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Issue No 88 November/December 2020

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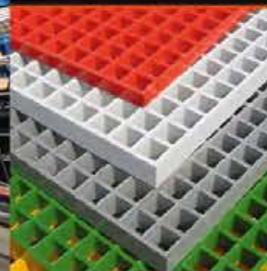
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# 26

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### Cyprus The beating heart of shipping



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### ISSUE 88 NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2020

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE WORLD'S SHIP OWNERS & SHIP MANAGERS



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## SMI Next issue teaser

Key maritime clusters will come together in an SMI Digital Debate to discuss the shipping industry's latest hot topics, while the problems posed by asbestos onboard ships will also be the focus of a special SMI webinar 'Asbestos – The Truth'. PLUS regional reports on Dubai and London and the UK, looking forward to London International Shipping Week 2021, in a post-COVID and post-Brexit environment.

If you have any news or views you would like to share on these or our regular features, please contact Editor Samantha Giltrow at [sgiltrow@elabor8.co.uk](mailto:sgiltrow@elabor8.co.uk)

For advertising/sponsorship enquiries please contact: Sales Director Karen Martin at [kmartin@elabor8.co.uk](mailto:kmartin@elabor8.co.uk). You can also keep abreast of news by subscribing to our daily newsletter at [shipmanagementinternational.com](http://shipmanagementinternational.com)

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**Samantha Giltrow**  
Editor, Ship Management International

**A**s another year comes to an end, I think it's fair to say that none of us could have predicted how 2020 would have turned out.

As I write this, thousands of seafarers are away from loved ones at a time of year when they should be together, with some even destined for a second festive period at sea because of the pandemic.

Yet, what 2020 has shown us is the true resilience of the industry and the opportunities that lie ahead once we are out on 'the other side'.

A shining example of this is the maritime cluster in Cyprus. In our report (starting on page 26) we look at how it has dealt with the pandemic and how the challenges of this year have propelled it forward in its aspirations for Blue Growth, not least on the technology side, a sector which has become so vital to all of us this year.

Yes, there have sadly been casualties of these difficult and challenging times, but there is no doubt that chinks of optimism are now being seen, with the cruise sector coming back, albeit at a slow pace, and the push for decarbonisation powering on at speed. Indeed the UK Chamber of Shipping has set 'Creating Pathways to 2030' as its theme for its inaugural virtual UK Shipping Conference in February, which you can read about in our interview with CEO Bob Sanguinetti on page 20.

We also have London International Shipping Week to look forward to in September when the UK will be able to showcase London and its other maritime clusters in a post-Brexit environment, along with providing the platform for networking and a packed programme of events, not least the Headline Conference at the IMO.

SMI too will also continue providing the industry with insight and will include some exciting new regular features such as Maritime Safety, which has remained vital during these difficult times.

So, while we will be glad to see the back of 2020, we can at least try and look forward to brighter days ahead in 2021. A big thank you to all our readers and advertisers who have supported us through this year.

I wish you all a happy, and healthy, new year.

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## London will not become Singapore on Thames, Brexit webinar hears



**T**he thorny issue of Brexit was tackled in a recent webinar with Bob Sanguinetti, CEO, UK Chamber of Shipping stating that London would not become 'Singapore on Thames'.

The event – 'Who's Afraid of Brexit?', hosted by Mare Forum, was moderated by Leon Kanters, Partner at KPMG Meijberg & Co, who said that people were afraid of what will happen at the end of the transition period on 31st December.

He said two main topics were holding up the trade agreement talks including fisheries – access to British waters and fishing rights – and state aid, where the EU is seeking to write commitments on limiting subsidies into the legal text of the trade agreement.

"We don't want to be in a situation where we have Singapore on the Thames," he told the webinar.

However, panellist Mr Sanguinetti said he did not see London becoming this, despite there being many challenges ahead.

"My personal view is that there is likely to be some assemblance of a level playing field as we go into 2021," he said.

He added that London was recognised as a premier centre of maritime services and he did not see that changing any time soon, and he also emphasised the

UK's strong relationship with the EU saying nothing would change dramatically.

The UK's Maritime 2050 Strategy, he said, took Brexit into account and one of its themes was on improving the attraction of the UK to ship owners. "Ship owners are waiting to see what the new environment looks like, but I don't see a seismic shift."

This view was echoed by Karin Orsel, CEO MF Shipping Group and Co-Chair Dutch Ship Owners Association, who said ship owners make a choice based on the total service package, and George Gourdomichalis, President and Managing Director of Phoenix Shipping & Trading, who said London would remain as "a significant shipping centre".

"London is a traditional centre," he said. "The trade will not stop and it will continue to be there. Shipping is a global business and will continue to be a global business."

However, there were concerns from Ernst-Jan Bioch, Senior Tax Manager at KPMG Meijberg & Co, over possible changes to the UK's tonnage tax system while Connie Roozen, Chairman, Rotterdam Maritime Services Community and Tax Partner at C&B More said she was afraid of the challenges Brexit would present and posed the question of whether EU hubs would be able to compete with London on the costs of financial services. ●

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## SAFETY | COMPLIANCE | EFFICIENCY



# Columbia chief is new InterManager President

President and CEO of Columbia Shipmanagement, Mark O’Neil, has been announced as the new President of InterManager, the international trade association for ship and crew manager, succeeding Bjørn Jebsen, who has been its President since 2016.

The news comes following InterManager’s Annual General Meeting, where its members are encouraged to vote in ballot format for the Association’s next President.

Mr O’Neil is a prominent figure within the maritime industry. Having earned a Law Degree at Southampton University and subsequent First Class degree from Guildford Law School, he has worked for 20 years as a maritime lawyer in London with leading international law firms: he assumed his role as Columbia Shipmanagement CEO at the beginning of 2017.

Speaking of the appointment, InterManager’s Secretary-General, Capt Kuba Szymanski said: “I am delighted to see Mark O’Neil elected as the President of InterManager.

“Mark brings with him a wealth of ship management experience. He has clearly laid out his plans for InterManager, which have the full support of our Executive Committee. I am looking forward to working with him and wish him all the best.”

As part of his manifesto for President of InterManager, Mr O’Neil is keen on creating a single industry standard through his ONE Approach, which centres around the belief of the strength of the collective voice when the maritime industry speaks to governmental and international institutions about maritime issues.

He said: “The ONE Approach will call for a far greater interaction between InterManager and international institutions, governments affecting the maritime sector, operators, managers, and crew, with InterManager assuming the role of the voice for shipping.”

His election also leads to enhancing the recognition of the value of membership (and increasing membership) of InterManager and ensuring the active nature of such membership: he also hopes to lead the Association’s PR efforts to recognise the importance and value of quality third party management, and introduce an industry standard for quality ship management.

“I would like to thank Bjørn for a fruitful four years, which saw our Association go from strength to



strength,” said Capt Szymanski. “During his tenure, InterManager continued to play a very important role in the International Maritime Organization representing ship and crew managers.

“We have delivered the iconic Martha Project, a study into seafarer fatigue in January 2017, and we expanded our Adopt a Ship project from its original Cyprus location to cover the Philippines, India, and Poland.

“In 2018, our Enclosed Space Death project resulted in the participation of 5,000 seafarers, which led to InterManager being appointed Chairmanship of the Enclosed Space subcommittee in HEIG (Human Element Industry Group).

“More recently in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we initiated the idea of pooling resources for crew changes, and the industry well received our Maritime Champions Club, where ship management companies shared their COVID crew changes.

“I wish Bjørn every success in his future endeavours.” ●

## Calls for seafarers to be priority for COVID-19 vaccines



Seafarers should be a priority in COVID-19 vaccination programmes, INTERCARGO has said, following the worldwide news that vaccines for COVID-19 are now a reality.

“As key workers, seafarers should be included in the early stages of a nation’s vaccination programme,” said Dimitris Fafalios, Chairman of the organisation representing the world’s quality dry bulk ship owners.

“As a key element in the drive to reboot the world’s economy, seafarers should receive vaccinations quickly and efficiently. We welcome new initiatives from national authorities and industry bodies to facilitate this and urge that these new initiatives be brought forward and trialled as a matter of urgency, so that seafarers can once again travel safely between their home and their ships and undertake port operations without the fear of infection.”

INTERCARGO Vice-Chairman Captain Jay K. Pillai said: “It is of grave concern that at least 3% of all

seafarers currently onboard ships will be spending a second Christmas at sea, away from their families and friends, and an estimated 20% of all seafarers on board are still not relieved upon completion of their regular contracts, despite flights becoming available. It is now time for the World Health Organization to work in the direction of a worldwide acceptable COVID vaccination certificate, both on paper and electronically, and for the unique situation our seafarers face to be recognised.”

INTERCARGO has actively supported industry initiatives, including the recent IMO Maritime Safety Committee industry-developed protocols, which set out general measures and procedures designed to ensure crew changes and travel can take place safely during the pandemic. It also welcomed the recent UN Resolution on Crew Change, which urges Member States to designate seafarers and other marine personnel as key workers. ●



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# Cyber risk on managed ships - IMO 2021 – be prepared!



By Robert Hodge, Director, ITIC

Earlier this year we wrote an article for *Ship Management International* on the low sulphur rules with the introduction of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) 2020. Now ship managers have yet another date to focus their attention on which is IMO 2021, cyber risk management.

Technologies are essential to the operation and management of a ship, there are numerous systems onboard and ashore that are critical to its safety and security. The IMO has recognised these technologies as being vulnerable to cyber risks and threats. Rather embarrassingly in October 2020 the IMO itself suffered what it called “a sophisticated cyberattack against the organisation’s IT systems that overcame robust security measures” which took down their website and web-based services. Nonetheless they require, no later than a ship’s first annual Document of Compliance (DOC) audit after 1st January 2021, that every Safety Management System (SMS) must include cyber risk management.

The DOC holder is the party who is ultimately responsible for ensuring the management of the cyber risks. As most ship managers are the DOC holder, they must carry out this role. One description of cyber risk management used by the IMO sees it as “the process of identifying, analysing, assessing, and communicating a cyber-related risk and accepting, avoiding, transferring, or mitigating it to an acceptable level, considering costs and benefits of actions taken to stakeholders”. So, it is no small task! Yet non-compliance may lead to the detainment of the ship.

The manager will have to carry out assessments to identify the risks on each vessel. There is no “one size fits all” assessment, as each vessel will have different systems and technology onboard. If an assessment is not carried out and a cyber-loss arises, the manager could be left exposed to a claim from the owner.

It is not just onboard risks that need to be assessed. The interface between the ship and shore is vital as many systems are linked. It is necessary, therefore, that the manager considers the cyber risks in their office, systems and employees, as this could be the route a hacker uses to penetrate the onboard systems. You must also think about how secure your physical office space is as well. Cyber criminals have been known to break into buildings to access IT systems from the “inside”.

The manager should consider the cyber security arrangements of third parties appointed on behalf of the owner. It could be the ship agent who is employed to carry out the complex tasks of coordinating information with various parties at the port. The service providers and suppliers of products and equipment to the vessel should also be evaluated. It is clearly not possible to carry out detailed assessments on each, but the manager could ask to see if the ship agent has, for example, the FONASBA quality standard or a ship supplier has the Lloyd’s Register cyber security certification ISO 27032.

ITIC insures ship managers on terms no more onerous than BIMCO Shipman 2009. As part of the effort to address cyber security risks, BIMCO has developed the Cyber Security Clause 2019 to be used in their agreements. This clause is intended to further raise awareness of the risk and to ensure there is a mechanism to have in place procedures and systems to minimise it. Managers may wish to consider including such a clause in their management agreement.

In the article on IMO 2020, we advised that it is critical you have in place the plans, processes and documentation in the event the owner seeks to recover a loss from you. The exact same advice is again relevant for the upcoming IMO 2021 - you must be prepared. ●



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## MSC approves protocols to help stranded seafarers

An important set of protocols to help ensure safe crew changes and to emphasise the need for Governments to designate seafarers as key workers has been approved by the International Maritime Organization's Maritime Safety Committee.

Around 400,000 seafarers are still said to be stranded onboard vessels amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, with many having seen their contracts extended months beyond the maximum duration of service periods accepted under international treaties, while many crew members are also still waiting to join ships.

The Committee, meeting virtually for its 102nd session last month, approved an MSC circular recognising the industry-developed protocols, which also emphasise the need for Governments to designate seafarers as key workers, providing an essential service. The protocols (previously issued via circular letter) include practical steps for joining and leaving ships, including the need for compliance and strict adherence with COVID-19 testing and quarantine requirements, and measures to prevent infection onboard ships. They

are a living document which will be updated in line with developments concerning the pandemic.

The move to issue the crew change protocols via an official IMO circular (MSC.1/Circ.1636) was one of a number of actions taken by the Committee to support efforts by UN agencies, the maritime industry and governments to address the crew change crisis.

Up-to-date information on national focal points and on ports which facilitate crew changes will be made available on a new module in IMO's Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS), following the agreement of the Committee.

The MSC agreed that IMO, working with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), develop a universal non-text logo or symbol that enables seafarers to identify, and consequently access, dedicated resources and processes on ship, in port and in transit to/from ships.

The Maritime Safety Committee also progressed its work on a wide range of important technical matters, including adoption of amendments and guidelines. ●



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# IMO to stage LISW21 Headline Conference



The headquarters of the International Maritime Organization – the heart of global maritime regulation – will play host to the Headline Conference of London International Shipping Week next year.

Taking place on Wednesday 15th September, the LISW21 Conference will feature a unique blend of in-person and online attendance, thereby attracting up to double the usual number of delegates who will come together to debate the most important issues facing the world's shipping industry.

Drawing on the week's tagline of 'Propelling World Trade' and its overarching theme of "Driving growth in a disrupted world", the conference will explore the fundamental role that the ESG agenda has in shaping the future of the global shipping industry.

Jos Standerwick, CEO of Maritime London and Chairman of the LISW21 Conference Working Group, said: "We thank the IMO for giving us the exciting opportunity to bring this important international forum to the heart of maritime legislation. This partnership with the IMO underlines the important and strategic role London plays within the international maritime community.

"LISW21 is already shaping up to become the most important event of 2021, giving ship owners and operators, and all those involved in the global maritime services sector, the opportunity to talk about how our industry has responded during the pandemic and to discuss how shipping navigates its way forward in terms of the environment, social and governance."

LISW Steering Group Chairman John Hulmes, said: Although the Grosvenor House Hotel has been a wonderful host for the Headline Conference at previous LISWs, the opportunity to work with the IMO and use their wonderful facilities helps cement the international reach and reputation of LISW."

The IMO is a specialised agency of the United Nations which is responsible for measures to improve the safety and security of international shipping and to prevent pollution from ships. Through its regulatory framework, IMO facilitates a global maritime transportation system that connects markets and moves 80% of world trade. It is also the only UN organisation headquartered in the UK. Its purpose-built building on London's Albert Embankment overlooks the River Thames and was formally opened by HM Queen Elizabeth II in 1983.



LISW21 will see a switch from the traditional Thursday event to Wednesday, thus enabling delegates to continue their discussions and networking after the conference closes. The iconic LISW Gala Dinner will go ahead on the Thursday evening as usual.

With key speakers already being lined up, the LISW21 Headline Conference will feature Government Ministers, shipping industry experts and leaders of influential maritime companies. The maritime sector has a crucial role to play in realising the UN's 2030 agenda for sustainable development since many of its elements cannot be achieved without a sustainable transport sector supporting world trade and facilitating the global economy. The event also marks the midpoint of the IMO's own 2030 Sustainable Development goals and precedes the important COP26 discussions in Glasgow in November.

LISW21 is held in partnership with the UK Department for Transport, Maritime UK and maritime event specialist Shipping Innovation, together with other UK Government departments, British Ports Association, Baltic Exchange, Maritime London, The Society of Maritime Industries, UK Chamber of Shipping and the UK Major Ports Group.

LISW21 will enable London and the UK to showcase its central role at the heart of global trade. Central to discussions during the Headline Conference will be "Maritime 2050: Navigating the Future" which is the UK Government's landmark strategy setting out its vision and ambitions for the future of the British maritime sector. ●

For further information and updates as plans develop please visit the LISW21 website:

<https://londoninternationalshippingweek.com/>

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# How I Work

SMI talks to industry leaders and asks the question

## ***How do you keep up with the rigours of the shipping industry?***



**Bob Sanguinetti**  
CEO of UK Chamber of Shipping

It's hard to believe that Bob Sanguinetti has been heading the UK Chamber of Shipping for two and a half years now, and with Brexit, the future of the UK's maritime sector and, more recently, the coronavirus pandemic, the post has kept him extremely busy.

"The first issue I faced when I arrived was obviously Brexit, and we were two years into the process, and two years on we are still in the process," said Mr Sanguinetti.

"We have been very consistent with our policies which are apolitical and all along we have campaigned for a deal which preserves as much of the free-flowing trade between the UK and the EU as possible."

The Brexit transition period is due to end on 31st December, with or without a deal.

"Clearly we don't know what it will look like at the end of the year but we have asked for a deal whereby we retain access to talent so we can still recruit the best people whether it's seafarers or non-seagoing jobs in shipping and the wider maritime sector," he said. "We also continue to work closely with Government to see how, as we unshackle ourselves from some of the EU bureaucracy, we can develop policies that make the UK a more attractive place to do shipping-related business."

Mr Sanguinetti believes that whatever happens come 1st January 2021, freight will continue to flow between the UK and the EU to the same extent that it does today but perhaps with slight changes to trade routes depending on how freight companies and logistics providers decide to deal with the friction that it brings.

"That is a point that I think is lost of many people, that whether we have a deal or not, there will be more friction at the borders as a result of us leaving the EU," he said. "We will no longer be in a Customs union and we will no longer be in the Single Market and therefore there will be checks and controls regardless of whether we've got tariffs to pay or not."

The UK Chamber's view is that as much of that process as possible should be done away from the ports and ships to minimise the friction and the delays at the point of entry into the UK or going into the EU.

However, Mr Sanguinetti is looking forward to the opportunities it will also open up.

"As we strike trade deals with other countries, that is likely to lead to an increase in trade," he said. "In terms of shipping-related business in the UK, the UK is an island nation and has been a trading and maritime nation for centuries – that is not going to change. In terms of expertise, we've got some of the leading shipmanagement companies, leading maritime law firms, P&I clubs and international institutions like the IMO and the International Chamber of Shipping."

Working with Government, the UK Chamber has been looking at how it can make the tonnage tax more attractive and Mr Sanguinetti firmly believes that if the UK can attract the ship owners, they in turn will attract managers, operators and charterers and then "we will see the UK reassert itself as a key maritime hub on the global stage".

To showcase what the UK has to offer, the UK Chamber is hosting its inaugural virtual UK Shipping Conference on 11th February 2021 which, due to COVID, is replacing the Annual Dinner. It is also something the Chamber has wanted to do for some time.

The Conference, which has title 'Creating Pathways to 2030' will see executives from across the shipping industry come together and, as well as featuring expert speakers, will include useful breakout sessions.

"There's a lot of talk about Maritime 2050 and decarbonisation but what seems to be lacking is what are the shorter term steps that we need to take in order to allow us to eventually meet our targets of 2050," said Mr Sanguinetti.

"The conference will be an opportunity to look at the key challenges facing the UK shipping industry over the next 10 years and see where we need to make progress that will allow us to achieve safer and cleaner shipping."

The other big challenge for the industry has obviously been the pandemic and Mr Sanguinetti says it has most highlighted is the vital importance of shipping to world trade and the global economy.

"Lesson number one is the importance of shipping and lesson two is that shipping adapts, and it will recover.

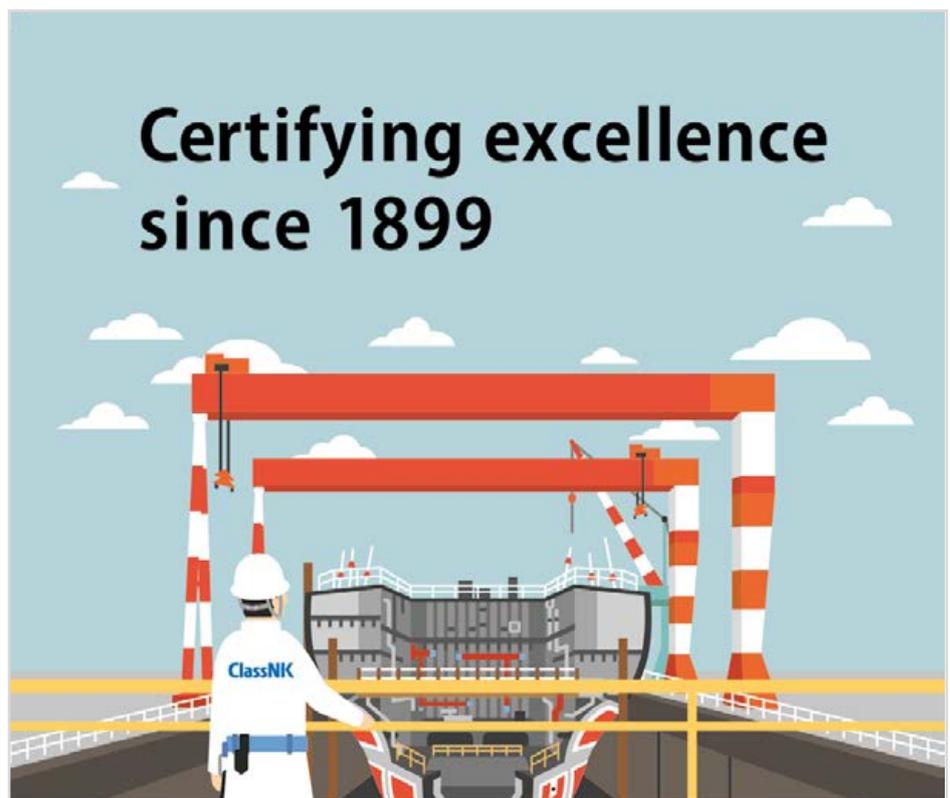
Lesson three is the massive importance of seafarers and the shocking situation that we find ourselves in where there are still dozens of sailors who have not been home for months and have no idea when they are going to get home."

