

# THE PILOT

JANUARY 2008 No.292



The official organ of the United Kingdom Maritime Pilots' Association

## Editorial

The role of the pilot has never been easy to define but generally the Master pilot relationship results in a mutual understanding that works remarkably well considering the number of ship movements that are undertaken without incident throughout the world every day. Unfortunately a combination of circumstances inevitably combine which results in an incident in pilotage waters and of course the investigators have the benefit of hindsight to analyse in detail what went wrong and make "recommendations". However, there is a fundamental difference between undertaking an investigation to produce reports to provide "lessons learnt" in order to prevent others making a similar error and using the findings to apportion blame which could result in prosecutors using such fact finding reports in support of legal action. Regrettably there is an increasing tendency towards the latter in maritime investigations and whilst the system has worked extremely well for the air industry it is no longer working for the maritime industry. In a recent "Viewpoint" column in Lloyd's List, Michael Gray eloquently wrote about this development and quoted Dennis Bryant of Holland & Knight who has accurately summed up the difference in the following quote:

*"When there is an aviation casualty, the search starts for the cause and how to prevent a recurrence, When there is a maritime casualty, the search often starts for someone to blame and possibly prosecute."*

Pilots are of course at the front line and the UKMPA are currently supporting two members whose authorisations are under threat following incidents. By seeking to identify a "culprit" in every maritime incident and possibly using MAIB reports to bring legal action against individuals there is a danger that those involved will increasingly refuse to co-operate in investigations. This is a serious problem that the MAIB needs to address as a matter of urgency.

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## SQUAT: Are we out of our depth?

All pilots are aware that, at speed, ships display a tendency to sit deeper in the water, a phenomenon officially referred to as "squat". Despite their being generally aware of squat, most pilots have no respect the squat tables calculated for a particular ship because they frequently indicate that a passage using historically proven safe under keel clearance (UKC) parameters is mathematically impossible! In the majority of ports the UKC parameters were established sometime around the time of Noah and traditional pilot training has meant that rather than relying on mathematical tables, pilots gain an instinctive "feel" for the ship with vibration, high exhaust temperatures or a breaking quarter wash indicating that a vessel's speed is too high for the existing water depth which usually results in the speed being reduced before a squat induced grounding occurs! A pilot's knowledge and experience of their own district is therefore considered more reliable than the tables

and consequently the number of groundings solely resulting from squat are almost non-existent and the only case that I can identify as being totally attributable to squat is the QE2 leaving Massachusetts in August 1992.

So, in theory, squat can be disregarded as a serious problem for pilotage navigation but these days the "we'll pull her back a bit Capt as we go over the shoal" approach is not considered best passage planning practice so, in order that we can factor in squat, it is increasingly necessary to have accurate data regarding the causes and effects of squat.

As mentioned previously, information provided by the ship's squat tables rarely tallies with the pilot's / port's established passage planning speed / UKC guidelines but there are now two key reasons why pilots must take squat seriously. Firstly, should a pilot be unfortunate enough to be involved in any incident the passage plan and master / pilot exchange will be



*Restricted Channel.*

*According to Dr Barass' squat tables this tanker should be aground! Photo JCB*

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*Squat exists! This vessel is steaming at about 12.5kts. Draft 7m Water depth 16m. Photo JCB*

examined in detail and if a pilot hasn't discussed the squat characteristics with the Master then he will be condemned by the investigators, regardless as to whether or not squat was of relevance to the incident. The second factor is that well trained "bridge teams" now utilise squat tables when calculating safe UKC parameters in their passage plans so the Master / pilot relationship can get off to a frosty start if the pilot breezes up to the bridge and dismisses the bridge team's squat tables as an irrelevance that can be ignored, especially if he then identifies points during the intended passage where the UKC is likely to be less than the tabulated squat! The intention of this article is to try to increase the overall understanding of the squat phenomena.

