more complex or specialist jobs the onboard 3D printer can create a range of tools, patches, and parts.

Despite the advanced technology onboard, life for a seafarer hasn't changed much. The knowledge and training requirements to become a master mariner make no provision for autonomy, VDES, or advanced cyber security.

Instead, they still have to learn signal flags and morse code. The UKHO withdrew paper charts a few years ago, but many maritime colleges are still required to teach paper navigation. The basic requirements to sail on a dual fuel ship were bolted onto the last STCW update, but most individuals have very little practical experience of safely bunkering new fuels.

Maybe things will improve in 2040 when we next have an update to the convention? For now, though, new technology will march forward, and the world's seafarers will continue to be certified to a standard that was useful decades ago. I guess some things don't change.

This article is one of many in the recently published Ship Concept 2030 magazine, a publication designed to give readers a realistic idea of what newbuilds will look like in seven years' time.

Source: Splash247 230922 —oo00oo--

Laws

The Law of Volunteering - If you dance with a grizzly bear, you had better let him lead.
The Law of Avoiding Oversell - When putting cheese in a mouse trap, always leave room for the mouse.
The Law of Reality - Never get into fights with ugly people, they have nothing to lose.
The Law of Self Sacrifice - When you starve with a tiger, the tiger starves last.
The Law of Motivation - Creativity is great, but plagiarism is faster.
Boob's Law - You always find something in the last place you look.
Weiler's Law - Nothing is impossible for the man who doesn't have to do it himself.
Law of Volunteer Labour - People are always available for work in the past tense.
Conway's Law - In any organisation there is one person who knows what is going on. That person must be fired.
Law of Cybernetic Entomology - There is always one more bug.
Heller's Law - The first myth of management is that it exists.
Osborne's Law - Variables won't; constants aren't.

(With thanks to Paul Dixon)

Source: Maritime Advocate 838 —oo00oo--

Not so frozen north

By Michael Grey

There were some exciting times in the far north this month. For a start, the passengers aboard the small expedition cruise ship *Ocean Explorer*, getting up close and personal to glaciers on the coast of north-east Greenland, found that they were unable to go anywhere after their ship ran aground in the spectacular Alpefjord. There they remained for five days, with the nearest Danish patrol ship scrambled from 1200 miles away, although they would have been comforted by the fact that they were in sheltered waters, if anywhere in that latitude can be so described. In the event, the weather stayed kindly and as if from nowhere, the research ship *Tarajoq* popped up to help haul the ship off the shelf.

It was a reminder that in these remote places, you cannot completely guarantee the depth of water or the accuracy of the charts, and that if you insist on going into such latitudes, you will be largely on your own, far from any meaningful assistance. A few years ago, I was present at a fascinating presentation by the Norwegian emergency services, which explained the detailed planning they have been required to undertake with the increased numbers of big cruise ships seeking spectacular sights in potentially dangerous places.

The scenario involved the rescue of several hundred people, of the demographic one expects, from an abandoned vessel in conditions of heavy ice and bad weather and it all seemed very scary, involving long distance flying, landing on ice and other hair-raising operations. One just felt relieved that the Norwegians were on the case and hoped that they would not have to undertake the exercise for real, not least because of the sheer numbers aboard some of the larger ships. *Ocean Explorer*, aground off Greenland, was a mere minnow.

While this was happening, on the Northern Sea Route above Russia, the capesized *Gingo*, fully laden with 164,600 tonnes of ore concentrate, was making a 13 day passage between Murmansk and China, assisted by a couple of nuclear icebreakers. A triumphant photograph of the ship, with the largest cargo ever to have been transported on the NSR was taken by one of the icebreakers, apparently illustrating the ease of such an operation for a ship that was not ice strengthened. Ploughing through the murk, it showed a worrying amount of floating ice, presumably cleared by her atomic friends.

It was also revealed that during this season, at least two other large tankers had made the voyage through the Barents, Kara and Laptev seas, *en route* to Chinese ports. Neither was apparently ice-strengthened although it might be assumed that the crude cargo would have the protection of double hulls. It was not revealed whether the bulk carrier would have had more than a single skin on the load waterline.

We are being asked to accept that this is now perfectly routine, with the melting ice from climate change making the NSR a perfectly viable alternative for commercial all-year-round navigation. The Russian authorities, who seem in their announcements to be oblivious about the political horrors of the war and sanctions, suggest that the sea route could be carrying up to 200m tonnes by the end of the decade and that transits by non-ice strengthened ships would be routine in the summer.

You have to hope that they know what they are doing. You only have to read accounts of navigation in these remote and poorly charted areas, to realise that the weather and indeed the climate, are exceedingly fickle. It was only in 1932 that a Soviet icebreaker succeeded in completing the passage and just a year later, a small fleet of ships which set out from Murmansk for Vladivostok, to take advantage of the good ice conditions in August, was crushed by the returning ice, just short of the Bering Strait, and destroyed.

The ice, from all accounts, comes and goes in an unpredictable fashion, hugely prone to weather and wind changes, with the seasons lengthened and shortened without much notice. And despite all the technology, forecasting and the presence of the world's most powerful icebreakers, you have to be worried that the Russian need to get their oil to market, in the teeth of sanctions, will encourage them to take risks with the environment that should not be taken. It is not that many years ago that they thought it perfectly acceptable conduct to abandon their time-expired nuclear submarines in the Kola Inlet, to rot among their leaking radiation.

It does not take much to punch a hole in a ship that was never designed for high latitudes and low temperatures. You should not count on assurances about "climate change" and its suggestions that these waters are suddenly, and permanently, safer.

Michael Grey is former editor of Lloyd's List.

Source: Maritime Advocate 839

—oo00oo--