He said he was pleased with the way the UK Government had dealt with issuing seafarers key worker status and it had "shown leadership from the start".

The Government will also be key, he said, in getting the cruise sector – which supports 80,000 jobs and is worth £10bn a year - back on its feet and warned that although it has been working with the sector to produce a set of protocols which mandate safety measures from passenger booking to disembarkation, action needed to be taken immediately to give confidence to operators and consumers.

"The cruise sector is ready to restart but it won't happen in a hurry because it physically takes three months plus to mobilise a ship," he said.

"The time to act is now because this time of year is traditionally when most passengers book their cruises. In three months' time we will be in a different backdrop when vaccines are rolled out and we will know more about the virus. If cruise companies start to feel the UK will be a difficult place from which to do business, they will consider re-deploying their ships and their cruises elsewhere and then it will take a number of years to reverse that." ●



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**Caroline Yang**  
*President of the Singapore Shipping Association (SSA)*

As President of the Singapore Shipping Association during the middle of a global pandemic that has thrust the role of the shipping industry and the plight of the stranded seafarer into the international spotlight, Caroline Yang has had a lot on her plate this year.

The shutting of airports and borders around the world had a dramatic impact on crew movements and with Singapore being one of the largest maritime hubs, it found itself hitting the headlines for the wrong reasons.

“Right at the beginning, COVID was very new and it was very scary with little or no information available. When you have a situation like that, countries want to isolate themselves; they withdraw and ring fence in order to be safe. This was true for every country, but even more so for Singapore which is a small island state but an important hub where millions of people move in and out of, so it was even more critical that we took care of ourselves,” she said.

In such a situation, it is really dealing with the unknown and certain judgement calls had to be made whether they

were popular or not. This was the case when it came to the movement of seafarers right at the beginning of lockdown. The ship, in many instances, was seen as the safest place for the seafarer, especially when owners and managers had no idea where the infection was coming from – whether symptomatic, asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic. “That was why we felt that the ship was the safest place at the time, as no one could get on or get off.”

“But as the situation continued, we felt we had to get our seafarers home. Importantly, we were aware of the mental health all well-being of our seafarers. Singapore published a crew change guidebook which supplemented the port authority’s policy on crew change criteria. The guidebook outlined the what/how/who processes for companies planning a crew change in Singapore. And the guidebook is constantly updated with versions that match with each new revised port policy pertaining to crew change criteria.”

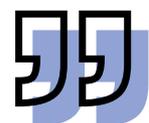
Progress on the crew change situation has been swift, to the extent that Singapore now has one of the “best crew change systems in the industry, all operating in a safe and responsible way. We are made aware that over 1,000 crew changes are approved on a daily basis, but actualisation of crew change depends heavily on factors like last minute changes to vessel arrival, and, of course, availability of international flights. It is estimated that we are conducting between 600-800 crew changes a day currently. We need to do more, of course, and we are constantly in dialogue with the relevant stakeholders for more crew change numbers,” Ms Yang added.

And has the industry and Singapore learned from its experiences over the past nine months? The answer is a resounding yes. In fact, the way the island state handled the pandemic, in her view, shows that Singapore has the structure, discipline and predictability needed if it is to grow and attract investment in for the future. But the job isn’t done yet.

“We are the number one global maritime cluster, but there are areas we must do better in, so with COVID-19 happening, Singapore has shown it is structured and organised and is capable of facing problems head on. The decision to move the World Economic Forum from Davos to



**We are the number one global maritime cluster, but there are areas we must do better in, so with COVID-19 happening, Singapore has shown it is structured and organised and is capable of facing problems head on**



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Singapore next year due to Coronavirus concerns, shows that Singapore can handle the effects of a pandemic," she said.

"The challenge with COVID 19 is the potential for a structural shift to onshoring, near-shoring and even regionalisation because of trade wars. Because of this, instead of just in time, people are looking at just in case. Every country has experienced this shift during the early months of COVID because they were threatened with a shortage of supplies. So, there could be a structural shift in world trade and this will affect shipping. When you have onshoring, nearshoring or regionalisation, it can bring down the efficiencies of trade and you will then need more ships," she stressed.

The rolling out of a vaccine is obviously good news for the shipping industry and there are already calls for seafarers to be at the front of the queue when it comes to getting inoculated. Singapore, with its hub status, has been touted as an obvious vaccination point for seafarers. But as the SSA President suggests, while this is an interesting suggestion "it would be a tall order in the beginning because of potential tight supplies of the vaccine and also issues related to the way it is distributed. I would be very cautious about pushing Singapore forward as a hub for seafarers' vaccinations at this time," she said.

But what are her views about a post-COVID world, something that is clearly on the horizon?

"Looking at the longer term, I feel that COVID-19 has brought digitalisation and decarbonisation to the fore. Personally, I believe that for the next few years the decarbonisation agenda will be a very big one for the industry, so the SSA needs to work together with the maritime community to ensure we know what is going on and that we are well positioned to advise our members of any possible outlook in the future. Our job is to keep our members up to date.

"The third part is talent and talent for Singapore is something we want to look closely at. The maritime community is very dynamic and has a good mix of local and overseas personnel. Mix this with the push for digitalisation, you then have a drive to encourage more start-ups and technology companies to set up in Singapore."

Caroline Yang has six months left of her two-year term as President of the SSA before the elections, and it is interesting to see how closely her own blueprint for her role as President fit in with that of the MPA to continue to grow Singapore as international maritime centre? One of two documents she read, a number of times, was the IMC2030 initiative, spelling out Singapore's maritime growth up to and beyond 2030 and the other was the Industry Transformation Map of Sea Transport by the MPA. "These two publications guided me in formulating my strategies for the SSA," she said.

And what have you missed as a result of COVID-19?

"I am so looking forward to meeting people in person again over a cocktail. I always thought of myself as an introvert and thought I would enjoy this quiet period, but No. I am hoping to meet members again and start visits again to my members and have more in-depth conversations with them. I have another six months to go until the elections but my aim as President has always been to be the representative voice of all my members and engage with them.

"Next year, crew change will remain the top priority as will be having the jobs to attract young people to the maritime sector. To attract more talent and bring vibrancy to our maritime sector means we have to persuade them that maritime is a good sector to be in.

"Above all, we must keep ourselves relevant. My biggest fear is becoming irrelevant, so we have to always be on top of things and stay ahead to be relevant," she concluded. ●



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# Cyprus

## A ROUNDTABLE

# DEBATE

### The Post-COVID Future

SMI talks to key industry players about how the Cyprus cluster has navigated the pandemic and how it can still meet its target for 'Blue Growth'



Click play button to watch debate

Key industry players discussed the Post-COVID Future for Cyprus in a SMI Digital Debate, looking at how the cluster has navigated the pandemic and how it can meet its target for Blue Growth. Participants were: **Vassilios Demetriades**, Cyprus Shipping Deputy Minister; **Thomas Kazakos**, Director General, Cyprus Shipping Chamber; **Capt Maurice Baker**, Managing Director, Interorient Shipmanagement; **Alastair Evitt**, Managing Director, VShips Cyprus; **Capt Eugen Adami**, Owner, Mastermind Shipmanagement; **Mark O'Neil**, President, Columbia Shipmanagement; **Sunil Kapoor**, Director, FML Ship Management; **Oleg Kalinin**, Managing Director, SCF Management Services; **Despina Panayiotou Theodosiou**, CEO, Tototheo Maritime; **Anna Vourgos**, Director, Aphentrica Marine Insurance Brokers; **Dieter Rohdenburg**, CEO, Intership Navigation; **Ilias P Tsakiris**, CEO, American Hellenic Hull; **Andreas Chrysostomou**, CEO, Marine Fields and Chief Strategy Officer, Tototheo Maritime. Moderated by **Sean Moloney**, Managing Director, Elaborate Communications.

**Sean Moloney**

How well has Cyprus navigated the pandemic and what particular challenges have been thrown up for the cluster?

**Vassilios Demetriades**

It is important to discuss and elaborate on the post-COVID era, which is something to look forward to, to be optimistic about and plan. Cyprus was among the first states globally that recognised seafarers as essential workers and facilitated crew changes and repatriation of around 5,000 seafarers. When you consider the size of port traffic in Cyprus, I think this is a big number. At the same time, we have introduced some measures to facilitate the shipping industry including deferral of payment deadlines for tonnage tax and extension of the validity of certain certificates. We also had to identify and highlight the importance of the sector because shipping is all about providing mobility to trade, and it was important to highlight the fact that we should continue business as usual. It was never easy, and it is still not easy, but I think we have dedicated a lot of people in the Shipping Deputy Ministry to take care of all the requests and up to now I believe we have managed to respond to most of the problems and provide solutions.

**Sean Moloney**

A situation like COVID gives us all an opportunity to look at the way we have our processes and our procedures to drive in efficiencies, to maybe look at areas where we can improve. How is Cyprus going to learn from all of this and what are the opportunities moving forward for a cluster like Cyprus?

**Thomas Kazakos**

As far as lessons learned, from our perspective it has, both for the cluster and the shipping industry per se, shown we need to adapt and move on in terms of change, primarily in technology and innovation, and these are the areas we need to focus on more. This, of course, applies to both to our cluster, and I dare say it in the presence of our Minister as well, even to our Administration as well. They need to become more efficient, and I think they are taking the right steps when it comes to upgrading their services towards their clients. This motto that we use, 'together can do better', has proven to be very applicable during these difficult days in many shapes and forms. We had to reassess our cooperation between the stakeholders, the private sector and the public sector at both national, regional and international level.

**Sean Moloney**

Looking at the Blue Growth strategy that Cyprus has, can you touch on what that actually is and how you see Cyprus cementing and consolidating its position as a shipmanagement centre but also maybe attracting in other sectors?



Cyprus - A Roundtable Debate



**Vassilios Demetriades,**  
Cyprus Shipping Deputy Minister



**Thomas Kazakos,**  
Director General, Cyprus Shipping Chamber



**Anna Vourgos,**  
Director, Aphentrica Marine Insurance Broker



**Capt Maurice Baker,** Managing  
Director, Interorient Shipmanagement



**Alastair Evitt,**  
Managing Director, VShips Cyprus



**Capt Eugen Adami,**  
Owner, Mastermind Shipmanagement



**Mark O'Neil,**  
President, Columbia Shipmanagement



**Sunil Kapoor,**  
Director, FML Ship Management



**Oleg Kalinin,**  
Managing Director, SCF Management Services



**Despina Panayiotou Theodosiou,**  
CEO, Tototheo Maritime



**Dieter Rohdenburg,**  
CEO, Intership Navigation



**Ilias Tsakiris,**  
CEO, American Hellenic Hull



**Andreas Chrysostomou,**  
CEO, Marine Fields and Chief Strategy  
Officer, Tototheo Maritime



### Thomas Kazakos

I would like to pass this on to Captain Adami who is Chairman of Cyprus Foundation of the Sea (CY-FOS) which is a specially designed and structured foundation explicitly looking forward to the work of the development of Blue Growth.

### Capt Eugen Adami

The Cyprus Foundation of the Sea should connect as a cluster organisation all the marine and maritime stakeholders in Cyprus, and as such we have formed five committees to complete the task, eventually to drive Blue Growth in Cyprus. The cooperation with the Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institute (CMMI), as well as an initiative derived from the community of Limassol to embark on a risk assessment of all areas connected to the Limassol Bay have taken shape and it is an in-depth view of how our organisms work together and the end result from that study will be to drive Blue Growth in all areas. It has been very well received by the Government and the first results will be ready before Maritime Cyprus next year.

### Sean Moloney

Will Cyprus always be serving a local market as well as being a local market for the big services in London, such as law, insurance and finance?

### Anna Vourgos

Three years ago we undertook a joint exercise with a team including Thomas and Minister Demetriades at the time – a whole review – of would we be able to attract insurers in Cyprus, specifically P&I clubs. The insurance sector was quite slow in developing in Cyprus in terms of marine. Ilias is the pioneer in that with American Hellenic setting up a pure marine insurance some years ago and in doing so we have realised that what organisations consider is not just the financial side of things or the incentives etc. They are actually looking at the proximity of services, environment climate and all these things did come into consideration. We felt that we understood what it is they are looking for and we also understood what it is we are competing against in other clusters. Brexit was also a consideration and Lloyds of London was even considering Cyprus so we were a candidate and we are a candidate even though COVID has turned things upside down. But I think COVID has also made us re-evaluate the circumstances, the quality of life, the priorities, and working from home. Cyprus offers the closeness, the togetherness, and I do strongly feel that a lot of organisations are going to consider Cyprus as a candidate going forward if we focus on promoting what we can offer.



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**Sean Moloney**

Minister, can I just bring you in on that to get your views on growing sectors outside of the core shipmanagement, because there is a lot of potential.

**Vassilios Demetriades**

We have recently announced our intention to come up with a long-term strategy for Cyprus in shipping. We are taking stock of our achievements and accomplishments and we will soon open a stakeholders' consultation with all the interested parties to formulate a vision for Cyprus shipping for the next two decades. When it comes to the cluster, in my mind there are two approaches. The cluster related to the traditional core shipping activities and the more expanded scope which covers the Blue Growth and the Blue Economy, because coupled with the traditional shipping activities and how Cyprus shipping has grown over the years, we need to expand our cluster in order to promote the marine economy and sustainability and other services around this core cluster. You will see shortly some initiatives from the Deputy Shipping Ministry towards that direction, building on strong strategic assets and one of them, of course, is our people. I have been having virtual meetings every day with our stakeholders and the shipping community of Cyprus and the most important thing they highlight is that Cyprus is efficient and provides a fast service, so we want to build on that. You will see initiatives on more simplification of our procedures and digitalisation with an attempt to create the conditions for a one-stop shop. I think this is very important, not only how we deal with our existing clients but also as a tool in promoting Cyprus as a shipping and shipmanagement centre as well, plus promoting Cyprus further as a destination for headquartering, for flying the Cyprus flag and also for other services, plus special actions for the young people, for marine education and training and together with Cyprus CMMI our intention is to have a holistic approach.

**Ilias Tsakiris**

American Hellenic launched its operation in 2016 in the full belief that Cyprus is the perfect venue for doing business. All the infrastructure works perfectly. However, the impact on the Blue Growth is not only going to be on marine, but on marine living sources, renewable energy, port activity, shipbuilding, maritime transport and, of course, tourism. We are proud that our company was the first marine insurance company to sign up for the United Nation's Sustainability Blue Economy Finance Principles and we are also part of the sustainability team and writing the guide now for the Blue Economy. These actions are taking place from Cyprus, and I think that Cyprus gains visibility from all its stakeholders and we can only enhance the effort that the Cypriot Government is making to make Cyprus a global maritime hub.

**Despina Panayiotou Theodosiou**

We have heard Minister Demetriades talk about his plans for a 20-year strategy so Cyprus certainly has a plan and is expanding its capabilities, but in terms of companies coming to Cyprus, I think we have long had the aspiration to extend the Cyprus maritime cluster, and to do that successfully we need all the elements within the industry here, whether that's shipmanagement or technology developers or law firms or insurance. In the last two years we have been focusing on broadening our basis and it is not just firms coming from the UK that we are attracting. It was mentioned before that the CMMI was launched with EU funding last year which is part of ongoing efforts to become a leading player in Europe and globally on the technology side so there's definitely a strong focus on the evolution of the country's maritime potential. This focus is based on a long-term approach, and I think Blue Growth remains a key priority for everyone as it will bring us the opportunities and potential for general growth and innovation.

**Mark O'Neil**

The reality is maritime companies won't come to Cyprus without a reason. The only way we will continue the growth



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## Cyprus - A Roundtable Debate

of the maritime cluster is to focus on the core and grow the core because once you grow the core, all of these service companies will grow accordingly and flourish around them. What is the core? The core is owners, charterers, managers, cargo interests and commodity traders. The reality is there's only so many owners you can attract to Cyprus. We won't attract the commodity traders or the cargo interests. We have attracted and we have got pretty much all of the sizeable managers and I do believe that post-COVID is the age of the ship manager because we have seen through this crisis so far that the managers who are able to bring scale and quantity to the problems that we experience day by day are the managers that have best been able to manage the crisis so far and will be best to manage it going forward. Build up, encourage, enthuse and support as Cyprus has been doing. The ship managers that are here attract the ship managers that aren't and very soon you will have a surge in the growth of the cluster around that core and you will keep attracting the owners. But I do think we need to focus on the core because building a cluster for the sake of building a cluster doesn't make any sense.

### Dieter Rohdenburg

Obviously, the core is important and it is why we need to continue to grow and this is how Cyprus was started many years ago and it will continue to be the most important part of the cluster but at the same time I also think the way we have been able to grow the ancillary businesses, these will also allow us to further complement and to grow the cluster. Take, for example, the CMMI, which I think is a great achievement. I think this will be in the future one of the jewels in the crown of the Cyprus cluster where we hopefully will be able to build on existing knowledge and innovation capacity that we have on

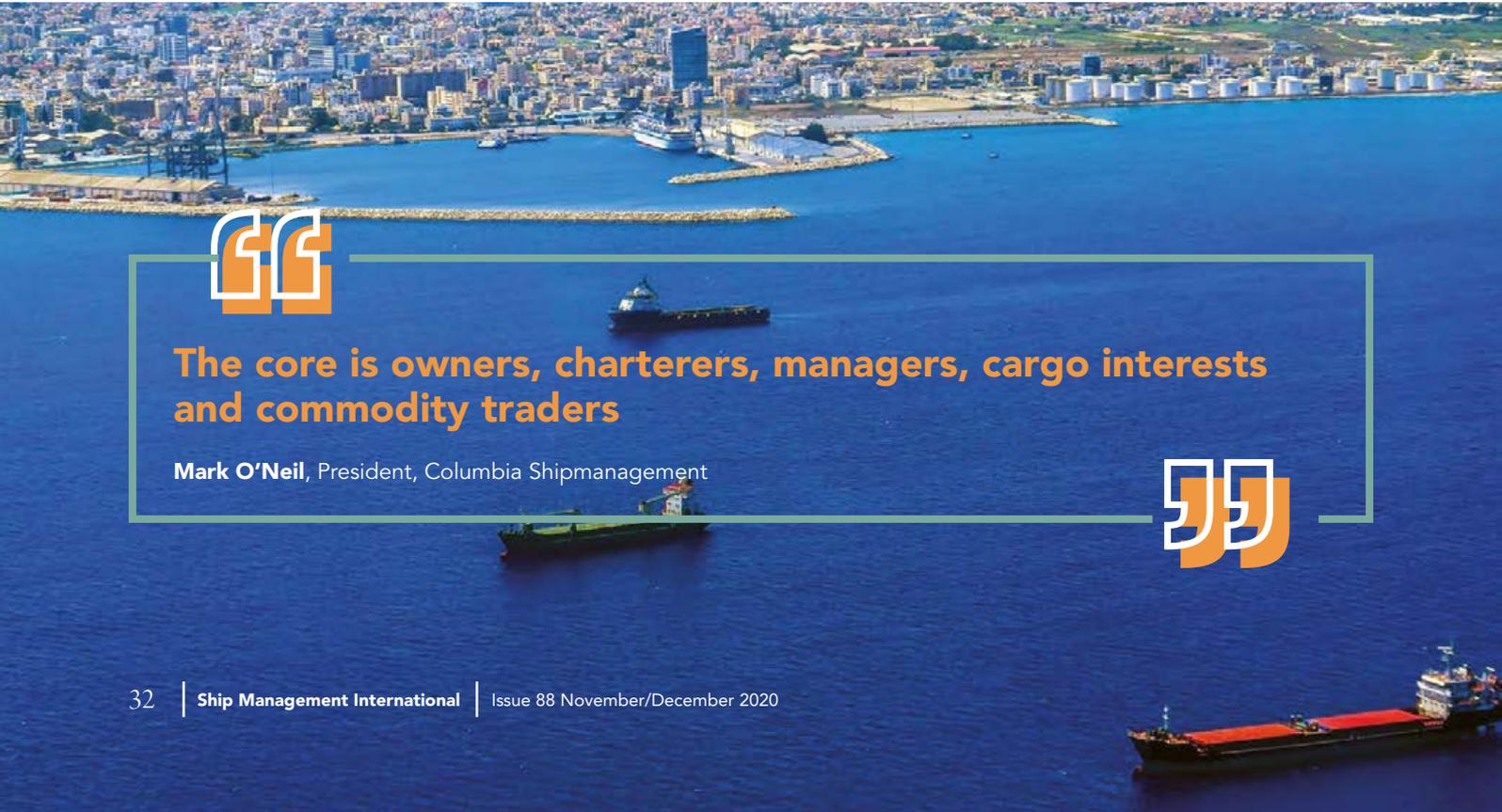
the island. We will also be able, through the CMMI, to attract new business and bring research development companies here including big names of the shipping industry. I think about the decarbonisation efforts that we will all have to undertake in the next few years. Why should Cyprus and the CMMI not be a big part of this?