My interest was triggered by a major feature on squat, somewhat alarmingly titled "Don't Fall Victim To Ship Squat Perils" in the July 2006 issue of the *Nautilus Telegraph*, written by Dr. Barrass FNI whose mathematical calculations and tables are those used throughout the Industry and shipping fleets. In that article Dr. Barrass reproduced tables which indicated that at 10 kts speed through the water a vessel with a high block coefficient such as a tanker or bulk carrier would squat between 1 and 2 metres and that this might be doubled if another vessel was passed in shallow waters. This is clearly an incorrect figure because such vessels have been safely transiting shallow water port approaches using under keel clearances of 0.5m and 1.0 m years before any calculations had been produced to suggest that such parameters were unsafe! I had therefore been planning to write and question Dr. Barrass' mathematics myself but Houston pilots' representative, Louis Vest, beat me to it and the following is an extract of his letter:

*"... we will transit a vessel with 13.7m of draft and 0.6m of under keel clearance. A typical transit speed for such a vessel will be about 10 to 12 knots across the bay.*

*According to the author's tables, we should experience about 2m of squat, but we don't. The ship runs up the channel, the 0.6m under keel clearance doesn't change, and we deliver the ship safely to her berth.*

*This is not a rare event but a daily occurrence. Contrary to the author's claim that squat increases in shallow water, squat appears to disappear in very shallow water.*

*The author also asserts: 'The presence of another ship in a narrow river (passing, overtaking or simply moored) will also affect squat – so much so that squats can double in value as they pass/ cross the other vessel.' We make our transits with two-way traffic. In no case has a change in squat been a factor in these meetings. I do believe that squat exists, but squat and ship hydrodynamics in very shallow water are a very poorly understood phenomenon. If the author would like to correspond with me in the interest of clarifying these points, I would be happy to oblige."*

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(Right) Freight Ro-Ro Speed 10 kts, draft: 6.5m UKC 8m. (Below) The same ship, speed 20 kts. Draft 6.5m UKC 8m

Photos JCB



Such observations are in accordance with our experience in London and many other major ports such as Rotterdam, also safely undertake passages using low UKC parameters so one would have expected that Dr Barrass would take up the offer of dialogue with the Houston pilots in order to try to understand and resolve the anomalies between the actual and theoretical squat. However, rather than entering into a constructive dialogue, Dr Barrass chose to respond in the December 2006 Telegraph with another article titled "Ship Squat Is A Real Issue In the Real World" where he used his complex formulae to reveal how the Houston pilots totally misunderstood how ships behave in shallow waters and narrow channels and accused them of dangerously negligent navigation practices which couldn't possibly be undertaken without a grounding. Unfortunately, Dr Barrass' diatribe reveals almost total ignorance of real ship operations with, for example, the following responses to Louis Vest's comments regarding transit speeds of 10 - 12 kts:

*"To me, his (Louis) speed appears to be 'ship speed over the ground.' This is the speed measured when using GPS. It is not the speed that I use, namely the 'ship speed relative to the water.' Louis Vest has mistakenly ignored the speed of current flow. At zero current flow it is not possible in hydrodynamics to have to a ship speeding at 10 to 12 knots along a channel where B/b is about 4 and H/T is about 1.04. In the real world the local port authority would take an extremely dim view of these speeds. Furthermore, the machinery space within an oil tanker would not generate sufficient power to produce these ship speeds along this channel."*

With respect to Louis' comments regarding squat seeming to disappear at slow speeds Dr. Barrass reveals poor research methodology by stating:

*"This just cannot be so. It defies the laws of physics. It contradicts the laws of the Venturi effect. I have a database of 69 vessels that have gone aground due to ship squat problems. If this quote were true, then we would not have had any groundings such as the Herald of Free Enterprise in 1987, the QE2 in USA in 1992 and the Sea Empress in 1996."*

These are unfortunate examples because only the QE2 grounding was directly attributable to squat and checking on other examples of groundings listed by Dr Barrass as having been caused by squat reveals that at least two (*Tasman Spirit* and *Diamond Grace*) grounded for reasons entirely unrelated to squat and most of the others listed cannot be directly attributed to squat. However, Dr Barrass' arguments were reinforced by retired Venetian pilot, Sergio Battera MNI who agreed with Dr Barrass

that UKC of 0.6m at speeds of 10-12 kts would be unsafe and could result in a grounding!