### Andreas Chrysostomou

In terms of COVID, I think Cyprus as a maritime nation has actually responded very well. We missed one opportunity in the challenge – I think we could have been much more proactive to take participation in the safe hospitality corridors with Italy, Malta and Greece taking advantage of it, and they have gained knowledge on how to run cruising during COVID times. When it comes to the cluster, I do agree that, of course, you must have a core, and you have to grow the cluster round it to serve it. The core is definitely shipmanagement, mainly third party, but we see growth in other kinds of shipmanagement – second party, or whatever you may call it. I do also see that some of the industries that are serving the core have also expanded and are now servicing outside, such as communication companies and digital companies and what we have to take advantage of quickly is sustainable funding. That is an area we haven't explored, and I would like this to be something that we explore further in order to increase the cluster. I think there is a lot of opportunity on digitalisation and technology but also port opportunities.

### Alastair Evitt

I think the Minister got it absolutely right when he said it is about people. And, we have to support the core because everything else will grow from it. There are individual companies obviously which will compete with each other for business, but I think we



**The core is owners, charterers, managers, cargo interests and commodity traders**

**Mark O'Neil**, President, Columbia Shipmanagement



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all have a collective responsibility to support the cluster. The reason I say that is that I have had the opportunity to work in many clusters worldwide and a good cluster attracts good people and good people attracts good business. There's a lot of competition out there. Dubai is looking at developing a cluster, we've got Malta and many other areas which want to compete with Cyprus. As long as the shipping community supports the cluster then we have got every opportunity to grow and succeed.

**Sean Moloney**

Is there room for even greater cooperation, not only within the individual parts but between the actual companies themselves, the shipmanagement companies and the lawyers, to push that idea of Cyprus as a strengthening and growing cluster?

**Oleg Kalinin**

Despite the circumstances, overall Cyprus looks as if it is doing very well. I would like to say a big thank you to the Deputy Shipping Minister and the Cyprus Chamber of Shipping. In this pandemic situation we have had great help with many things. In terms of the cluster I agree that Cyprus is a fairly small island and it is not like some kind of magic that we can invite everybody here, but we have big potential for growth. There have been recent developments with hydrocarbon projects, drilling with LNG hub development and I think this is another area where Cyprus took a good strategical direction

**Sean Moloney**

Talking about growth strategy, what is on your wish list and what does Cyprus really need in the level of support from the Government to help it achieve its aims?

**Capt Maurice Baker**

We have a good, mature core and it is time to look at other support services that come with it so it makes Cyprus a one-stop shop. When it comes to what attracts owners and managers, it's the tonnage tax, and Cyprus has done well in particular on this, and this is something we should build on. For ship managers to exist and compete and to make it attractive to clients, we still rely on a great deal of ex-pats when it comes to resources – this is the core of shipmanagement – and if I compare today with when I arrived in Cyprus 21 years ago we never used to advertise when we needed someone. This is no longer the case as now we have to work hard on attracting the right resources here. Why? Because of the cost of living. Another pain point, from my personal experience, is connectivity. I have come across a lot of discussions and with the disappearance of Cyprus Airways, things moved backwards rather than forwards and I am just wondering if there is something in the pipeline.

**Vassilios Demetriades**

Firstly, I wish to comment on Andreas' point of green, sustainable funds. Just to announce that in the first half of next year, pandemic permitting, I am planning to invite the Brussels experts and regulators on green and digital funding to a seminar with the Cyprus shipping community, to explain the EU funding framework, what are the opportunities for the shipping sector and what are the eligibility criteria because most of the time there are complex procedures and guidance. Coming back to the tax incentives, yes, we consider them important and that is why we will soon announce a set of green tax incentives for the sector



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– for vessels that demonstrate energy efficiency improvements and go beyond the EU and IMO framework. They will receive a tax discount from our existing tonnage tax regime, and we are ready to discuss other incentives within our future strategy. Regarding connectivity, you are absolutely right and it is something I have been discussing with the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Transport. We need to have a better plan to put Cyprus on the map when it comes to air connections.

**Capt Eugen Adami**

If we look back 20 years our maritime workforce was about half the size it is now. Today, we are standing at around 9,000 shipping professionals working in Cyprus. Almost all of the growth has been made up by Cypriots and foreigners living in Cyprus, through the great effort from the maritime universities, as well as the private initiatives of companies and the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers. I agree the core needs to grow and the core needs to be very well looked after but the core can grow effectively and efficiently when the people support the core and therefore the educational programme is extremely important and it is a very dear and close partner to the core. The academia in Cyprus has embraced shipping and I think we have to praise the Government for including shipping in the curriculum of the school children. This was an initiative I had pushed for, for many years and we have succeeded so shipping is being taught to school children. It is brought into families in Cyprus through the 'Adopt a Ship' campaign and it is gaining momentum so I believe in growing the core and growing the ancillary services through educated people and academic programmes targeted for the maritime and marine future ie environmental engineering. This, together with digitalisation, and taking also the pride that Cyprus has with three of the largest software developers on the maritime side, shows us that when we all work together, utilising the tools and the great help of the Deputy Minister, we can bring all these innovative ideas together.

**Andreas Chrysostomou**

Through this strategy for 2020 I believe, or I hope, we are including the Flag, and issues such as getting a digital Flag because from my own experience the Flag is a very important pull for attracting customers.

**Vassilios Demetriades**

Indeed, part of the strategy will, of course, be that and that is why we want to brainstorm with everybody to accommodate the most important things that will make Cyprus more competitive and to ensure a sustainable future. Regarding education, it, of course, goes together with culture. 'Adopt a Ship' is a fantastic programme and addresses elementary schools. What we will do early next year is go out to the secondary schools and young people aged 15 who are starting to think about what to study. We will send a questionnaire to students and from that they will understand the importance of shipping, how important it is for Cyprus, the way forward, so they can learn the basics, and every year during the summer period we will provide two or three days' training in the Shipping Deputy Ministry and also experience of Port State Control and how shipmanagement companies, shipowning companies and insurance deal with technology. It will help build the knowledge and the culture.

**Mark O'Neil**

When one looks at all the international shipping associations such as INTERTANKO, BIMCO, InterManager and ECSA, they are full of Cypriots and/or people living and working in Cyprus with shipping companies. In fact, Cyprus is punching well above its weight in all of those organisations, either leading them, or right at the top. I think this is a fantastic opportunity both in what the Minister is talking about but also at a wider and international level to really come out of the COVID period with a massive PR branding campaign really focusing on Cyprus as the beating heart of shipping; really building on the core with tax incentives, social



**Regarding education, it, of course, goes together with culture. 'Adopt a Ship' is a fantastic programme and addresses elementary schools**

**Vassilios Demetriades, Cyprus Shipping Deputy Minister**





incentives and all the other good business incentives which attract talent and businesses to the island.

### Sunil Kapoor

This coronavirus lockdown has been a unique social experience for everyone, but it has affected our social relationships and the way we interact with people. Some relationships have been strengthened while others have come under serious strain, and I feel all the damage caused by the lockdown will fully unfold once this pandemic is over. We all know shipping never stops but it has brought about new challenges. The good things about Cyprus are the weather, it's easy to start a business, there's a good social system and good English schools for ex-pats who come in. The bad part, I feel, is the cost of living is going up, income tax is quite high and connectivity is very poor as Maurice said, and also the internal transport system is bad. The ugly part which we faced most severely during this pandemic is that we have no procedures. Bureaucracy is so strong and during this pandemic everything seems to stop, and many people took it as a sign not to work or stay home, so we faced a lot of problems with visas and migration. As we have heard, people are important and whatever we are doing here on this island and in our offices, we require professional people and if we don't have professional people, we cannot run our businesses and we cannot even attract more businesses to Cyprus.

### Sean Moloney

We do have a question come in Thomas, that you can maybe touch on. It says 'Can we maybe look at bringing the Cyprus Shipping Chamber and the Cyprus Union of Shipowners together? To have two industry bodies representing Cyprus internationally is surely not helping and could be confusing investors?'

### Thomas Kazakos

Together we can do better, and cooperation of any shape or form I'm sure the Chamber will receive positively because you have one goal, one set of targets, which is to make Cyprus shipping – and international shipping – sustainable, more competitive and hopefully profitable. We see the cluster as a whole. Shipping, for us, includes everything from the traditional ship owner, the core basis of shipmanagement and, of course, all the other shipping related services. As a Chamber we don't make distinctions and we can work better if we work closer together. I am very pleased to say we do that with the Shipping Ministry and the current Minister.

### Capt Eugen Adami

I want to raise a point as a ship owner and that is COVID is coming at a cost to the ship owners ultimately and we

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have not addressed that anywhere so we are dealing with procedures and we are trying to move crew from vessels and back but we don't recognise in the industry that COVID has a cost and the ship owners ultimately have to bear this cost. We need to find a way like in other industries that the end consumer, if they want to have their goods continue to be transported by seafarers in a professional and safe manner. We need to find a way to get the cost of COVID priced in our freight rates and governments have to come and help here.

### Vassilios Demetriades

We do acknowledge the problems and the impact of COVID might be more visible next year to the shipping industry. We do know already that passenger ships and cruise sector were heavily impacted and we'd like a clearer picture from the shipping industry about the impact and to examine ways to see how we can best help. I would like to close by saying that also in our strategy will be a special place for women and for WISTA (Women's International Shipping & Trading Association) – this is a promise. ●

# Need for more collaboration



**Nicolaos Kretsis,**  
Managing Director  
BSM Cyprus

**T**he impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Cypriot economy in general and on the tourism industry, in particular, have been significant. Due to the temporary downturn of other sectors, in 2020, the maritime industry has been one of the most important contributors to growth in Cyprus, and it can be anticipated that the shipping sector will further gain in importance in 2021 and beyond.

The expected growth of the maritime industry is likely to positively influence related sectors, and strengthen businesses like spare part and equipment suppliers, software companies, travel agencies, as well as educational institutions, or insurances. This can provide the foundation for a flourishing maritime industry in Cyprus in the years to come, especially considering that the same sectors can be utilised for the development of the growing energy sector in Cyprus. The development of the EastMed pipeline will, for example, create unique LNG infrastructure opportunities which can benefit and strengthen the maritime cluster in Cyprus.

The UK leaving the European Union can be viewed as an opportunity to establish Cyprus as a maritime hub, giving owners a stable base within the EU for their day-to-day operations. Maintaining a flexible and attractive tonnage tax system in Cyprus will support this expansion and provide a unique opportunity for growth of the maritime industry in the Eastern Mediterranean and Europe.

To fully explore the growth potential of the shipping industry in Cyprus, we need to ensure a seamless cooperation between different segments. We must get actively involved in developing cutting-edge technologies that help the industry tackle climate change through decarbonisation and that meet the challenges and opportunities presented by digitalisation collectively.

All in all, I see great opportunities, and at the same time major challenges ahead of us, and we will only continue to achieve outstanding results for the shipping cluster in Cyprus if we adopt a more collaborative approach across all sectors with a strong emphasis on educating and developing the talents required to meet the needs of the future. ●





# An opportunity to build back better



**Sylvia Loizides**, Board Member, Head of Shipping, KPMG in Cyprus

**T**he pandemic brought unprecedented detriments to the global economies and businesses; the Cyprus economy and shipping specifically is no exemption.

The authorities have responded to the pandemic by imposing lockdowns and/or restricting movement, but also taking measures to ensure the continuity of operations and thus the security of the supply chain. The Deputy Ministry of Shipping (DMS) immediately offered support and guidance to Cyprus ship owners and managers, whilst remaining fully operational and continuing to provide its high-quality services without disruption.

The Cyprus government has adopted a number of tax, employment, economic stimulus and other fiscal measures to support businesses and employees during the pandemic, ranging from deferral of VAT payments and other tax submissions, to special subsidy schemes for full or partial suspension of operations, special parental leave and sickness benefits, and special measures to safeguard borrowers. The DMS has committed to a long-term 'Blue Growth' strategy, to support sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors as a whole through maritime education and innovation in marine and maritime technologies.

Admittedly, as the duration and the severity of the pandemic is yet to be clear, uncertainty dominates the outlook. Still, we do not expect that the focus to 'Blue Growth' will change, if anything this should be seen as an opportunity to build back better within the context of the socio-economic crisis caused by the pandemic.

Cyprus has been growing its importance in shipping and these developments are the results of conscious and intensive efforts by both the Government and private sector to expand the cluster. The number of shipping companies based in Cyprus and registered under the Cyprus tonnage tax system has grown significantly over the last decade since the regime's EU approval, and particularly since the establishment of the DMS.

As a modern, efficient and integrated shipping cluster, Cyprus will continue to strengthen its global position by maintaining and enhancing its sound maritime infrastructure, its blue growth strategy, as well as its favourable and competitive income and tonnage tax regimes. Only recently the Cyprus tonnage tax system was renewed for another 10-year period with now wider applicability and advantages. We are already seeing the impact of this change from the increased inquiries we are receiving from international companies. ●

## We have adapted very well to the pandemic



**Andreas Ioannou**, owner, EPSCO

**O**ur cluster has been able to adapt very well to the pandemic with services continuing more or less as normal. In ports, where services are restricted, we have still been able to complete vessel services in good time by our vendors and service colleagues following correct safety procedures.

The people that have suffered most are of course, the seafarers who are forced to stay onboard vessels for extended periods. In comparison to other clusters, Cyprus has done particularly well in this area. Our Deputy Shipping Ministry and Cyprus Shipping Chamber made great efforts and we were among the



first to facilitate crew changes, recognizing it as a humanitarian crisis for mariners.

Cyprus allowed owners and operators to use the island for hot-layups of ships. By allowing cruise ships to dock at our ports for refuelling & services, it made Cyprus attractive and sent a clear signal to cruise companies that it is open for leisure business going forward. Our cluster now needs to follow up and capitalise on the goodwill and interest it has generated during this crisis. Support needs to be provided for technology innovation and educational programs to grow Cyprus as a maritime hub.

The common consensus seems to be that it will take at least five years for "normality" to return. However, we do have strong foundations on which to build Blue Growth. Prior to the pandemic our cluster already offered a complete infrastructure with a highly educated human element via several reputable and long-established educational institutions; three maritime academies, five private

and three public universities offering an array of maritime studies. More recently, we had the launch of the Cyprus Marine & Maritime Institute (CMMI) for Research and Development. The main objective of CMMI is to be an independent international, scientific and business centre in marine and maritime actions driven by both industry and society's needs.

Initiatives such as the Fleet Information Sharing Platform (FISH) are a step in the right direction for seamless transition to a paperless and contactless world that is now demanded and required by a COVID19 impacted world. More such digital initiatives should be encouraged to speed up processes and get rid of bureaucratic hurdles.

We must certainly never take anything for granted in the future. Crew welfare and the quality of their life at sea is most important. More definitely needs to be done in this area to ensure that they are never placed in this kind of situation again. ●



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# Cyprus has long been more than just a shipmanagement centre

**Mike Dobson,** Group Commercial Director, Matrix Ship Management

**W**e have adapted well to the strange situation we find ourselves in with respect to COVID-19 - our personnel department have been working non-stop finding different ways to keep the crew members moving to and from the vessels and getting them home safely and quickly too.

The costs per crew change have increased steeply and can now be as much as double what they were before the pandemic started, due to extremely limited flight availability and the need for additional transport options. Through our own in-house travel agency, we are able to find the most cost-effective flight routings to give our clients the most competitive pricing available.

COVID-19 has had a significant effect on the cluster, at times forcing new ways to do business but I believe we will emerge stronger and more efficient on the other side of this pandemic. Numerous meetings / trainings / briefings are now being held online which is helping to drive costs down. On the flip side, international travel is significantly more difficult but hopefully over the coming year things will start to ease.

Blue growth in terms of cruise tourism has taken a serious hit with many smaller cruise operators disappearing, but we are already seeing the major cruise players repositioning their vessels in preparation for post-COVID-19 vacations and we are hopeful that once vaccines are in circulation, the cruise industry will be at some form of normality by the end of 2021.

We have seen some P&I clubs opening offices in Cyprus in preparation for Brexit. Cyprus has long been "more than just a shipmanagement centre" however as a result of Cyprus' dominance in the shipmanagement market, it certainly makes sense for ancillary companies to also set up a local base in Cyprus to support the growth.

Post-Brexit Cyprus may well attract more growth from business that has predominantly been operated in the UK until this point. There have been several companies looking and preparing to move their operations to Cyprus and that can only be a good thing for the Cyprus shipping cluster. Maintaining vital regular air routes within EU and beyond will be key to Cyprus attracting UK based business. ●

## Vast network of maritime expertise will help Cyprus maintain its status

**Petros Achtypis,** Founder and CEO, Prevention at Sea

**C**ompanies that account for 20% of the world's third-party managed fleet and 4.5% of the world fleet reside on our island and Cyprus has the third largest fleet of ships flying the Republic of Cyprus flag within the European Union.

This means the impact of the pandemic on the Cyprus shipping industry reached a great percentage of the industry. However, thanks go to the

immediate and effective response of our Shipping Deputy Ministry (SDM), who provided targeted support to the crew change crisis and in communications with shipping companies to advise on the implementation of changing rules and procedures to help recovery here and allow the shipping industry to continue contributing to the Cyprus Economy as it has done for many years.





The impact of the pandemic has been felt financially, of course. According to the Ship Management Survey released by the Central Bank of Cyprus in early November, total revenue for the shipping sector in Cyprus fell to €484 million in the first half of the year – equal to 4.8% of Cyprus GDP — for the first half of the year representing a 7.5% decline from €523 million for the first half of 2019.

Cyprus is a country that is resilient and our SDM continuously strives to ensure competitiveness in the market, even during the global pandemic. In an industry facing great pressure to optimise operations and reduce costs, traditional methods for ship operations are being challenged by digitally-enhanced alternative methods that seek to reduce the time spent by crew onboard or personnel onshore. The move towards greater digitalisation to support the growth of the Cyprus maritime cluster will only be strengthened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

More companies are choosing to expand their presence in Cyprus. I believe this is because the country offers a unique combination of highly qualified professionals and a great quality of life. Local industry officials have been mounting efforts to showcase the advantages of Cyprus in conjunction with Brexit prospects. I believe that the move of more international companies to Cyprus to conduct their business in the shipping industry is proof that Cyprus is expanding its capabilities to be more than just a shipmanagement centre.

However, to maintain our country's status as a top maritime cluster, these shipping companies are supported by a network of other businesses providing activities, such as maritime technology companies, P&I Clubs, ship brokers, specialised shipping lawyers and accountants and ship repair and maintenance services. So long as the country has this vast network of maritime expertise and services, it will maintain its attraction as a top maritime cluster. ●

## Post-COVID years will be about digital disruption

**W**hat has become clear from the pandemic is that the government authorities need to speed up reducing bureaucracy in all public departments.

The Shipping Deputy Ministry (SDM) has taken the signal and already started providing some digital solutions to ship owners and operators to save time and more new services will be introduced over the next few months that will enhance data entry, cut red tape and reduce human error in a paper less environment. The post-coronavirus years will be all about digital disruption. And disruption does not necessarily mean damaging. It will be just an acceleration towards digital and technological advancements in the shipping industry.

Cyprus is an already a well-established maritime cluster. This has been achieved as a result of the island's historic origins as a shipping nation in the crossover of three continents as well as through its various competitive advantages such as its EU approved tonnage tax system, business friendly environment, legal system closely modelled on its British counterpart, highly skilled professionals in various shipping related professions as well as excellent weather conditions and safe and easy place for a family to live and raise kids. Adding to the above the state's commitment to the industry over time, has resulted in Cyprus becoming the EU's top third-party shipmanagement centre and one of the largest worldwide. Also, Cyprus fleet ranks 11th in ship registration globally.



**Kyriakos Christodoulou**, Associate Partner,  
Shipping Sector Leader, EY Cyprus

A key element of SDM's current growth strategy is to safeguard and enhance the competitive advantages and improve the quality of its traditional services. But while the cluster is continuously growing from its traditional services another equally important element of the strategy where the growth will come in the next years, is to attract more ship owners and more companies involved in other maritime-related services such as chartering, bunkering, brokerage, shipping insurance, maritime technology, telecommunication services and procurement services. Having said that, it is critical to understand that no growth strategy can be sustainable without local maritime professionals. And we are excited to see that various local Universities and especially the three relatively newly established maritime academies are active in offering shipping related education. There is also increased activity in awareness campaigns for youth and initiatives taken to encourage blue careers. ●



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SMI talks to industry leaders and asks the question

## **How do you keep up with the rigours of the shipping industry?**



**Maurice Baker**

*Managing Director,  
Interorient Shipmanagement*

**D**espite taking up the post of Managing Director at family-run boutique shipmanagement company Interorient Shipmanagement just over a year ago, Maurice Baker says he has made a lot of changes which are already delivering results.

A restructuring with the reshuffling of some positions and the appointment of two senior positions – head of fleet personnel and head of technical – along with a number of other appointments are ensuring there is now a “solid harmonised structure” to maintain consistency of service to clients of offices across the group.

“This has allowed us to grow and support each other in a smooth and effective fashion,” he told *SMI*, adding “our clients tell us that we are doing much better than 12 months ago and this is music to our ears”.

In addition to the ongoing enhancement of procedures and processes, the main area of focus has been on Information Technology and the company has completed the roll out of a state-of-the-art Clients’ Portal.

“This means sending reports and various other information on emails and attachments has become a thing of the past,” he said. “Now we have and transparent information, 24/7 at a touch of a button and our clients see what we see.”

Interorient is also currently testing a mobile app that will take reporting to the next level and finding out a vessel’s performance, requisition status, defects or its financial position will no longer require access to an office or computer as everything will be through a touch on the app.

Mr Baker said the group’s targets and objectives had also been agreed and, staying with technology, the group’s targets and KPIs will go live by the year end and will simultaneously feed each clients’ related KPIs into their respective Clients’ Portal.

One of the main challenges during his first year has obviously been the COVID-19 pandemic, and Mr Baker said it had highlighted just how vital crew are.

“We have always said that crew are important and the COVID situation has only highlighted how important they are,” he said, adding that the lack of consistent international response to their travel movement had frustrated both those already onboard and those at home, waiting to board ships.

“Interorient have been more determined than ever to put their crew at the forefront of everything we do,” he said.

Free internet access was provided to all ships from the start of the pandemic and the company is currently designing a pension and medical health insurance scheme for them, and possibly their families.

“These measures will hopefully be gratefully received, leave our seafarers feeling appreciated and loyal to the company. It’s a win-win in the end,” said Mr Baker.

So, what of the future post-pandemic for Interorient and Cyprus shipping in general?

“Interorient has strong work ethics and with the changes we have made and the future developments in sight, we are set to benefit from future growth from clients who share same values and ethics as us.”

He added: “Cyprus is a small but resilient country with a proven track record of not only bouncing back from difficult times but also coming out much stronger in the end. “It has a healthy and very close shipping community which continues to work together, supporting each other for not only their and their clients’ benefit but also the island’s benefit.” ●



# Cyprus Shipping Chamber welcomes UN resolution recognising seafarers

*Resolution calls for all governments to immediately designate seafarers as key workers*

The Cyprus Shipping Chamber has welcomed a UN resolution calling for all governments to immediately designate seafarers as key workers and implement proper protocols as approved by the IMO to facilitate with safe crew changes and seafarers' repatriation as well as ensure access to health care.

The Resolution entitled "International cooperation to address challenges faced by seafarers as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic to support global supply chains", was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 1st December.

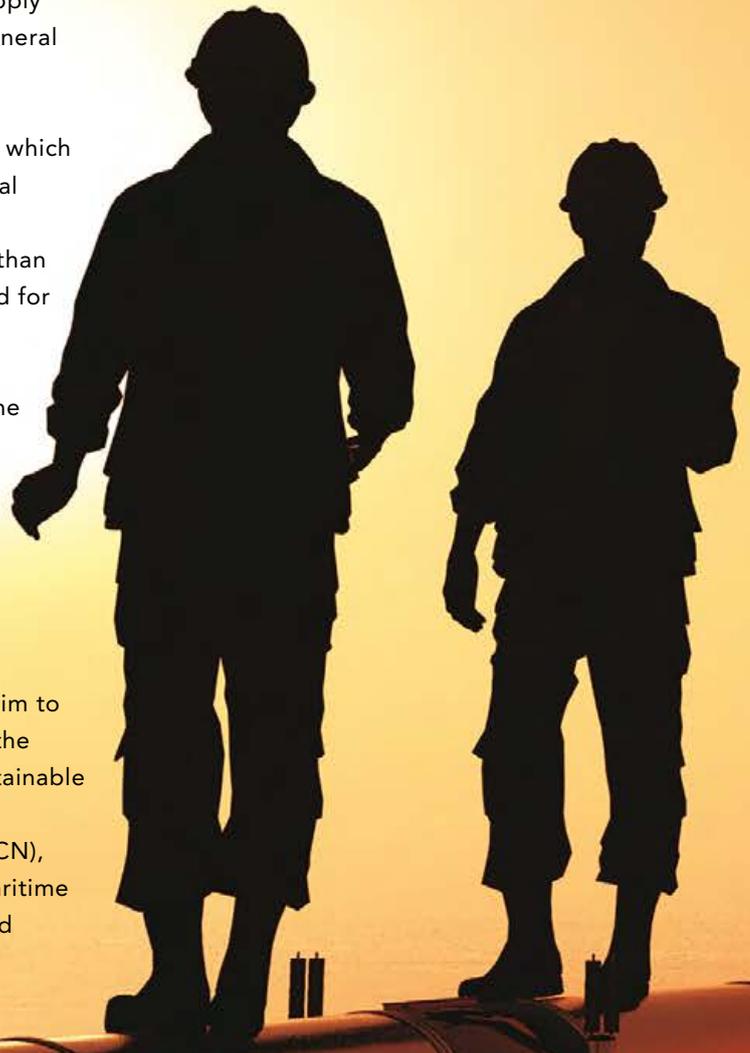
The Resolution calls for all governments to immediately designate seafarers as key workers which has been a longstanding plea of the international shipping industry, asking for all governments to properly address this humanitarian crisis. More than 400,000 seafarers, whose contracts have expired for many months, are still onboard and unable to be repatriated.

The Shipping Chamber said it appreciated the efforts of the UN and stressed the importance for Cyprus, which has already acknowledged seafarers as key workers, to include them among the categories that will receive priority vaccination.

\*The Chamber and the Maritime Anti-Corruption Network (MACN) have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC), with the aim to collaborate on the eradication of corruption in the maritime sector and to safeguard a fair and sustainable maritime operating environment.

The Maritime Anti-Corruption Network (MACN), was established in 2011, by a small group of maritime companies committed to fighting corruption and

has grown to include over 130 members globally, representing the entire maritime industry value chain. The Shipping Chamber says is extremely proud for becoming a "MACN Partner" and states its commitment to support and promote the work of MACN within the Cyprus Shipping Industry. ●





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# Law firm opens office on back of cluster's rapid growth



**George Zambartas,**  
Head of Shipping and  
Corporate, Ince Cyprus

The rapidly growing shipping industry in Cyprus has seen the Ince Group open a new office in Limassol, increasing expertise in the area and strengthening connections in the region.

George Zambartas, Head of Shipping and Corporate, Ince Cyprus said the launch of the new office in September had been driven by the island's need for a UK law firm, focusing on maritime law, to keep up with the cluster's expansion.

"The industry is evolving into a real maritime cluster, with multiple P&I Clubs opening branches in Cyprus," he said. "We recognised that there is clearly a need for a UK law firm, focusing on maritime law with all of the global resources of Ince, to support a rapidly developing shipping industry in Cyprus, and provide a range of legal services that, until now, were only provided from the UK."

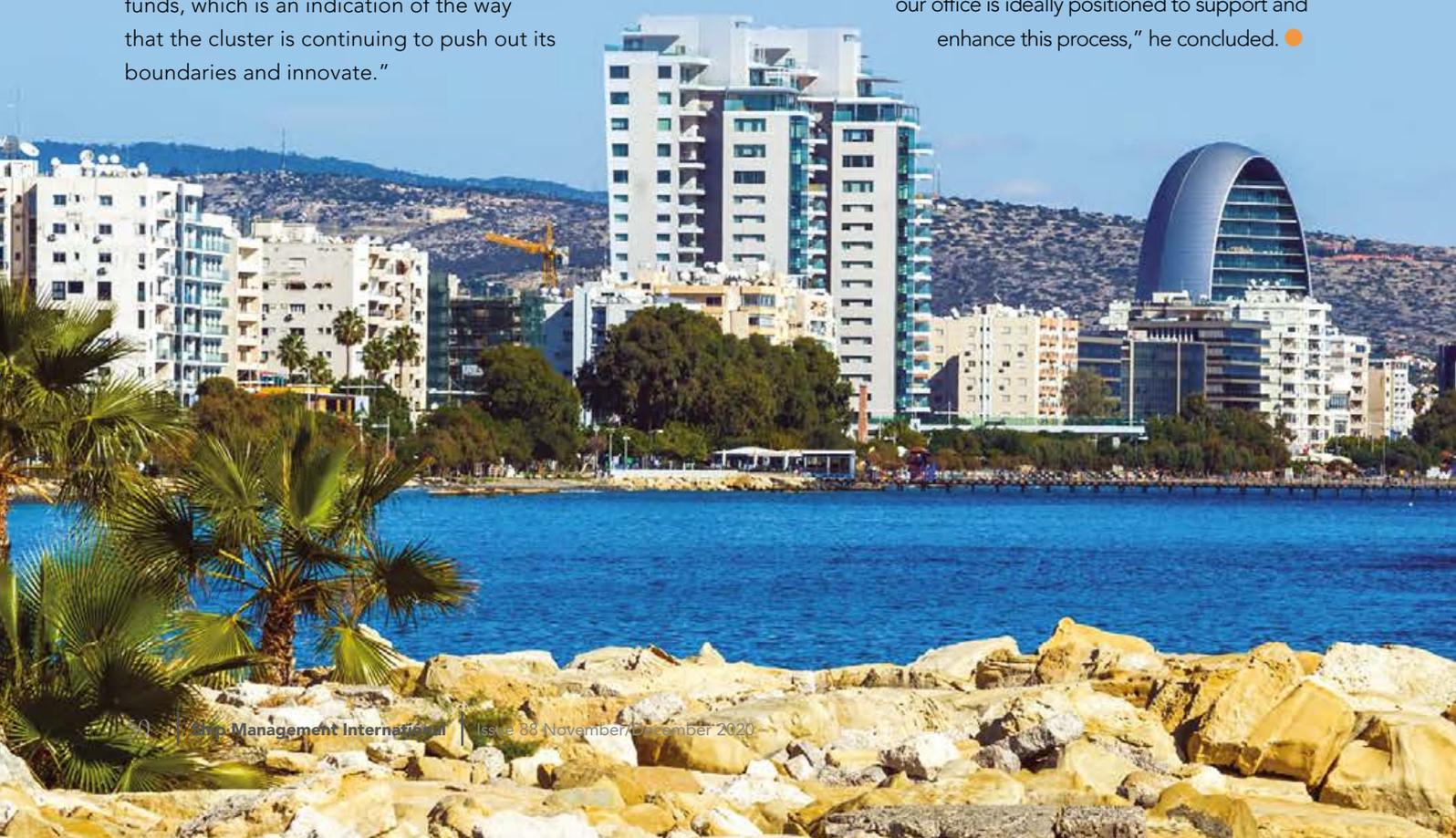
Mr Zambartas added that the development of the Cyprus cluster has also been enhanced by the growth of the ship finance teams of the Cypriot banks, adding: "There has also been a growth of shipping funds, which is an indication of the way that the cluster is continuing to push out its boundaries and innovate."

Commenting on the island's Blue Growth strategy, particularly in light of the pandemic, he cited the resilience of Cyprus as "a positive sign for the cluster, which can offer the quality and innovation of shipmanagement companies and the infrastructure which supports the industry, now supplemented by the P&I Clubs that have set up on the island".

"I strongly believe that the opening of offices in Cyprus by the P&I clubs is one of the most significant developments in the Cypriot shipping industry in recent times," he said. "Together, with the opening of our office, this sends out a very strong message that Cyprus is developing a genuine maritime hub, which can now offer a wide range of skills and services."

Mr Zambartas also praised the work of the Shipping Deputy Ministry, saying it had made "significant strides" over the last few years to modernise its systems, and added that the Cyprus maritime cluster strongly supports protection of the environment and cares about the welfare of seafarers.

"I firmly believe that despite all of the challenges, the cluster will continue to grow and flourish in Cyprus at a fast pace and our office is ideally positioned to support and enhance this process," he concluded. ●





# Keep health in the spotlight

**T**he maritime sector, like the rest of the world, is looking for a brighter 2021 courtesy of a vaccine to defeat COVID-19. However, Christian Ioannou, Managing Director of international catering management and training provider MCTC, believes that the worldwide pandemic has shone a light on some interesting areas which need to stay in sharp focus such as seafarers' health.

"Our message to the industry is that health still matters post-COVID-19," Mr Ioannou said. "The industry needs strong leadership to prevent the maritime sector slipping back into old and comfortable habits. Seafarer wellbeing needs to stay at the top of the agenda. Nutrition affects every aspect of our physical and mental capability so further investment is vital. MCTC wants to play a role along with the shipping sector, in supporting crew which is why we're holding our annual Health & Nutrition Conference on 28th January.

"The food industry has a lot to answer for when it comes to preventing chronic diseases, like obesity,

and how it subconsciously dictates our choices. Our company is providing a free webinar to help the maritime industry and seafarers and their families make educated lifestyle choices.

"We've also tapped into the skills of Clinical Psychologist, Charles Watkins, Founder of Mental Health Support Solutions to discover which foods aid brain health but also to discuss emotive issues such as the psychological impact of obesity. It's taken for granted that someone may be obese, but we don't necessarily look beneath the surface to analyse the long-term effects on the individual and then take steps to address these issues."

To register to attend MCTC's free webinar, please visit: [www.mctconsultancy.com](http://www.mctconsultancy.com). A team of experts from food technologists, culinary consultants, and also food nutritionists, will be available to discuss a range of issues from dissecting food myths to enforcing wholesome diet habits and easy lifestyle changes. ●

## Health & Nutrition Conference

January 28th 2021  
8am GMT

Leading international catering management and training provider, MCTC is delighted to offer its annual Health & Nutrition Conference, free of charge to the maritime industry.

This Conference aims to break down myths and educate the maritime industry and seafaring community on food, nutrition and how our lifestyle choices impact physically and emotionally.

It will expose the psychological impact when one gains weight but also question how poor nutrition leads to mental health issues alongside the potential threat of developing chronic disease.

Our team of experts will also discuss how the food industry subconsciously dictates your choices and will cover emotive issues such as why sugar is as addictive to the body as cocaine.

MCTC's primary vision is to contribute to healthier lifestyle choices.

For further details, please visit:  
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**MCTC**

# Classification

## DNV GL, INTERCARGO and Standard Club launch new bulk carrier ventilation guide

Proper ventilation is essential to preventing damage to the cargo and to ensure the safety of the crew and vessel in bulk carriers. To provide ship's masters and crew with an understanding of different ventilation requirements for bulk cargoes, INTERCARGO, The Standard Club and classification society DNV GL have launched a new ventilation guide.

The guide covers the main aspects on how and when to ventilate to control of humidity and to remove flammable and toxic gases released from cargoes. In addition, fumigation issues and the entry of ship's personnel into confined spaces are addressed. The guide also sets out the regulatory requirements related to ventilation. Finally, several case studies illustrate practical examples on "what can go wrong" when correct ventilation and stowage procedures are not followed.

"Cargo ventilation is an often overlooked, but essential part of avoiding financial risk and danger to the crew and vessel," said Morten Løvstad, Business Director - Bulk Carriers, at DNV GL – Maritime. "With this guide we have worked together to examine some of the most common ventilation systems and provide some clear advice on how to deal with ventilation problems and hope this will help to build greater awareness of these issues within the segment."

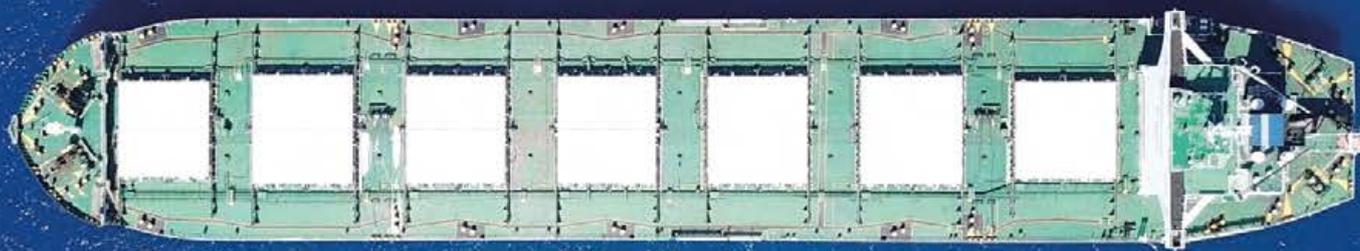
"The guide will provide ships' crew with a practical understanding of when to ventilate and the reasons to do so," added Ed Wroe, Technical Manager at

INTERCARGO. "Additionally, the guide clearly shows the statutory requirements of cargo and cargo hold ventilation. Working together, INTERCARGO, DNV GL and The Standard Club were able to provide their own areas of expertise to this publication which I hope will be found to be useful throughout the bulk carrier segment."

In today's market, ships carry a wide variety of dry cargoes, all with different ventilation requirements depending on the cargo characteristic, voyage, and the weather conditions.

"Ventilating the cargo is not merely allowing the outside air into the cargo hold, but it involves a precise process where a number of factors need to be considered," said Yves Vandeborn, Director of Loss Prevention, at Standard Club. "Failing to adhere to the requirement may cause cargo damage and result in large losses."

"Standard Club continues to see high numbers of wet cargo damage claims, caused either by fresh water or seawater, but the most serious damage is due to condensation. Inadequate ventilation and poor stowage may result in caked and mouldy dry cargoes, or rusty steel cargoes. The guide aims to provide a clear and concise understanding of the ventilation requirements for various cargoes and will assist in preventing cargo damage caused by poor ventilation practices on board dry cargo ships," Mr Vandeborn explained. ●

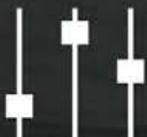


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# A legacy of saving lives at sea

**W**henever the history of liferafts is mentioned, no company can claim a longer heritage or a stronger legacy than Survitec.

Yet, Survitec's latest developments in ship evacuation technology are a far cry from the first experiments of inflatable liferafts carried out in 1919 by Reginald Foster Dagnall on Wisley lake. Dagnall explored the potential of rubberised cloth as a flotation material and, a year later, gave his initials to the company he founded in 1920 to develop his ideas: RFD.

That company later went on to become Survitec as it's known today. This year marks its centenary, a period during which many other legacy companies have added their energy and expertise to give Survitec a vital, more broad maritime safety role as requirements and technologies have evolved.

Dagnall did not initially focus on the maritime market. His experience came from making observation balloons so, with the Great War and the part played in it by early aircraft as his inspiration, his initial work led to the development of flotation devices for downed aircraft.

He developed a lightweight inflatable ring to prevent a ditched plane from sinking, allowing the craft to be recovered. He soon realised that, by adding a floor to the ring, it was possible to save the aircraft's occupants. This led, in 1928, to an inflatable boat – which would later be known as the liferaft we know today. And in the following year, flotation bags were supplied for planes launching from aircraft carriers and for long-range aircraft making the journey from the UK to Africa.

In 1930 collapsible dinghies were exhibited at an aircraft exhibition, marking the start of liferaft development, and in 1932, RFD patented an automatic inflation system. The following year, five trials were made using automatically inflated dinghies in Portsmouth in conjunction with the aircraft carrier *HMS Ark Royal*.

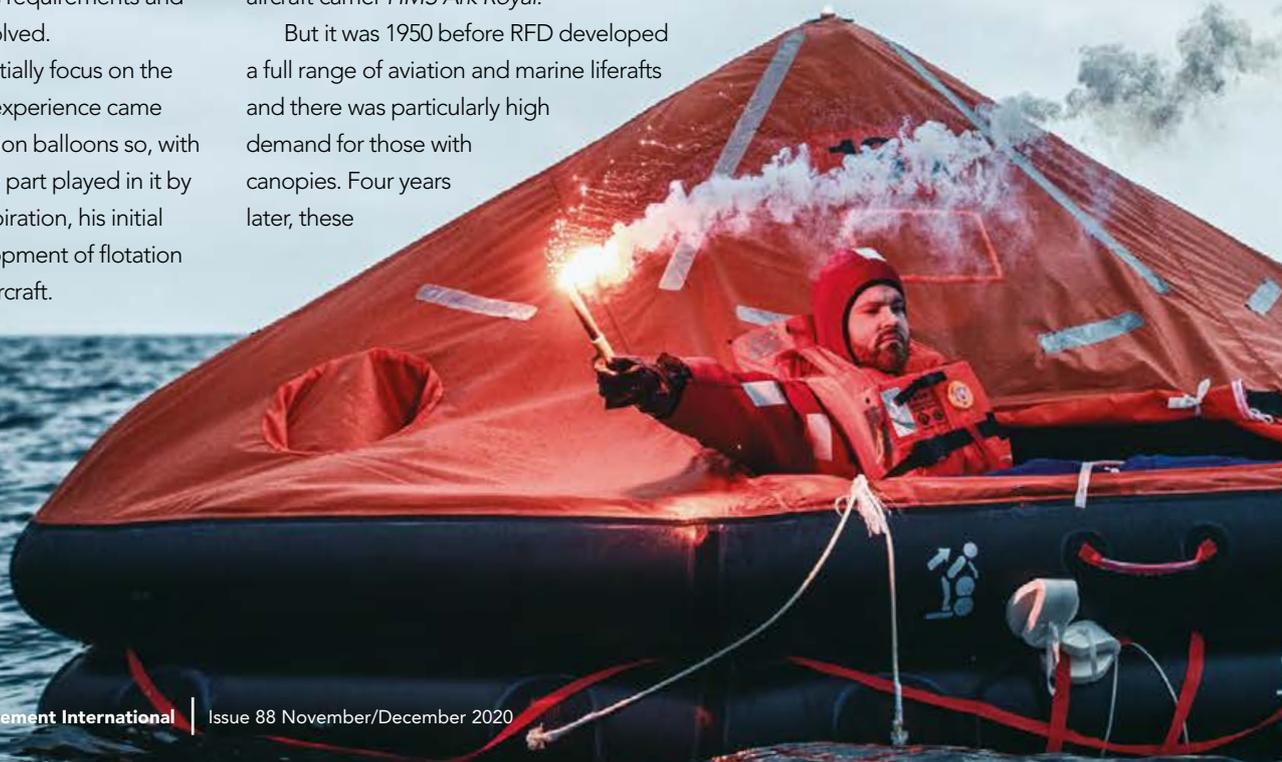
But it was 1950 before RFD developed a full range of aviation and marine liferafts and there was particularly high demand for those with canopies. Four years later, these

were approved by the UK's Ministry of Transport for use on trawlers and small merchant vessels sailing under British rules in British waters.