Louis Vest obviously responded and the following extracts highlight the key facts regarding the everyday navigation practices at Houston:

- a. Dr Barrass provided a table showing predicted squat of 1-2m for a vessel travelling at 10 knots in a confined channel. *The Houston Ship Channel crosses Galveston Bay for over 30 miles. It is a man-made channel 530ft wide and 45ft deep in a bay whose average depth immediately outside the channel is around 12ft, making this a restricted channel.*
- b. He made the assertion that the predicted squat can double in value as one vessel passes another vessel. *The project depth of the channel is 45ft and the initial dredging was to 47ft, as measured with tide value = 0. c.*
- c. Vessels making too great a speed in shallow water will ground due to squat. *We accept ships for transit to Houston with drafts of 45ft at 0 tide, 44ft at -1 tide, etc.*
- d. The lower the value of underkeel clearance the greater the value of predicted squat. *We transit Galveston Bay at speeds of 10-12 knots in these deep draft vessels. We do not run aground.*

*We operate in a two-way traffic environment and do not ground when meeting other vessels, even similarly loaded vessels. These are not calculations or predictions as some have suggested (Capt. Battera of Venice, January Telegraph). They are easily verifiable facts. They are not exceptions or rare occurrences but everyday events in the busiest port in the United States. The fact that our daily practice runs counter to accepted theories of squat is somewhat unfortunate for the scientists who have made this their life work, but it is no less true because of it.*

*Dr Barrass attempts to discredit my letter in several ways. In one paragraph he insultingly suggests that I am confused about the difference between speed over ground and speed through water. I would like to assure Dr Barrass that we humble seamen, in our crude Neanderthal way, are aware that current affects the speed of a vessel. In another paragraph Dr Barrass suggests that operating vessels at 10-12 knots across the bay is unsafe and irresponsible. The morality of the Houston pilots is not the question. We stand on our safety record. The ship, in a strictly scientific sense, cannot act irresponsibly. As an inanimate object (regardless of what personality traits she might manifest for her crew) the ship makes*

her transit in complete innocence of Dr Barrass's opinion of her conduct. For Dr Barrass to suggest that crossing the bay at 12 knots is dangerous or irresponsible ignores the substance of the subject, which is that Dr Barrass has published a table that says it can't be done and yet it is done on a routine basis. Elsewhere in his letter Dr Barrass employs his formulae to assert that the ship's machinery is inadequate to propel a vessel through a confined channel at 10-12 knots. Your readers can decide that one for themselves. On one hand you have a formula with  $B/b = 4$  and  $H/T=1.04$  and who knows what. On the other hand there is the vessel herself in one place one moment and a mile away still going strong five minutes later. I personally think  $Velocity = distance/time$  trumps Dr Barrass's hydrodynamic formulae here. Dr Barrass also uses formulae (not given) to predict that a vessel with a given speed in deep water would have her speed reduced to about one-third that speed in a confined, shallow channel given the same engine input. In practice, a vessel running very close to the bottom as we are discussing will make about 80% of the posted speed, not 33%. As the underkeel clearance increases that percentage approaches 100%. For example, a large tanker making turns for 12 knots as indicated in her tables will make about 10 knots. The same tanker outbound in ballast will make 11-11.5 knots. A small coaster with 5-6m of draft will make very close to her indicated speed. Yes, I am allowing for current (see above). In order to burst Dr Barrass's hopes that a change in water density from fresh water to salt water might explain our miraculous escape from the laws of physics as he interprets them, I would like to point out that Houston is a major oil port and the United States is an oil importing nation. Most, but not all, of our deep draft transits begin in the salty water of the Gulf of Mexico and terminate in the fresh water of Buffalo Bayou. The claim is made that we would not have had groundings such as the Herald of Free Enterprise, the QE2, and the Sea Empress if not for the effect of squat. According to the official report, the Sea Empress grounded on rocks due to the pilot's failure to adequately allow for the set of current across the channel. The Herald was notoriously lost due to the failure of her crew to secure her bow doors properly. Neither accident was remotely related to squat. The QE2 struck a rock jutting up from much deeper water all around. While this accident involved squat it is not related to my observations about squat in a confined channel with a continuous minimum underkeel clearance.

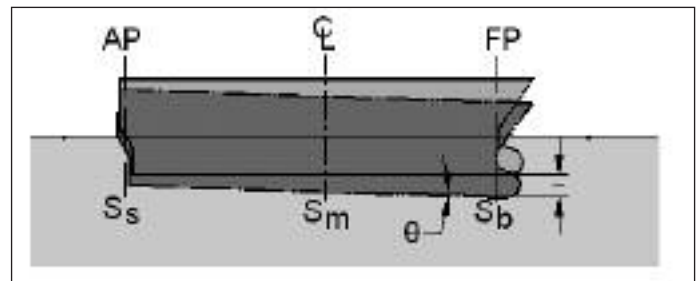
Now mariners from the ends of the earth (Houston) are telling scientists that their predictions of ship behaviour do not match real world observations. I suggest we recognise that our knowledge of the hydrodynamics of large vessels in very shallow water is indeed poorly understood. This represents an opportunity to advance our understanding of the world if properly taken.