Their use spread and in 1955, navies from Holland, Denmark, Belgium, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa all carried RFD liferafts.

Developments then came quickly. In 1956, the carriage of inflatables became mandatory for all UK fishing craft and in 1957 RFD introduced a 25/26-person liferaft that was lighter and smaller than its predecessors.

Then in 1958 came an important breakthrough, when RFD introduced its 20-person MC-type liferaft. This could be lowered fully laden from a ship with an 18m freeboard by a single-arm davit.





Importantly it could be released automatically. This overcame one of the problems with liferafts: passengers usually had to board them by climbing down ladders or jumping from height. Not only did this new design remove that difficulty but it also provided a means by which it could be recovered, complete with survivors, by a rescuing vessel.

Among the significant products in Survitec's product range that date back to its earlier years is its Babycot, which was developed by Beaufort Air-Sea Equipment, another Survitec company with origins dating back more than a century. Beaufort and RFD merged in 2003 to become RFD Beaufort, which is now a subsidiary of Survitec.

That product – now in its Mk IV version – remains unique in providing protection for infants and is widely supplied to the aviation industry.

Since the 1970s, as cruise ships have steadily grown until now, with the largest accommodating passengers and crew totalling nearly 9,000, liferaft capacity and their operation have been crucial factors in both that industry's development and Survitec's research.

Recognition of liferafts' importance to shipping safety was sealed when, in 1965, it became mandatory under SOLAS for ships to carry inflatable liferafts and RFD was the first manufacturer to gain approval under the new requirements, confirming its craft to be both safe and reliable. That reputation was further cemented in 1976, when the company produced the world's first welded liferaft.

Just three years later, it launched the world's first marine evacuation system (MES), introducing the concept that survivors could leave a ship rapidly, initially down a slide directly into a landing liferaft. The later developments introduced a vertical chute system, to offer vessel operators a choice.

Irrespective of whether descent is by slide or chute, an MES saves space and speeds up the evacuation time enormously compared with previous boarding systems – vital in an emergency. They also made it possible to abandon ship without getting wet feet – a feature termed 'dry-shod' evacuation.

That first MES was the first generation of RFD's Marin-Ark system, which is still available and consists of four large enclosed liferafts offering a combined capacity of 430 people. A significant design feature is that the liferafts are fully reversible, so there is no risk of them launching upside down. Additional over-capacity liferafts can be added to boost capacity.

A second-generation system, Marin-Ark II, can be expanded to hold up to 860 people and features a dual spiral slide that speeds up evacuation and incorporates a feature that allows crew to ascend if necessary.

Another significant development is Survitec's recently rebranded RaftXChange liferaft rental service, introduced following a SOLAS amendment which came into force in 2008. The regulation allows extended servicing intervals for liferafts for

some ship types, taking the normal 12-month interval and increasing it to 30 months.

Under the regulation, the liferafts have to be maintained within their containers at the correct ambient conditions, and the solution Survitec developed was to hermetically seal the liferafts in watertight silver foil bags and to incorporate humidity and CO2 sensors that deliver readings via a USB port on the side of the container.

Survitec, one of the first maritime safety companies to offer the extended service solution concept, has carried out a combination of more than 50,000 liferaft exchanges and inspections under the RaftXChange programme since 2012, with technicians recording liferafts in perfect condition even after 30 months of service.

As it looks to the future, Survitec's latest advanced evacuation system builds on the innovations developed by Dagnall all those years' ago and look set, once more, to revolutionise maritime safety. Survitec's award-winning Seahaven, is capable not only of providing cruise ships with a means of transporting 1,060 persons per craft to safety but could even make it unnecessary for ships to carry conventional lifeboats. This would free up large amounts of space for more cabins or entertainment areas and open up the view from areas of a ship currently obscured by davit-mounted lifeboats. Seahaven uses two inflatable slides to transfer passengers directly into a pair of powered inflatable lifeboats and one of its novel features is that it allows families to descend as a group, reducing stress and increasing levels of safety during the evacuation process.

Reginald Foster Dagnall, who began his development work in a small shed, applying his own inventive zeal to a particular practical need, would surely approve of this novel innovation. RFD and Survitec's have been powered by his driving force throughout the past 100 years and for as long as there are ships, there will be liferafts. And Survitec will continue to protect lives and be at the forefront of their development. ●



**Survitec, one of the first maritime safety companies to offer the extended service solution concept**





# Asbestos – The Truth

A large number of ships have been found to have asbestos onboard which has been identified during surveys on vessels which need to meet the EU SRR Inventory of Hazardous Materials (IHM) deadline by 31st December this year.

Inventory of Hazardous Materials (IHM) is a structured system to control hazardous materials onboard ships and achieve compliance with the EU Ship Recycling Regulation (EU SRR) and Hong Kong Convention (HKC) for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships.

From December 31st 2020, any ship which is 500 GT or over, regardless of flag, will require a valid and certified IHM on board if calling at an EU port or anchorage.

Kevan O'Neill, Marine Services Director at Lucion Services, a testing, inspection and consultancy firm which carries out IHM surveys, said a review of the 600 or so vessels they had surveyed in the last two years showed around 60% had asbestos onboard where it probably wasn't previously known.

"It is a fairly significant proportion, and even up until vessels built in Europe in 2015 have still been found to have some asbestos integrated into them, mainly from Chinese components. There was an outright ban on asbestos in 2011 but we are still finding that there has been asbestos integrated into vessels built after that."

An estimated 255,000 people per year die each year from asbestos-related diseases globally and asbestos exposure is the number one cause of work-related deaths worldwide and is the leading cause of 90% of mesothelioma cases.

Over the years, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has increased restrictions relating to asbestos-containing materials on ships through the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) 1974 requirements.

Ships built before 2002 are presumed to contain asbestos and must have a hazardous materials' register and management plan, while under the SOLAS convention, asbestos found onboard a ship built between July 2002 and 2011, the vessel's flag registry and class society must issue a non-extendable exemption certificate, providing the owner with a three-year window in which to remove asbestos where necessary.

Despite the ban in 2011, Mr O'Neill said this was not always the case as "there is not really a harmonised approach

to what is asbestos-free and there is a bit of misinterpretation as to what is considered asbestos-free," he added.

In Europe it is classed as 0.1% by weight of asbestos fibre – anything less than that is considered asbestos-free, while in the UK it is 0%, so no asbestos whatsoever.

However, in China has no official standard, yet results were returned of what they consider to be asbestos-free, containing up to 15% asbestos content.

"A lot of the issues have arisen because when they collate material declarations in the build of the vessel they will be provided with material declarations for parts and consumables from suppliers and procurement teams and quite often they will have asbestos-free certificates within them but historically they are not really worth the paper they are written on because they are not based on testing."

He added: "As part of the IHM and EU requirements we are physically testing and sampling these components and they are returning positive for asbestos which, in defence of the owner/operator, they have been previously been told are asbestos-free.

Mr O'Neill said with the more aged fleet, finding asbestos may not have come as a huge surprise because many had heard through the rumour mill of other owners and operators having similar issues.

"Some of our clients are being very proactive on the back of their IHM projects and discussing this ongoing asbestos management and there is subsequent remediation through their drydocking periods," he said.





In around 80% of instances, asbestos is in gasket material, so it is concealed within systems and is often found to contain Chrysotile (white asbestos) which poses a lesser risk than some other asbestos containing products. There are also two other common types of asbestos – Amosite (brown asbestos) which poses a higher risk and Crocidolite (blue asbestos) which Mr O'Neill says is less commonly found on vessels today.

All asbestos presents an occupational hazard to the crew and some research suggests that sporadic long-term exposure could present a greater risk than a one off higher-level exposure, for example.

"What we recommend is that with vessels built prior to July 2002 it is permissible to manage it in situ, where deemed safe to do so. So we prepare a management plan for our clients and if there are any planned works involving those systems where asbestos is identified we would, of course, recommend removing it. If it's low risk it doesn't need to be attended to immediately, only during the next maintenance period that affects that system, assuming it doesn't deteriorate over time" explained Mr O'Neill.

With some vessels built post July 2002 there are certain applications between 2002-2011 where it was permissible, in some with rotary vanes and high-pressure/high-temperature systems, but Mr O'Neill said they tended to adopt the approach that if it was built post-2002 it more often than not needs attending to.

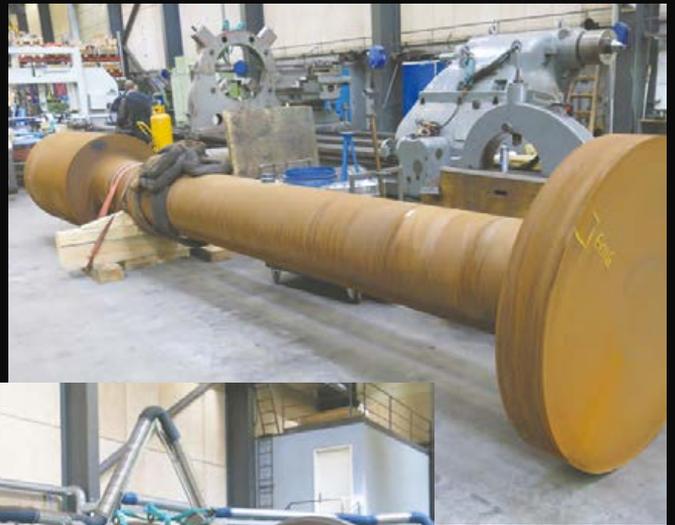
In most instances, ship owners will have a maximum of three years to remove asbestos from vessels built after July 2002 (some exclusions apply) under the SOLAS regulation.

Mr O'Neill expects many owners will carry out remedial work in the next planned maintenance period and believes the three-year window is "optimistic" as there are many thousands of vessels which will require abatement works.

"I do think that the three-year time frame is fairly onerous because vessels generally operate on a five-year maintenance cycle so I think that would have been a more appropriate timeline to apply to the SOLAS requirement to move the asbestos, assuming the risk is considered low enough to allow" he said.

**Lucion and SMI will be holding a free to join webinar on Asbestos – The Truth on Tuesday 26th January 2021, starting at 09.30 GMT. Please follow the link to register: [https://webinar.ringcentral.com/webinar/register/WN\\_3jcRhKOeRiG8qzgKD5rUmw](https://webinar.ringcentral.com/webinar/register/WN_3jcRhKOeRiG8qzgKD5rUmw)**

# MarineShaft has a big growth strategy



**M**arineShaft in Denmark is extending one of its three workshops to achieve more capacity.

MarineShaft repairs rudder arrangements and propeller equipment and has a market niche in class approved cold straightening of rudder stocks and propeller shafts.

Our strategy is always to have the capacity for urgent repairs" "says CCO Lisa Hjermitslev "We know the importance of time when you deal with unplanned damage due to incidents and others, and we receive equipment from customers worldwide for repair."

This strategy required fully equipped workshop facilities, and MarineShaft has 3 workshops at three locations in Hirtshals.

The workshop at Silvervej is 1600 m<sup>2</sup>, and it is being extended with 60 meters. Almost doubling the size of the workshop with a new 1400 m<sup>2</sup>. The lifting capacity will be increased from 100 tonnes to 200 tonnes.

"The workshop extension is almost completed and ready for use beginning of next year" says CCO Lisa Hjermitslev.

And what do MarineShaft plan to use the extra 1400 m<sup>2</sup> for?

"We will install a new 27-meter long SKODA lathe that we recently bought. It will be delivered end of this year and besides this lathe, we also need space for our biggest hydraulic press". tells Lisa.

The hydraulic press Lisa refers to, has a max press capacity of 8000 tonnes and can cold straighten shafts up to 1,5 meters in diameter.

Raw material in stock to meet any request for new manufacturing



MarineShaft also specializes in the manufacturing of new rudder stocks and propeller shafts.

And their strategy is to be among the best and fastest suppliers.

Therefore, MarineShaft decided to invest in a huge stock of material right outside the workshop ready to be taken into the workshop for machining and meet any request from a vessel owner.

Whether the inquiry is for a huge round bar, stainless steel or bronze liners in long lengths, plates etc. MarineShaft is known to have in stock. And everything comes with class certificate.

This year they have increased the stock with raw material for propeller shafts and intermediate shafts in many different sizes.

Having a large stock of material has been an extra value during these COVID19 times. Even with very solid and loyal suppliers delivery time for spare parts and material has taken longer.

When required, MarineShaft also sell raw material from the stock, and they keep their stocklist updated and available on their website.

When asked about the supply chains Lisa added: We have had urgent orders for

new manufacturing and we have been lucky to have all the required material in stock, so we could maintain our fast delivery times.

The Corona pandemic has affected the business of MarineShaft - when speaking of onsite work.

"It has been a lot more difficult and in some cases, impossible and unsafe to send service engineers to location."

"We follow the Authorities travel recommendations to keep our employees safe. When possible to travel and solve a repair on-site we do, and during the pandemic we have had repair work abroad," says Lisa Hjermitslev.

"We have been lucky to maintain a full workforce and we do look optimistic at the future of our business. Still, nobody really knows the effect of the pandemic." ●



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# P&I and Law

## Malta sees promising signs in bid to become shipmanagement centre

By Jan Rossi, Associate within Ganado Advocates' shipping team

Following the decision of the European Commission endorsing Malta's tonnage tax system and the subsequent enactment of Legal Notice 128 of 2018, Malta's revised laws on tonnage tax have now been in force for just over two years.

In June 2018, I wrote an article entitled Ship Management: Recent Legal Development in which I provided a brief overview on the application of the tonnage tax laws to the operations of third party ship managers, specifically managers providing technical and/or crew management services. One of the objects of the amended law was, and still is, to attract ship managers to our shores by creating an attractive fiscal environment, supported by all Malta has to offer as a maritime hub. I am pleased to report this has started to gain traction and there now appears to be an increased level of interest from ship managers involved in both technical and crew management.

Some crew managers are now benefiting from Malta's tonnage tax system. Once a crew manager is duly recognised by the Registrar-General and has paid the appropriate tonnage tax due on the managed vessel, no further tax under the Income Tax Act (Cap. 123 of the Laws of Malta) is charged on the income of the crew manager generated from the provision of crew management services. Dividends distributed from profits derived from crew management activities are also exempt from tax under the Income Tax Act, in the hands of the shareholders of the crew manager.

Any crew manager wishing to enter Malta's tonnage tax system, must be set up as a licensed 'shipping organisation' in terms of the Merchant Shipping Act (Cap. 234 Laws of Malta) and must be established in the European Union (EU) or in the European Economic Area (EEA).

The objectives or purpose of the crew manager to provide crew management services must be clearly identified and specified in the objects clause of the manager's memorandum of association or other constitutive document.

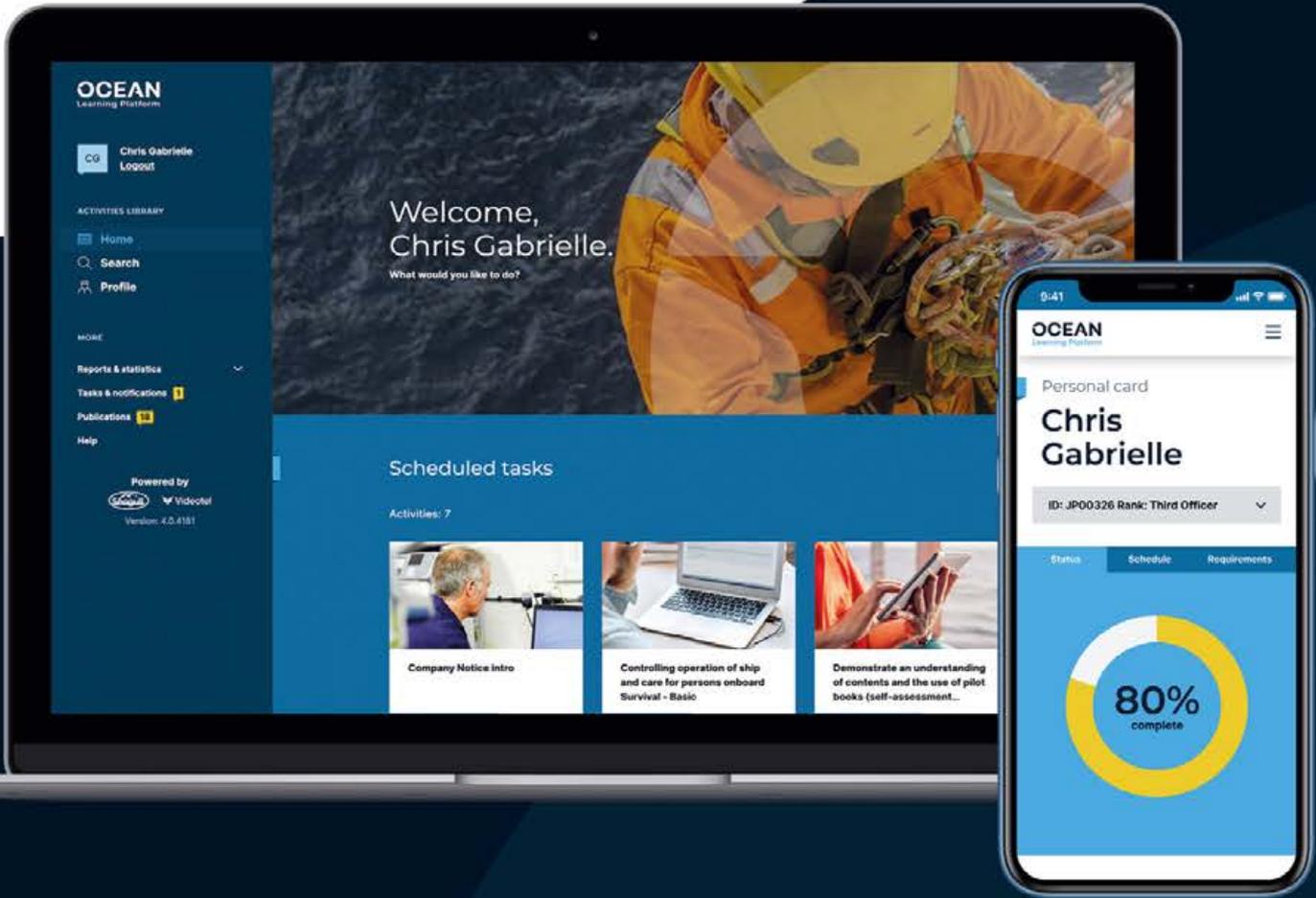
At least two-thirds of the managed net tonnage must be managed from offices based and operating in the EU or the EEA. Additionally, the majority of the vessels to which crew management services are provided must be flagged within the EU or the EEA – the general rule here is at least 60% of the net tonnage managed must be EU or EEA flagged. However, the law allows the Registrar-General to consider a crew manager whose managed EU or EEA registered tonnage is less than 60%, subject to a minimum managed EU/EEA flagged tonnage of at least 25%.

A crew manager must also apply with the Registrar-General of Shipping in Malta and is obliged to submit supporting documentation as may be requested by the Registrar-General. These documents include a copy of the 'Certificate of Authorisation for Seafarer Recruitment and Placement Services' in terms of the Maritime Labour Convention issued by a "Recognised Organisation" and a copy of the duly executed crew management agreements entered into by a crew manager and its client ship owner/operator. These management agreements usually consist of standard industry forms such as the BIMCO SHIPMAN and CREWMAN contracts. Certificates issued in favour of the managed vessel such as a copy of the certificate of registry, transcript of registry and international tonnage certificate must also be submitted.

The amount of annual tonnage tax payable by a qualifying crew manager is equivalent to 25% of the annual tonnage tax payable in respect of the particular ship managed on the basis of the tonnage tax rates contained in the First Schedule to the Merchant Shipping Act. These rates apply irrespective of whether the managed vessel is registered in Malta or not.

In accordance with Legal Notice 128 of 2018 and MS Notice 150 of the 1 April 2019, a crew manager has to submit an annual declaration to the Commissioner of Revenue as well as a 'Tonnage Tax Return' to the Registrar-General. ●





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**Mark Charman**  
CEO, Faststream Recruitment

## The candidate is king

**D**espite the COVID-19 pandemic, over half of people working in the maritime industry are looking to change jobs in the next 12 months, according to a survey by maritime recruitment specialists Faststream Recruitment.

In a webinar staged by the UK-based company, CEO Mark Charman said 57% were looking to change roles in both commercial and technical positions, with pay rise freezes impacting how they felt about existing placements.

Speaking in the webinar, Kelsey Connolly, Director of

Faststream's shipmanagement business added that she predicted the demand for in-country hiring would shoot up in the next few months as the pandemic keeps its grip on the world and said it was more important than ever for shipmanagement companies to look at new ways of attracting seafarers, with some even paying bonuses to try to lure new employees.

"Candidates have an appetite to change jobs even during these difficult times," she said, "and where there are skills shortages, the candidate is king."

Commenting on shore-based roles, Mr Charman said the appeal of taking up an ex-pat position was also fading as people seek to be in their home countries with their families and not abroad in another country where they could no longer enjoy a social life.

"The ex-pat lifestyle is losing its shine," he told the Maritime Employment and Industry Update webinar.

With 77% of companies surveyed saying pay

will remain static for the next 12 months he believes the industry will see more people changing jobs to earn more money and even those leaving the maritime sector altogether. It will be harder to attract new talent, he said.

However, there is optimism in a challenging market as 46% of companies plan to make new hires in the next 12 months.

Mr Charman said vacancies in the maritime sector were generally holding up well and the second half of the year had seen an increase in new vacancies, all dominated by the "three Rs of restructuring, reshaping and replacing." There was also the fourth 'R' of reinvention, he said.

"Lots of businesses are looking in the mirror and reinventing themselves and the people they need."

Remote working was also now the new norm, he added, and some companies are looking at how they can benefit from this and have access to the global shipping pool, which was proving useful for filling in skills shortage gaps.

Ms Connolly said the pandemic had brought many challenges, not least the repatriation of crew with an estimated 400,000 seafarers still stranded.

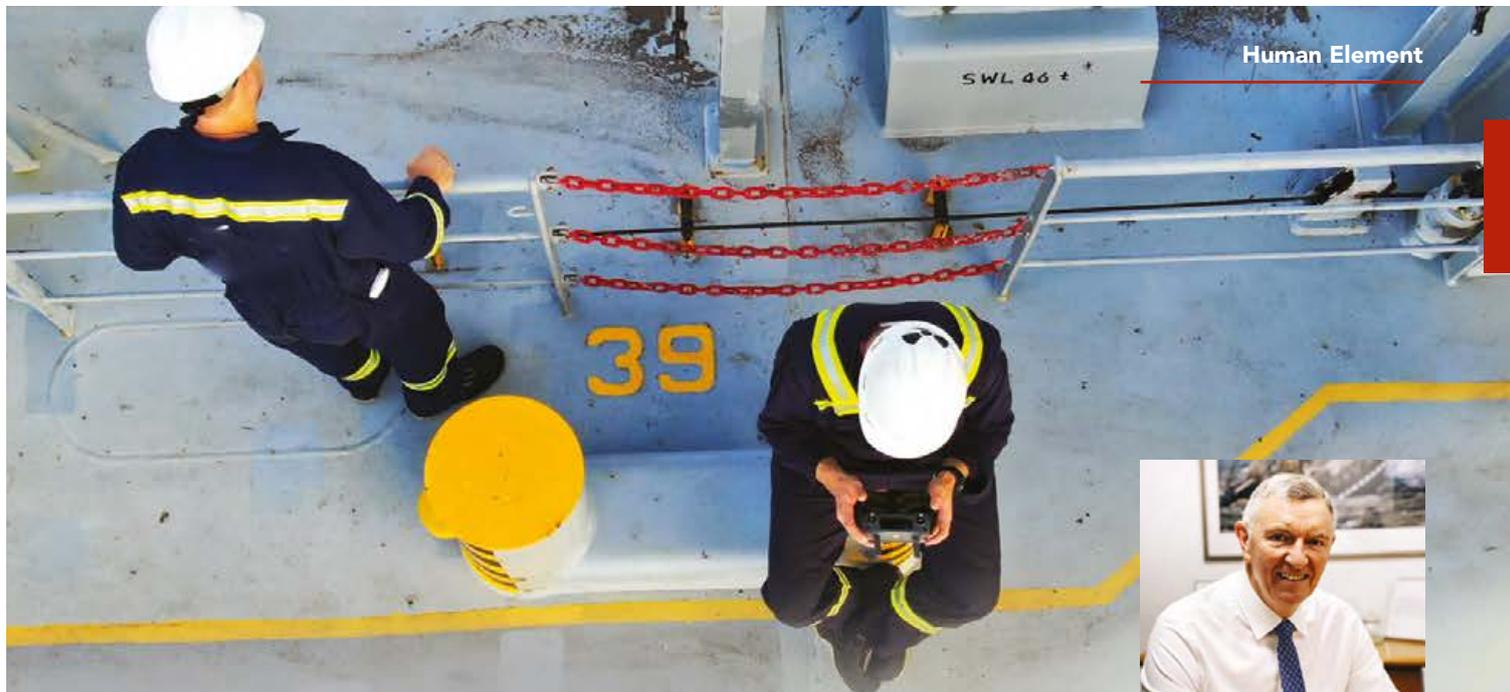
The cruise sector has been severely impacted and she told the webinar of one highly-proficient captain on a cruise ship who was now working as a supermarket delivery driver.

"Many qualified seafarers are unable to transfer skills," she said.

However, she added that it was not all doom and gloom as there had been a spike in vacancies in the tanker sector and they were seeing a skills shortage across LNG and LPG vessels.

Second engineers and chief officers are currently the most requested rank to recruit for and gas experienced candidates have been long sought after, added Ms Connolly.

Concluding the webinar, Mr Charman said the impending Brexit would not make it easier to hire in the UK and Europe but opportunities to hire remotely would help and warned companies of the need to adapt. ●



**Neil Carrington**  
Chief Executive, Voyonic Crew Management Group

## Bonuses are not the answer in attracting seafarers

**A**n increase in ship managers using enticements to attract seafarers, particularly where there are skills shortages, was one of the factors which prompted one crewing company to start a whole new entity offering total crew management services.

Voyonic Crew Management Group was set up in October by Guernsey-based Voyonic Crewing with an emphasis on individual crew member training and development.

Chief Executive Neil Carrington told *SMI* that trying to lure crew members with bonuses and other one-off incentives would not work in the long-term and companies need to look at loyalty and looking after seafarers with defined career paths and opportunities.

"That is exactly what prompted us to get more involved in total crew management because it is short-sighted," said Mr Carrington. "The solution is to look ahead, train people, and then you don't have the supply and demand issues that prompt people to throw money at it."

Voyonic Crewing, which was started in 2007, was primarily involved in the employment of seafarers and over the years has opened offices in Malta, the Philippines and Aberdeen. "It reached a point where clients asked us if we could do their full crew management, so we decided to pull together a group of like-minded individuals and create this overarching company – Voyonic Crew Management Group," explained Mr Carrington.

"If somebody comes along with a ship, we can man that ship for its entire lifecycle because our philosophy is on individual crew member training and development, so it's all about retaining the good staff and promoting good staff from within. It provides better value for clients because the ship is being looked after by people who care a bit more about it."

With this in mind Voyonic has become involved with the Humber Maritime College in Immingham, UK, which it has helped to create and develop since its opening a year ago, with the TEC Partnership behind the whole venture.

"It forms part of our wider service delivery because it entails training the seafarers and putting them onboard," said Mr Carrington.

There have been concerns in the industry that the COVID-19 pandemic and the longer time seafarers are having to spend onboard may deter future seafarers from coming forward but Mr Carrington remains optimistic and said the college had met its quota for the next intake of cadets. "I think there is still a desire to go to sea," he said.

He also concedes that the role of the seafarer is changing as ship owners pursue the dream of having autonomous ships, and though he believes this is still some way off, we are now in an interim stage in which technology is playing a huge part and we need the younger generation to go to sea because they are brought up on technology.

"We are noticing that now and that is why we were keen to get involved in the training and development side of things because nautical colleges have to be different," he said.

He added: "Shipping is not alone in that when cost-savings are being sought, training always suffers first. The industry also had a reputation of poaching crew from other ships. The best way to counter that in the longer term cost-effectively is to make sure you are training people up to do the work. Even autonomous ships will require people with seagoing experience behind them for the concept to survive." ●



## Push to get psychological first aid responders onboard ships

The COVID-19 crisis has undoubtedly presented huge challenges for the shipping industry but often feeling at the bottom of the priority list are the seafarers who we rely on every day to deliver our goods across the globe.

A recent industry-wide survey on maritime workers' well-being during COVID-19, led by Lloyd's Register (LR) in collaboration with the UK Chamber of Shipping, the Mission to Seafarers and Safety at Sea highlighted marked differences in support for seagoing versus land-based employees and serious concerns were also raised over seafarer mental health, communications and disease management, with 62% of seafarers saying they felt their health and safety was not being balanced appropriately with operational demands and 54% of seafarers saying they felt they were not being actively helped to manage stress and fatigue during the pandemic.

These findings would have come as no surprise to Charles Watkins, Clinical Psychologist and Managing Director, Mental Health Support Solutions (MHSS), who said the pandemic was taking its toll on the mental well-being of many seafarers finding themselves away from loved ones on extended contracts due to the repatriation crisis caused by the virus.

Fears for the health and safety of their loved ones back home, along with their own well-being, or seafarers facing financial issues through not being able to board ships, were all adding to the woes and creating a spike in the number of people seeking help. However, Mr Watkins, said the issue of mental health was still a relatively new topic for the industry.

MHSS was formed in summer last year following a collaboration between Mr Watkins and psychotherapist Susann Rüsçh in which he started researching what was available across the industry in terms of mental health support.

"It is a rather new subject for the industry, which was quite shocking for me because I think it is such an incredibly important aspect of life onboard," said Mr Watkins.

"In terms of how we deal with mental health in society, it has always had a negative stigma with negative connotations. People don't really understand the parameters, or how it works, so it is like a black hole they are afraid of."

Mr Watkins said the importance placed on mental health was getting better in general but in the maritime industry there is still much to be done and he wants to see psychological first aid responders onboard vessels, just as you would have a medical first aid responder.

"The most important thing to do to help someone who is struggling is to connect with people and reach out and you don't have to be a professional to do that," explained Mr Watkins.

"The future is not so much about having psychological training but having one designated person – people who are naturally interested in the subject, who do not need a clinical background."

Employees of companies signed up to MHSS can make use of its 24/7 helpline which offers a network of psychologists across various countries who are at the end of the phone to talk about any mental health issues they may have.

Mr Watkins said the helpline had experienced a huge spike in calls during the first wave of the pandemic earlier this year and was now seeing numbers rise again as the second wave takes hold worldwide.

"During the first wave we saw a big increase in the demand for our services," said Mr Watkins. "We had Captains calling us asking for information on how to handle states of anxiety among seafarers and we were also talking them through more serious situations such as suicide and self-harm. We obviously had to manage those situations very closely such as talking to people every day for weeks before we could get them to safety. We are slowly seeing the numbers go up a little bit again because of the second wave."

Mr Watkins added that it was not just the seafarers who were suffering. Crew superintendents, he said, were doing a "tremendous job" and were under immense pressure and because of this MHSS developed a programme – Crisis Management and Communications – to help them deal with all the extra daily issues.

"We teach them how to deal with their own stress and how to communicate effectively because they have the most contact with the ships," explained Mr Watkins.

He added that many companies did now seem to be looking more at the mental health of employees but that it really depended on the individual shipmanagement company as to how issues were dealt with and which support services

were utilised because all have different styles of leadership and culture.

"With our clients we have had positive experiences and they want to change something," he said. "They recognise the needs of seafarers and their suffering and they are active about it."

Along with the helpline, Hamburg-headquartered MHSS offers other support services including seminars and webinars, staff training, audits and one-to-one therapy and counselling.

It is the educational aspect Mr Watkins says is the most important factor and making people realise that mental health issues are not a sign of weakness.

"We had a lot of difficulty with trust in the beginning. People were worried about confidentiality and whether it could damage their career if they were open about their issues," said Mr Watkins.

"Unfortunately, it is seen as a weakness but we have been able, through countless measures, to do a lot of different awareness programmes and training. We've been able to make at least some of the people understand that it is a strengthening factor. It's part of daily appropriate hygiene and is just as important as daily exercise and diet because it has a huge effect on how you feel and how resilient you are."

He added that acknowledging mental health strengthens people because they realise they have a voice and can talk about it: "Breaking the silence creates a stronger connection in group cohesion. People realise others feel the same way and they are not alone." ●

# Sustaining Crew Welfare



The Sustaining Crew Welfare Campaign will help to maintain and adapt the services we offer against the backdrop of the COVID-19 virus. We invite your company to become a sponsor and help us maintain and build sustainable services for seafarers and their families. Find out more about the campaign and how you can make a difference at [missiontoseafarers.org/sustaining-crew-welfare-campaign](https://missiontoseafarers.org/sustaining-crew-welfare-campaign)





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## Piracy incidents rocket in Gulf of Guinea

Vessels transiting West Africa's Gulf of Guinea need to take care now more than ever as the number of piracy incidents has rocketed this year with criminals advancing from stealing products to kidnapping crew members.

James Hilton, Managing Director at private maritime security company Protection Vessels International, said the number of kidnappings in the Gulf this year has been the highest it's ever been with a reported 40% increase in the first nine months of the year compared to the same period last year.

The situation has become so critical that China, one of the largest shippers of goods in the Gulf of Guinea, recently set up an ad hoc working group through its Ministry of Transport to lay down some precautionary security measures for the country's owners and operators.

"At the moment there are almost daily incidents in the Gulf of Guinea and more than 100 seafarers have now been kidnapped in the area just this year," said Mr Hilton.

"The number has really gone up in the last few weeks including 14 Chinese seafarers who were kidnapped off Sao Tome."

He cited the drop in the price of oil as one of the main factors for the rise in kidnappings as the costs involved in stealing products far outweigh what they currently get back on the black market. The criminal organisations have now turned to kidnap and ransom particularly going after vessels which they believe to have

European, American or Chinese crew.

"Any vessel is at risk because it's the people onboard they are interested in. Also, incidents are pushing further and further out because security in Nigerian waters is much higher than it was and it's much more effective these days," said Mr Hilton.

Unlike other areas in the world where armed guards are allowed on vessels for protection, West Africa is a complex mix of different jurisdictions. For instance, in Nigeria, a vessel can only use a private security escort vessel that has to be Navy approved, with Naval guards onboard, and the vessel owner also needs to have an MoU with the Navy. On the other hand, in Benin and Togo you can put armed guards on a vessel, but they have to come from the Navy.

Craig De Savoye, African Business Development Lead at PVI, and a specialist in the sub-Saharan African maritime sector, said along with economic factors, COVID-19 was also impacting on people's livelihoods and driving the increase in criminality.

He added that the pirates were becoming more accomplished in their operations and receiving more funding because the better they get, the more investment the activity attracts from other criminal organisations.

Along with the need for practical measures such as vessel hardening with the likes of razor wire, he stressed the need for due diligence and compliance with each jurisdiction having its own way of securing a vessel. "If you are not compliant and fail to abide by these rules and regulations, it will expose the vessel, crew and company to a risk of fines, asset detention and imprisonment" he warned.

"Also, have a plan to take in all the various factors such as the impact of the potential risk of an attack, the voyage plan, the type of vessel and even the weather," he said. ●



# Preparing for West Africa voyages

By Max Williams, COO at ARC (Africa Risk Compliance Ltd)

*Following a spike in the number of attacks in West Africa, piracy in West Africa is currently hitting headlines across the shipping industry. However, in the articles and comments by various experts, academics and analysts, there is very little useful information for those who are responsible for the security of the ships that sail into the region. So, what should a CSO be aware of when a voyage has been fixed for West Africa?*



## 1. The different “areas”

In West Africa, there are a number of different areas that have been designated by various shipping organisations as “high risk”. It is important to know which ones affect the voyage. The MDAT-GoG Voluntary Reporting Area is from the Mauritania/Western Sahara border to the border of Angola/Namibia. Furthermore, whilst the Lloyds Joint War Committee Listed Area is generally used as the “high risk area” for the region, some flag states, including the Korean Ministry of Fisheries, have their own. This can cause issues in charter party contracts when security services have to be arranged in high-risk areas and the two parties are using different definitions of the high-risk area. As well as these, there are the IBF high-risk area and Extended Risk Zone, as well as some owners

and ship management companies who have their high-risk areas stipulated by company policy.

## 2. Differences from the Indian Ocean HRA

The situation with the Indian Ocean allowed for an easy solution when it came to maritime security. Four major entry/exit points (north, south, east and west) to the area, international waters through which privately contracted armed security personnel could escort merchant vessels from A to B, and such vital chokepoints that the entire global community was willing to work to a solution, with local powers and distant seafaring nations providing naval forces to support merchant shipping. West Africa has none of these – no privately contracted armed security personnel, effectively no international waters, no strategic chokepoints to encourage



# A strategy of future investment

Singapore's strategy to strengthen its global position as a powerhouse maritime cluster will embrace the present as well as the future as it looks to grow the number of shipping players in the city state, strengthen cooperation with other international maritime clusters, as well as enhance its position as an Asian insurance and maritime legal and arbitration hub and expand the sources of financing.

According to its IMC2030 Strategy document, designed to guide its development to 2030 and beyond, it is determined to grow the number of owners, operators, brokers and shipmanagement companies as well as strengthen its port activities and develop opportunities related to the port ecosystem.

In an interview with SMI, Ms Quah Ley Hoon, Chief Executive of the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore, said that core to this strategy was strengthening interlinkages between Singapore's maritime cluster and adjacent industries such as logistics, commodity trading and technology.

"We will build a strong maritime cluster centred on strong alignment of innovation and R&D efforts between public and private sectors, as well as promote digitalisation of the maritime industry leveraging Big Data, Internet-of-Things, and Intelligent Systems," she told SMI.

"There is a range of ongoing initiatives to promote this ecosystem. For example, the PIER71 initiative accelerates innovation

by bringing together start-ups and maritime companies to solve problems in the industry. The local universities and Institutes of Higher Learning have also set up centres of excellence in areas such as digital port, safety, sustainability and autonomous operations."

**"We will position Singapore as a leader in existing and new areas of excellence such as port management, risk management, and safety, security and sustainability"**

Singapore wants to use its position to develop what it calls a multi-skilled workforce with a global mindset. "We will strengthen the quality of maritime education and training, further enhance standards of professionalism of the maritime industry and raise the profile of the maritime industry to attract talent. One such programme is MPA's Global Internship Award for local students to have an opportunity to experience working in overseas offices.

"We will position Singapore as a leader in existing and new areas of excellence such as port management, risk management, and safety, security and sustainability. We will also promote a regulatory environment that supports new innovation initiatives and standards. Aligned with the MPA's decarbonisation agenda, the International Advisory Panel (IAP) on decarbonisation, with a cross-disciplinary global network of experts was set up to discuss pathways to maritime decarbonisation, comprising policies that could help accelerate the transition and proposed actions to be taken. Its inaugural meeting was held in July 2020," she added.

And this is important, considering the MPA is working towards transforming the maritime industry for the better – to become even more nimble, innovative and future-ready – by focusing on the three Ds – Digitalisation, Decarbonisation and Disruption.

By working with the industry to layer physical connectivity with digital connectivity, the MPA helps maritime companies go digital. In fact, COVID-19 represented a good opportunity for it to press ahead with digitalisation, as companies now recognise the importance of building their digital infrastructure to ensure business continuity. This, it believes, is the best moment to support companies to go digital, and to build on the existing groundwork that has already begun. The MPA, together with the Singapore Shipping Association (SSA) and Infocomm

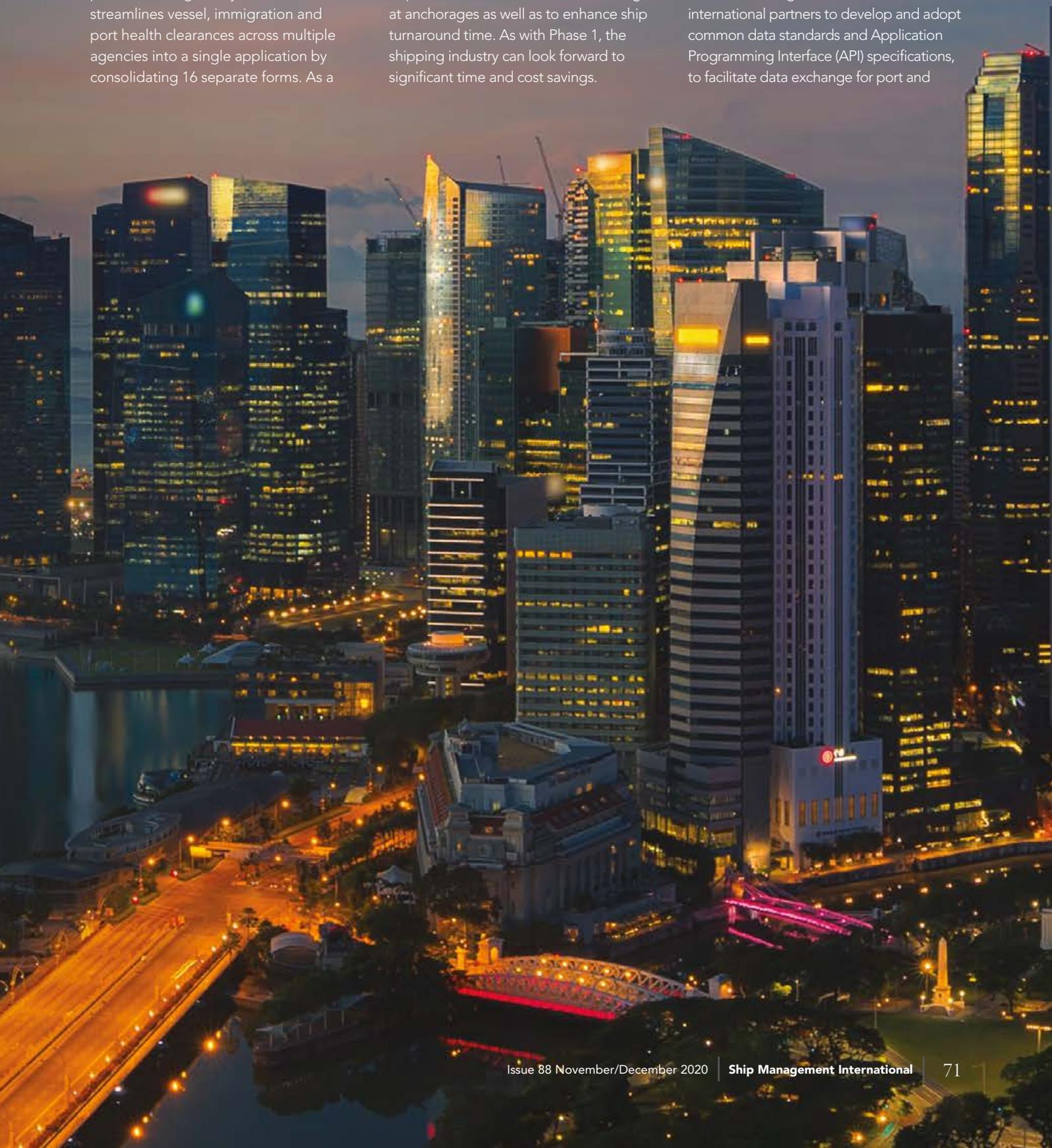
Media Development Authority (IMDA) in Singapore, launched the Maritime Digitalisation Playbook in June 2020 to help companies embark on their digitalisation journey. They also have access to financial support from its Maritime Cluster Fund.

Within the Port of Singapore, the MPA has also replaced Marinet with digitalPORT@SGTM, a one-stop digital platform for regulatory transactions that streamlines vessel, immigration and port health clearances across multiple agencies into a single application by consolidating 16 separate forms. As a

result, the industry can now save up to 100,000 man-hours per year.

In its next phase, digitalPORT@SGTM will be enhanced to become a single integrated digital platform for the industry to facilitate the booking of marine services from service providers. It will also provide Just-In-Time (JIT) services to facilitate direct berthing on arrivals and on-time departures to avoid or minimise waiting at anchorages as well as to enhance ship turnaround time. As with Phase 1, the shipping industry can look forward to significant time and cost savings.

Going forward, the MPA is taking this digital effort globally and hopes to bring along the entire international maritime community with it. "The next step will be our digital OCEANSTM strategy, to foster port-to-port and system-to-system digital connectivity through open or common data exchange standards. Already in July this year, the MPA signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with five international partners to develop and adopt common data standards and Application Programming Interface (API) specifications, to facilitate data exchange for port and



maritime services transactions. We warmly welcome more like-minded partners to join us in this initiative. Together, we can help to digitally transform the global supply chain," said Ms Quah Ley Hoon.

This whole area of digitalisation has come to the forefront of the thinking of industry practitioners, but as Olav Nortun, CEO of the The Thome Group, stressed, while the industry is embracing it in a way it couldn't imagine pre-COVID, "how we have digitalised will affect the way we man the vessels in the future."

"Digitalisation helps to influence a lot of what is going on, with a different set of tools. It is difficult to say what the new norm will be. In Singapore, we have been in a bubble as we have been closed to the outside world. If we manage an operation today what changes will we see in the future? Are we less connected to our physical place? Do we need to organise ourselves in the way we are and will we have the same connectivity we had before COVID," he added.

In the area of decarbonisation – the MPA will launch the Maritime Singapore Decarbonisation Blueprint 2050 next year. The blueprint will chart out strategies to achieve a sustainable maritime Singapore and establish Singapore as a responsible hub port and international maritime centre. Singapore is driving maritime decarbonisation to meet the IMO's 2030 and 2050 decarbonisation targets of reducing total annual Greenhouse Gas emissions by at least 50% compared to 2008 levels.

Ms Quah Ley Hoon again: "To guide us in formulating our decarbonisation strategy, we formed the IAP, a cross-disciplinary global network of experts which had its inaugural meeting in July 2020. As a responsible Member State of the IMO, Singapore has always been committed to supporting sustainable shipping within our port. Under the Maritime Singapore Green Initiative (MSGI), MPA's Green Ship Programme offers incentives to Singapore-flagged ships which exceed IMO's Energy Efficiency Design Index (EEDI) requirements, and/or adopt engines using alternative fuels with low carbon content such as LNG. The MPA's Green Port Programme also provides 25% port dues concessions for qualifying vessels that use LNG as a bunker fuel or have exceeded the IMO's existing EEDI requirements."

The MPA and its partners are funding the research, test-bedding, and adopting low-carbon technologies through the S\$40 million Maritime GreenFuture Fund. MPA also recently launched the joint Call for Proposals with the Singapore Maritime Institute (SMI) to support the development in electrification of harbour craft.

In the immediate term, MPA has been actively developing Singapore's ecosystem and infrastructure for LNG bunkering since 2017, to support the use of LNG as a clean transitional fuel. This journey has not been a straightforward one. From ensuring there is sufficient supply of LNG to building up the standards and guidelines to ensure safe LNG bunkering, it has actively planned ahead and leveraged on key partnerships. Domestically, the MPA has worked with government agencies and businesses to develop the Technical Reference for LNG Bunkering, or TR56 for short, to guide LNG bunkering operations in the Port of Singapore.



Internationally, it has also collaborated with like-minded port authorities and maritime administrations to develop a set of harmonised LNG bunkering standards and procedures for ocean-going vessels for LNG bunkering, the MPA concluded.

Turning our attention to more pressing issues like the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact this has had on crew change practices, the MPA CEO is quick to defend the actions of her agency in this area, pointing to the facilitation since 27th March, of more than 60,000 sign-on and sign-off crew of all nationalities from some 3,500 ships of different flags involving more than 2,900 companies. On average, Singapore is conducting some 500 to 600 cases of crew change per day, she stressed.

## As a responsible Member State of the IMO, Singapore has always been committed to supporting sustainable shipping within our port

“Together with our Tripartite partners – Singapore Shipping Association (SSA), Singapore Maritime Officers’ Union (SMOU) and Singapore Organisation of Seamen (SOS) – we are constantly reviewing our crew change procedures. Creative ideas we have come up with to enhance the crew change process during the pandemic include:

- Publishing the Singapore Crew Change Guidebook to detail crew change procedures under the ‘safe corridor’, which IMO circulated to all IMO Member States as a reference.
- Using tele-medicine consultation to assess if the crew is fit-to-travel for the purpose of signing-off in Singapore
- Chartering flights for countries which have suspended scheduled international passenger flights
- Re-purposing floating accommodations into a dedicated Crew Facilitation Centre for crew change
- Extending financial support for Singaporean seafarers under the Seafarers Relief Package; and
- Establishing the Singapore Shipping Tripartite Alliance Resilience Fund (SG-STAR Fund). MPA worked with our tripartite partners and global players including international industry associations such as International Maritime Employer’s Council, International Transport Workers’ Federation and International Chamber of Shipping to set up this global fund. This is the first global tripartite initiative bringing together the industry, unions and government to work with stakeholders in seafaring nations on concrete solutions for safe crew changes.

Demetris Chrysostomou, newly appointed Managing Director of the Asia Region for Columbia Shipmanagement, praised the quality of the planning and the help offered by the Singapore Government – key factors in creating the Singapore cluster into one of the strongest globally.

“The main challenge faced in 2020 is undoubtedly the COVID pandemic and the necessity to significantly restrict travel to and from Singapore. Since the cluster

is significantly made up of international companies as well as reliant on major exhibitions and conferences, these restrictions have been huge. On the growth side, possibly the recent political events in Hong Kong may see growth opportunities for Singapore, however, this is to be seen once our world returns to some form of normality,” he said.

“The focus in Singapore has been mostly in dealing with the containment of COVID spread and slowly looking at conservative ways to open up. Of course, having contained the virus very successfully would presumably help the move to a faster economic recovery post-COVID which I would assume will place Singapore in a strong competitive position globally.”

According to Mr Chrysostomou, the Singapore MPA has been at the forefront of crew welfare during the pandemic but of course within certain restrictive parameters necessary to deal with the challenges and also, of course, safeguarding the country against the spread of COVID. Singapore has managed to set-up procedures enabling shipping companies to comply and facilitate crew arrangements in a manner which is more convenient and less restrictive than the majority of other major ports globally.

He added: “Crew matters, crew welfare, mental well-being as well as crew changes have and still are undoubtedly the greatest challenges faced during the pandemic. At Columbia we have been fortunate to have established a number of positive initiatives even before COVID which have served us and our people significantly. These were initiatives such as 24/7 mental health line, well-being and improved catering arrangements, Columbia Fit initiatives, Columbia Care package for crew and staff,



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online crewing portals, online training platform just to mention a few.

“At the same time operationally, Columbia has been better equipped than most to deal with the crew challenges through our global network of 14 Columbia Manning Agencies and a large number of Ship Management Offices through Europe and Asia including the ability for all staff to work fully remotely as required from time to time to comply with national restrictions related to COVID measures. From our Chairman and CEO down, our emphasis has been on our crew, our clients, our staff and safety overall and this has undoubtedly helped us mitigate, as far as humanly possible, the challenges of this pandemic and keep safety, quality and our service level to our clients and market at the same high standards pre-COVID,” he said.

Steffen Pedersen, Partner at the law firm Penningtons Manches Cooper, stressed that while the Singapore and Asian markets were ‘very robust’ at the moment, “there is a distinct ‘localisation’ with visas harder for foreigners to get and local firms springing up to compete with the international maritime players. Such localisation is, in my view, a natural development (it has happened in Hong Kong and Shanghai too) and has simply been speeded up by COVID.

“My feeling is that disputes have actually increased. The Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) has surpassed 1,000 cases for the year for the first time, and the Singapore Chamber of Maritime Arbitration (SCMA) is also busy. So, on this basis I would say it is robust, and with shipping trade continuing, so will the disputes.”

According to Mr Pedersen, Singapore is blessed with having a nimble business-minded government supporting its core sectors, like legal services. “I think Singapore has positioned itself extremely

well to be at the forefront of the post-COVID dispute resolution world with its excellent virtual hearing facilities and infrastructure and at the same time actively looking at ways to re-open travel through air bubbles which, once open, will be a big game changer for the city as first mover,” he said.

And how is business going this year? “Extremely well. In Singapore we do contentious work. Mainly arbitration,

## With a robust maritime growth strategy and support in place for productivity, the Singapore cluster has always remained buoyant in seizing opportunities and development

although I also have a couple of court cases being run by local firms related to arbitrations I have, as well. My main work during the last few months has been disputes arising out of the Hin Leong fraud which has affected some tanker owners quite badly. We are up against banks and charterers. Other than that, I have the run of the mill dry shipping disputes: claims for misdelivery, charterparty disputes, bunkering disputes and I also act as arbitrator and have had quite a few appointments in maritime arbitrations through the year, which again

would attest to a very robust amount of disputes,” he added.

Executive Ship Management is well versed in the opportunities facing a growing maritime cluster like Singapore but according to the company, ship management faced a cascading effect from the global fallout this year, especially with the increase in operational costs due to COVID, such as mandatory tests and institutional quarantine etc. Business growth has been stunted at least by 20-25% but the company has coped up well with the new normal and the management has been able to ensure health and safety as a priority. There is a disruption in the scheduled growth path, but it has continued its emphasis on utilising this time on consolidation and preparation for ‘after-COVID’.

With a robust maritime growth strategy and support in place for productivity, the Singapore cluster has always remained buoyant in seizing opportunities and development, the company said.

But what about the Asian market in general? Executive Ship Management again: “Strategic and timely efforts such as the recent Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) between the Asia-Pacific nations is poised to catapult the Asian market for recovery and growth opportunities post COVID. Although hit hard with the pandemic, Asian countries such as Singapore managed containment, protecting themselves against prolonged or sporadic lockdowns which in turn has now served well in restarting the economies – a stark contrast to the current European or American reality.

“In Asia, we are optimistic about recovery and the necessary boosts initiated by the nations to reinforce the economy,” a spokesperson said. ●





## Coasting post-COVID

By **Michael Grey, MBE**, is an internationally respected maritime commentator

**D**uring this horrible year of plague and uncertainty, we have been frequently urged to bend our minds to new ways of doing things and after it is all over, to embrace a “new normal”, rather than returning to the old ways.

We are frequently lectured about the “opportunity” in a post-COVID-19 world for some original thinking about lifestyles, the way we work and, in particular, our custody of the environment. And it is quite clear that much of this is resonating with the public, policy makers and governments, who see a unique opportunity to introduce ideas which, in normal circumstances, may not have got off the ground.

A surprising amount of this thinking has revolved around energy and transport. Thus, when not worrying about the economic effects of the pandemic, we have been encouraged to consider a world beyond fossil fuels, with accelerated timetables for carbon reduction, the replacement of petrol and diesel with more benign fuel solutions and renewed enthusiasm for renewables. And it is also clear that marine transport, like it or not, is going to have to go with this particular flow and adapt its practices accordingly.

We should be encouraged that the shipping industry has largely made it clear that it is going to play its part, with individual players exploring the use of new fuels and carbon-reduction methodology. The industry as a whole has well-developed plans for funding collective research in a completely new form and is fully engaged with environmental regulators at all levels. So we perhaps should not be discouraged in this atmosphere of co-operation and a willingness to embrace changes. Additionally, encouraging noises have been heard from some major users of ships, who have suggested that they might in the future favour more sustainable shipping solutions.

One area that maybe ought to be explored for the opportunities it offers for a better transport world is that of coastal and short sea shipping, both from the possibilities of environmental improvement and the reduction of landside congestion. And while this might not be a new

idea it is suggested the time is now ripe for some serious development and investment in this area.

There are arguments both in favour and against such developments. In many coastal areas there is existing port infrastructure capable of expansion when it is not currently under-used. The concern generally surrounds the inability of coastal shipping systems to encourage users of ships to pay an economic rate for their services, leaving shipping under-invested and unable to afford the development of efficient and green modern tonnage. A brief examination of Northern European coaster fleets reveals a large proportion of ships might charitably be thought of as in the evening of their lives. It is not difficult to conclude that these fleets will need some sort of economic boost if they are to be modernised and made suitably sustainable.

There are some encouraging examples of governments willing to put a price on the “road to water” argument and effectively subsidising coastal shipping. The current edition of the specialist journal *Coastal Shipping* describes an initiative by the Scottish Government and Forestry Commission - the TimberLINK scheme - which effectively subsidises the ships for the number of lorry journeys they substitute.

There is progress being made on the technical front. The Japanese maritime sector is engaged in research on the development of electric coasters. There is also pioneering work being undertaken in Norway to replace conventional short sea domestic tonnage with “clean” maritime transport and there is interest in a range of different fuels, along with battery and hybrid power. EU funding is available to encourage such design developments.

In the end, it all depends upon those who use coastal shipping to pay enough for these developments to advance, beyond a range of conceptual schemes, into cold steel and viable businesses. It will require, one suggests, something more than the traditional government “hands-off” approach to marine transport and a more focussed attitude to the sustainability improvements sea transport can uniquely provide. ●

# Pragmatic eco approach by short-sea owners

*New powering options have been embraced in a raft of fleet development projects for the European short-sea dry cargo trades.*

Funding through the European Union or national governments has underpinned several research programmes for designs and demonstrators of short-sea cargo carrying vessels of radical type, focused on zero-emission technologies and high levels of automation. However, newbuild schemes implemented over the past year by operators display an altogether more pragmatic and affordable technical approach, with the overarching goal of ensuring long-term trading viability while achieving the significantly reduced environmental impact mandated by regulators or sought by shippers.

Total reliance on untried or non-conventional marine powering technologies or fuels is anathema to the short-sea community in particular, which treads a more circumspect developmental path, and for whom efficiency is not only intertwined with today's all-pervading environmental demands but elemental to survivability in what has always been an intensely competitive and operationally rigorous sphere of trade.

Two 9,200dwt geared minibulkers ordered from Dutch shipbuilder Royal Bodewes by Aasen Shipping of Norway will incorporate a hybrid powering solution, albeit benefiting from a degree of state financial support for the hybrid design engineering aspects of the project. In the diesel-electric solution adopted, a 340kWh battery pack will confer a peak-shaving capability, provide for propulsion and manoeuvring in port on batteries alone, and engender noise- and emissions-free cargo handling by means of battery powering of each vessel's deck-mounted, electric excavator.

Aasen sought the advice of technology group Wartsila, which determined that the investment premium entailed in fitting a battery installation would be more than offset by achievable fuel cost savings over time. The owner had also considered an LNG-capable, dual-fuel main engine, but decided against this on account of higher costs and also out of logistical considerations as to LNG availability relative to the intended trading area.

For short-sea operators, levels of capital expenditure on new assets have to be weighed against the typically low-margin nature of intra-regional and coastwise trade in

bulk commodities. Judicious use of energy storage systems, though, appears to offer scope for operational cost savings, as does investment in the latest power take-off/power take-in (PTO/PTI) arrangements, yielding companion benefits in lessened emissions. The operating profile of such vessels, typically entailing multiple short voyages over time, weather-influenced variable speeds, frequent waiting at or off ports due to tides or working shifts, and fluctuating load demands where cargo gear is fitted, affords ample scope for hybrid options.

UK shortsea specialist Scotline Marine has continually renewed and developed its fleet over recent years, and its latest phase of newbuild investment is distinguished by the nomination of a hybrid power arrangement, albeit on a modest scale so as to determine the best course of action in future projects.

The contract for a 90-metre singledecker is the fourth of the Bodewes Trader 4800 type ordered by the company from Royal Bodewes. Unlike the preceding newbuilds, however, the latest vessel will be equipped with an 80kWh bank of batteries to reduce diesel genset operating time, fuel consumption and associated emissions. This is thought to be the first such installation specified for a British coaster.

The Bodewes Trader 4800 class offers an underdeck cargo volume of some 240,000ft<sup>3</sup> and an overall timber-fitted load capacity of 6,800m<sup>3</sup>, well suited to Scotline's particular strengths in forestry product transportation, as well as bulk goods and project shipments. She will be strengthened and certificated to Swedish/Finnish ice class 1A standard, reflecting the need to ensure year-round continuity in the Baltic traffic.

Sri Lankan shipbuilder Colombo Dockyard recently scored a major success on the European market by landing a deal with Misje Eco Bulk of Norway for six 5,000dwt dry cargo vessels, plus options on four further units. On a length of just under 90m, the singledeckers will provide for the range of bulk commodities, including timber and steel products plus unit loads.

The concept and basic design has been developed by the Norwegian arm of Wartsila Ship Design, and a

fundamental aim has been to provide an edge over existing vessels of the same size as regards emissions performance. Central to this objective is the nomination of a four-stroke main diesel engine complemented by an electric hybrid solution delivering power through a bank of batteries. System integrator is Norwegian Electric Systems.

A new concept of short-sea singledecker that would facilitate intermittent technological adaptation and updating has been proposed by a Dutch company. A central feature of the 5,000dwt *Future Trader* emanating from Groningen design engineering consultancy DEKC Maritime is a modular engine room with exchangeable power plant.

The *Future Trader* marries a comprehensively optimised hull form with provision for economic upgrading of the power installation and driveline so as to adopt alternative energy sources and machinery, and benefit from technological advances throughout the ship's lifetime. The future of marine fuels is a fundamental topic. As observed by DEKC, "The industry knows that diesel will not last forever as the primary source of power on a ship, but no one knows exactly in which direction to look for an alternative." The aim, therefore, has been to devise a design that would enable the power unit to be relatively easily exchanged for a unit running on a different source of power.

Trust forged through longstanding business relationships between cargo producers and short-sea shipping specialists continues to underpin many of the sector's fleet investments. The drive by European industry to reduce its carbon footprint across-the-board has fundamental implications for transport logistics, giving added dimension to expectations of tonnage employed on charter or under contract of affreightment. Operators must accordingly look not only to proliferating environmental legislation when planning newbuilds, but also to the agendas of the cargo generators.

A new project involving the Amsterdam-based Spliethoff Group and Finnish paper maker UPM exemplifies the mutual drive to achieve 'greener' operations while raising ship efficiency and productivity and ensuring the requisite service dependability and cargo care. The adoption of a customised LNG fuel system in a highly versatile quartet of cargo carriers ordered this year by Spliethoff on the strength

of forward commitments by UPM promises to put the series in a class of its own.

The 5,800dwt vessels will be used in the transport of pulp and other forest products, with the additional capability to sail in 'open top' mode or in flush deck configuration so as to handle project cargo. There are evidently no existing general purpose vessels running on LNG offering the possibility of voyaging with the hatch covers open.

Spliethoff Group member Wijnne Barends, the prospective operator of the ships, and a leading coastal and shortsea fleet owner and manager in its own right, engaged Conoship International of Groningen for the basic design. The superstructure and bridge are located forward so as to improve conditions in open-top mode, and the LNG fuel tank is placed underdeck.

Use of natural gas is expected to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by approximately 25% relative to marine gas oil (MGO), virtually eliminate soot, and cut NO<sub>x</sub> and SO<sub>x</sub> by 85% and 95% respectively, achieving full compliance with IMO Tier III standards. Construction has been awarded to Wuhu Shipyard in China, with the European technology input featuring in each case a Wartsila 34DF model of dual-fuel main engine, plus Wartsila transmission, nozzled controllable pitch propeller and LNGPac fuel storage and supply system.

Such is the importance of the short-sea sector to the Dutch maritime cluster and within the Dutch fleet as a whole, and especially so for the industry in the country's northernmost provinces, that it is the subject of a dedicated financing instrument.

The NESEC Shipping Debt Fund(NSDF) was officially launched in the Netherlands on 27th January 2020 to provide mortgage-backed loans to Dutch and potentially other northwest European shipowners specialised in intra-regional, short-sea trade. The fund has a pool of €250 million (US\$ 294m), and is open to shipowners looking to obtain a long-term loan for newbuild or secondhand vessel up to 15,000 dwt, or for a ship modification project to raise efficiency.

Allocations are guaranteed by the Netherlands Ministry of Economic Affairs, with the approval of the European Commission. ●



The here and now: modern Scotline tonnage for the tough business of short-sea trading

# Objects of desire

## » Quattro mania

Audi is celebrating 40 years of quattro with this special edition top-of-the-line model in the TT model line. Limited to just 40 units, it draws on the power of the 2.5 TFSI engine from Audi Sport with the top speed raised to 174mph as standard. The five-cylinder engine produces 294 kW (400 PS) and develops maximum torque of 480 Nm (354.0 lb-ft) while the quattro permanent all-wheel drive distributes the power as required between the front and rear axles using a multi-plate clutch. The driver can influence the quattro drive and other components such as steering, seven-speed S tronic, exhaust flaps and engine characteristics using the Audi drive select dynamic handling system.

### Audi TT RS '40 years of quattro'

€114,040  
audi.com



## » Style icon



Vinyl is still making a comeback and you can make some beautiful sounds with this stunning turntable from Bang & Olufsen. Nearly 50 years since it was first released, the Beogram returns with the same futuristic look that made it famous. The restored table has had its aluminum polished and anodized for a warmer champagne glow, while new hand-crafted solid oak has been added to frame each deck. The interior has also been upgraded with a new RIAA phono pre-amplifier for seamless integration between the 4000c and B&O's range of speaker options. Just 95 uniquely numbered units are being released to coincide with B&O's 95th birthday this year.

### Bang & Olufsen Beogram 4000C Recreated Turntable

bang-olufsen.com  
\$11,000

## » Nod to the nineties

Patek Philippe has launched two new models of its Twenty-4 ladies watch which first came to market in 1999 and became a popular wrist adornment as one of the first watches to combine steel and diamonds. In the new design Roman numerals are replaced with white gold applied Arabic numeral 12 and 6 and the diamond hour markers have been replaced with 18k white gold trapeze-shaped hour markers. There are two dial colour choices – sunburst blue or grey, and the case is flanked by two rows of 18 diamonds totalling just under half a carat.

### Patek Philippe Twenty-4

\$14,667  
patek.com



» Designer cognac



For the 150th anniversary edition of Hennessy X.O cognac, the maison asked world-renowned architect Frank Gehry to design a limited edition bottle that honours Hennessy's legacy, while looking to the future. Gehry, the architect behind the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles and Louis Vuitton Foundation in Paris among many more was inspired by the reflection of light and the movement of the Charente river and came up with this glamorous gold carafe and gift box reminiscent of the fractured flow of babbling water. An icon of Hennessy, X.O has remained unchanged since its creation. Around 100 of the finest eaux-de-vie are carefully selected and aged to create this sophisticated blend.

**Hennessy X.O Frank Gehry Limited Edition**  
 £178  
[clos19.com](http://clos19.com)

» Watch this

We may not be doing much travelling at the moment but when you do get back to globe-trotting ways, you will want to keep your time pieces protected. German luggage legends Rimowa have released this watch case adorned with their signature grooved aluminum exterior shell to protect your watch collection. Each case has a microfibre interior, and is designed to comfortably fit up to three timepieces and glides open to reveal three padded cushions.

**Rimowa Watch Case**  
[rimowa.com](http://rimowa.com)  
 \$2,050



» Free your writing

Free up your thoughts and get them down without the distractions of other devices such as phones with this travel typewriter. It features a main 4.76" x 2.75" E Ink screen, with a smaller status screen below it, a full-size, scissor-switch keyboard with 2mm of travel, and very little else. There's no need to worry about saving your notes as it's constantly saving in the background to its internal flash storage. It also has WiFi for backing up to the cloud, and an internal battery that lasts for up to four weeks, and recharges over USB-C, enabling the device to weigh just 1.6 lbs with a footprint half the size of a typical laptop.



**Freewrite Traveler Typewriter**  
 \$429  
[getfreewrite.com](http://getfreewrite.com)

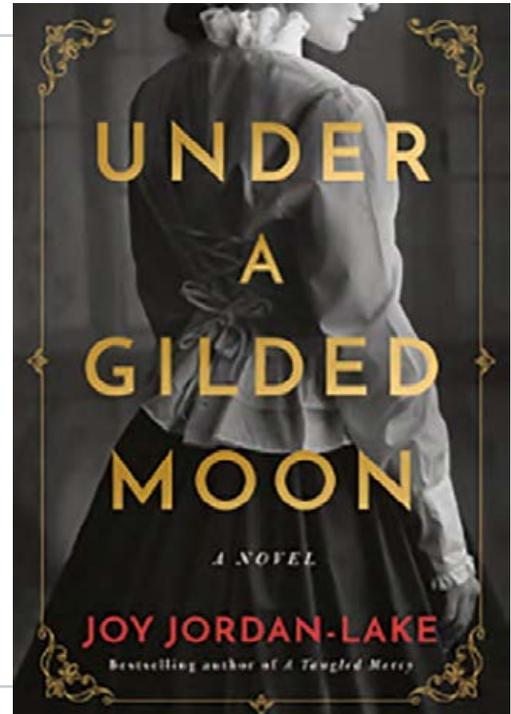
## Secrets, Murder and Class Conflict

By Joy Jordan-Lake

Lake Union

Biltmore House, a palatial Vanderbilt mansion, is in its final stages of construction in North Carolina. Its grandeur symbolises the owner's aspirations and the dreams of a girl who lives in its shadow. Kerry MacGregor's future is derailed when family obligations call her home to the beautiful Appalachians.

She is determined to distance herself from the opulence but something more powerful than an ambitious Vanderbilt heir could change Kerry's fate as she finds herself caught in an internecine war.



## Colour Burst In New York

By Ronnie Landfield 'Concurrence'

Showing until 14th January, 2021

[www.findlaygalleries.com](http://www.findlaygalleries.com)

Our interest moves to New York and the Findlay Gallery where colour bursts at their new Gallery on East 57th Street. Findlay Galleries Chairman and CEO James Borynack, commented: "Findlay Galleries is very proud to welcome Ronnie Landfield's 'Concurrence' exhibition. Landfield's colour field abstractions continue to develop with effortless sophistication, utilizing form, size, and colour in a progressive yet retrospective way." Your senses will reel at the sheer exuberance of Ronnie Landfield's riveting style and bold use of colour.

Ronnie Landfield "Concurrence" – Findlay Gallery, 32 East 57th Street, New York. Sat 14 Nov 2020 to Thu 14 Jan 2021  
Tue-Sat 10am-6pm.

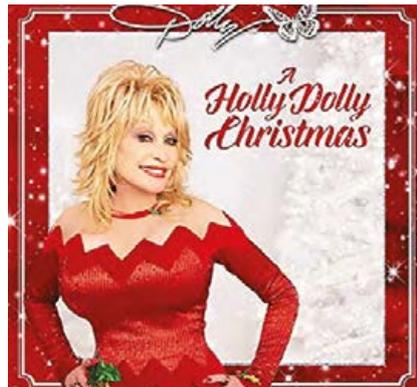
## A Holly Dolly Christmas!

**Dolly Parton**

Butterfly Records/12 Tone Music

'Tis the season to be jolly and if anyone can get you in the festive spirit it has to be Miss Dolly Parton! Her latest album – launching just in time for Christmas – will have you singing along in seasonal mood, countering those Winter Blues and Pandemic Palpitations. This CD is Dolly's first holiday album in 30 years.

The festive collection of music includes some of the timeless Christmas songs we all know and love, plus a few original tracks from Dolly.



## Innovative Dining in New York

**Hütte**

New York City

huttenyc.com



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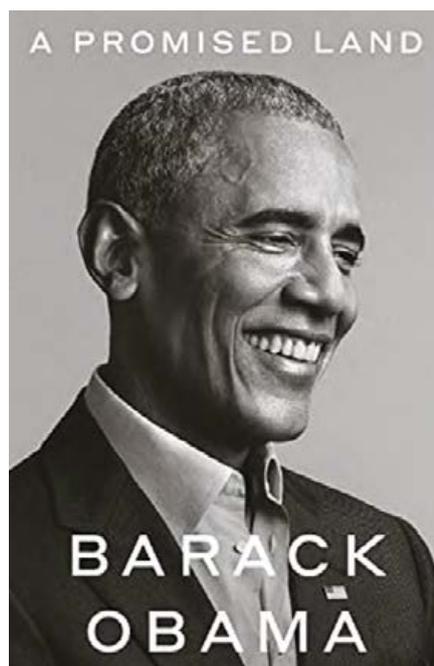
## First Volume of Barack Obama's Presidency Memoir

**By Barack Obama**

Crown Publishing Group

Leading the list of best sellers is former US President Barack Obama's account of the first two and a half years of his Presidency. This highly anticipated glimpse behind the scenes takes us in to The White House, the Situation Room, Beijing, Moscow and other stops along the way.

It puts into context where Obama started on his remarkable journey to becoming the 44th President of the United States and prepares the ground for Volume 2.



If our Art Exhibition has tickled your fancy you will need somewhere interesting to eat before or after your culture fix. Yodeling in the Alps might not be on the cards for you this winter, but for now, Hütte's outdoor restaurant experience, made to feel like an Austrian ski lodge, might be a novel substitute. They have built a heated tent and filled it with antique tables and hanging antlers, so if you're in the mood for a Tyrolean taster then do visit.

Hütte, 1652 Second Avenue, New York City.

## Niksen: Let us tilt at windmills

By Margie Collins

“I spent 25 years listening to people talk bollocks every night,” Jeremy Paxman, the combative former presenter of BBC’s Newsnight, said recently. Lucky for him he had been spared the vaporous nonsense of one of the reigning queens of psychobabble, actress Gwyneth Paltrow, who parlayed her celebrity into a successful company.

Goop, a wellness and lifestyle brand designed to tickle your whim, purveys beauty products, jewellery, home decor, crystals and cookware. Its vampire facials involve injecting a person’s own platelet-rich plasma onto one’s face.

“When I started Goop in 2008, I thought my calling was something else besides making out with Matt Damon,” she said. “Goop is about laddering up to one thing: optimisation of the self. We only have one life: how can we milk the s..t out of it?”

When actor Mark Wahlberg shared his daily self-care regimen with fans, the Twittersphere nearly went into meltdown. He gets up at 2.30am; prays; breaks his fast at 3.15. Wahlberg does two 95-minute workouts every day; plays golf at 7.30am; there’s lunch and dinner, and three carefully spaced snacks;

then spends time in a cryo chamber (ice packs and ice-bath immersions). To bed at 7.30pm.

The billionaire founder of Twitter, Jack Dorsey, is also a morning lark, who starts his day at 5am with an hour-long meditation. He takes an ice bath before walking the 5.3 miles to work. Eschewing breakfast, he eats only one meal on weekdays (usually fish, steak or chicken, with arugula salad and spinach, and berries chased with multivitamins), and fasts on weekends. “I feel like if I can will myself to do that thing that seems so small but hurts so much, I can do nearly anything,” he said in a fitness podcast. He also swears by “therapeutic journaling”.

Dopamine fasting – the ‘new’ thing among tech titans - is avoiding any activity that stimulates levels of the brain chemical and neurotransmitter dopamine, which

affects physical functions and behaviours including motivation and reward, mood, learning and attention. Tech entrepreneur James Sinka has periodic 24-hour dopamine fasts. “I sit quietly, meditate, journal, shower, walk, nap, take in the sun. I feel reset – emotionally, physically and mentally. I have improved concentration, an easier time getting into flow; I am laser-focused on my task,” he said.

Google ‘self-care’ and up pops almost nearly three billion articles – all the angst and unhappiness that money can solace. Once considered a bourgeois contrivance, or a passing millennial trend beloved of the kale-quinoa-avocado set, self-care (sometimes conflated with self-love and self-help) has been a boon to



publishing; in 2018 alone over three million books were sold, up 20% from 2017. A Harris poll in 2019 reported that self-care 'isn't a priority for consumers because 44% believe it is only possible for people with enough time on their hands, and 35% saying it's only possible for those with enough money to spend on them.' Even with these findings, the self-care industry is worth billions of pounds.

All one needs to do, it seems, in our modern world is to follow ordinary patterns of diet and lifestyle. But we can sometimes feel like being barely held together by Sellotape; we are overwhelmed, overstressed, overscheduled and exhausted. We have also become obsessed with ourselves. "We are the generation," wrote P J O'Rourke, "that created the self, divided the life of the self from darkness of the self, and said: 'Let there be self.'"

A recent YouGov poll found that 74% of British people were so stressed they felt unable to cope. Something of a stress epidemic – exacerbated by the harms the coronavirus has inflicted on us – is upon us, giving rise to fatigue, irritability, anxiety, depression, insomnia, substance abuse and other mental-health problems. We live in a state of national grumpiness and high alert. It's raining down hellfire and this feels like tumbrel times.

According to NHS Digital, 70.1m prescriptions for antidepressants were dispensed in England in 2018; 6.6m in Scotland, 5.6m in Wales and 3.1m in Northern Ireland. "No

doctor wants their patients to be reliant on medication and most patients don't want this either," said Prof. Helen Stokes-Lampard, chair of the Royal College of GPs, to the BBC. "Where possible, we consider alternative treatments – CBT, talking therapies." And self-care remedies and therapies, surely?

What is self-care? Navel-gazing; cleansing chakra stones; Buddhist temples, Benedictine monasteries; lifestyle gurus; bath oils and scented candles; detoxes and extreme diets in Alpine retreats; cannabinoids; therapets – cats, dogs and other emotional-support animals; Headspace, Calm and other meditation apps; yoga with goats; tea with Herdwick sheep? It is all these and more, for as our cares and worries got bigger and unmanageable, we learned to outsource our anxieties and problems to third parties.

Self-care - without resorting to fridge-magnet fortune-cookie witticisms - is loving one's self; directing care, kindness and attention to self, achieving and maintaining wellness. In the bestselling "12 Rules for Life", Jordan Peterson admonished: "You deserve some respect. You have some vital role to play in the unfolding destiny in the world. You are therefore morally obliged to take care of yourself."

Self-care was always primed to inspire the production of products that would enhance wellbeing and felicity. Tech gadgets – wearable fitness trackers, personalised health-care devices – provide health data at one's fingertips: the Apple watch,

Fitbit, Whoop and other gizmos that track heart and pulse rates, sleep patterns, fertility windows, etc. "We've advanced from simply counting steps to bringing health information directly to consumers' wrists," said Shelten Yuen, Fitbit's research vice-president. "The more a user understands about their personal health, the more empowered they are to make meaningful behaviour changes."

Hotels and holiday resorts are marketing wellbeing as a major selling point for travel. Grand View Research has valued the global wellness-tourism market at \$683.3bn; Global Wellness Institute reported that over 830m wellness trips were taken in 2017. Covid-19 has merely suppressed a burbling pent-up urge to restart travel. Next year has already been billed as "The Great Escape 2021."

"The average span of human life is less than 1,000 months," wrote Prof. A C Grayling. "If for a third of them you are asleep and a third you're in Tesco, the other third – about 25 years – is left for you to live well." The need for good sleep has created a global sleep-products market worth nearly \$70bn - anything from mattresses, aromatherapies, autonomous sensory meridian response, sound and music. The musician Tom Middleton produced "Sleep Better" – an eight-part suite featuring birds, ocean waves and sustained synthesiser chords that encourage deep sleep. Gordon Hempton, an acoustic ecologist whose mission is to "save quiet for the benefit of all life", records soothing natural



**The more a user understands about their personal health, the more empowered they are to make meaningful behaviour changes**





soundscapes. Jazz pianist Chad Lawson sends people to sleep; the star of “The Evening Calm” which is broadcast on Facebook and YouTube, he is filmed playing meditative and hypnotic piano pieces. He cites an Oxford Press study that claims that listening to music for just three to five minutes a day calms us, elevates our mood and releases hormones that combat stress. “The moment the world went into lockdown, insomnia soared. I was inundated with messages from fans saying my music was helping to keep them calm,” Lawson said.

Jumping on the bandwagon were Apple Music radio station and Spotify whose mental-health playlists have surged by 50% since March. The Dalai Lama, no slacker himself, released “Inner World” in summer: 11 tracks of his teachings and mantras set to music.

But what if we didn’t have to put the athleisure-wear on; no yoga mats or Eastern music; no more dousing pillows with lavender oils, bathing in patchouli? What if we just did – nothing? Jenny Odell, author of the bestselling “How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy”, promotes the idea we should detach ourselves from our online lives. “I believe that having recourse to periods and spaces for doing nothing is even more important because those are times and spaces that we think, reflect, heal and sustain ourselves...in this time of extreme overstimulation, I suggest that we re-imagine #FOMO (fear of missing out) as #NOMO (the necessity of missing out), or if that bothers you,

#NOSMO (the necessity for sometimes missing out),” Odell wrote.

A 2019 survey of UK smartphone users found on average people spend three hours and 25 minutes on their phones each day. We text, consume news, bank, listen to music and podcasts, tweet, flirt using our devices. “We do all those personal things... our phones become charged with all the feelings we experience while using them. All this makes it hard to block out our phones - this piece of magic, engineered to be maximally distracting,” wrote John Lanchester.

Let us tilt then at windmills, towards the straight-talking, Calvinist Dutch – the fifth happiest people on earth – and learn *niksen*, to do nothing. Carolien Hamming, Managing Director of CSR Centrum which helps clients manage stress and recover from burnout, describes *niksen* as: “To be idle; to do something without any use or purpose. It’s aimlessness, just hanging around, looking at surroundings, listening to music, as long as it is without purpose.”

Looking out the window, watching raindrops fall. Stroking your cat. Lying in the sun, watching clouds race by. Going for an aimless walk. Watching a gibbous moon; feeling pebbles on your feet as waves come crashing by. Knitting, ironing – monotonous activities that do not require two brain cells to rub together, allowing the mind to wander freely. Just being. This is *niksen* – and not to be confused with mindfulness or laziness.

“Dare to be idle,” Hamming told The Times. “It’s all about allowing life to run its course, to free us from obligations for

just a moment. At work you could take a short break, around two minutes every hour. Stare out the window, walk around, take a short nap of 10-12 minutes. Close your eyes or listen to relaxing music. The paradox is if you allow yourself to be idle now and then, it ultimately makes you more productive and creative.”

Journalist Olga Mecking has written bestselling books on *niksen*, which she has compared to a car whose engine is running but isn’t going anywhere. “Our culture does not promote sitting still,” she wrote for the New York Times. “And this can have wide-ranging consequences for our mental health, wellbeing and productivity. Technology does not make it easier. The smartphone you carry with you at all hours makes it almost impossible to unplug and embrace idleness. By keeping ourselves busy at all times, we may be losing our ability to sit still because our brains are actually being rewired. The brain is always active, always on. It is doing everything, talking quietly to itself.”

The National Trust with the University of Derby recently conducted a study which showed that daily connections to our physical environment do lift our spirits. The Times’ leader duly thundered: “Exposure to even the most minor glories of the natural world makes us happier. Few of us take a moment to enjoy what we know to be good for us. This can be as simple as admiring the flowers, listening to birdsong, or merely observing passing clouds for a minute or two...watching a sunrise, stargazing, tracking the progress of a butterfly or bee.” ●

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\*\*Source: Euroconsult, Prospects for Maritime SATCOM, 2020, market share VSAT units