This situation is obviously unsatisfactory. On the one hand we have pilots safely bringing ships in and out of port with minimum UKC parameters and on the other hand there are the scientific "experts" who have produced tables to prove that what we are doing is impossible. There is no other industry that would not only accept the mathematics without question but also create a safety policy around such poor scientific analysis. I have never met Dr. Barrass and I am sure that he is a very eminent mathematician but I would have thought that rather than publicly accusing the Houston pilots of incompetence and revealing a somewhat alarming ignorance of real ship behaviour, a curious scientist would have undertaken further research to explain the anomalies between the mathematical predictions and real time practical experience. To be fair to Dr Barrass his calculations are reasonably representative of others working on this phenomena and I will at least give him credit for sticking his head above the parapet and stimulating some emotional debate!

## So, what is squat?

The Permanent International Association of Navigation Congresses (PIANC) (see Autumn 2007 issue) is now the main forum for squat related issues. This is a positive development because the UKMPA attend the PIANC sessions so pilots' now have direct input into the discussions. The PIANC papers provide the following definitions of squat.

*Squat is the reduction in UKC between a vessel at-rest and underway due to the increased flow of water past the moving body. The forward motion of the ship pushes water ahead of it that must return around the sides and under the keel. This water motion induces a relative velocity between the ship and the surrounding water that causes a water level depression in which the ship sinks. The velocity field produces a hydrodynamic pressure change along the ship that is similar to the Bernoulli effect in that kinetic and potential energy must be in balance. This phenomenon produces a downward vertical force (sinkage, positive downward) and a moment about the transverse axis (trim, positive bow up) that can result in different values at the bow and stern*



Most of the time squat at the bow  $S_b$  represents the maximum value, especially for full-form ships such as supertankers. In very narrow channels or canals and for high-speed (fine-form) ships such as Passenger Liners and Containerships, the maximum squat can occur at the stern  $S_s$ . The initial trim of the ship also influences the location of the maximum squat. The ship will always experience maximum squat in the same direction as the static trim (Barrass 1995). If trimmed by the bow (stern), maximum squat will occur at the bow (stern). It is the classical "Venturi Effect" as streamlines will move faster under the smaller cross-sectional area at the bow (stern) resulting in lower pressure (i.e., more suction) and increased squat. It is not possible to compensate for increased squat at one end by trimming at the other end.

## Factors Governing Squat

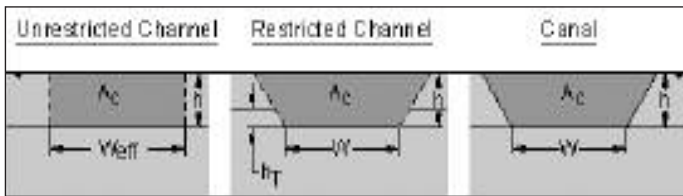
Prediction of ship squat depends on ship characteristics and channel configurations. The main ship parameters include ship's draft, hull block coefficient, and speed through the water. The main channel considerations are proximity of the channel sides and bottom Channel bends and proximity to banks tend to increase squat and muddy bottoms to decrease it. The presence of another ship (passing or moored) can also increase squat.

The most important ship parameter is its speed through the water and generally squat varies as the square of the speed so doubling the speed quadruples the squat.

The most important channel parameter is the water depth and can be ignored if the depth is twice the draft or more.

## How is squat calculated?

Consider yourselves lucky that I am not going to reproduce the mathematical formulae used to calculate squat because they are pretty baffling to a simple seaman such as me but for those of you who would like to see them they can be found via the web links I



have placed at the end of this article.

The calculations are made for three different shallow water conditions shown above and several specialists have produced mathematical formulae to calculate squat but Dr Barrass' formula are the most well known and widely used.

However, they all use the same basic concept so produce similar predictions but as highlighted by the exchange between Dr Barrass and the Houston pilots there are seemingly serious anomalies between the predicted squat and the actual squat experienced.

The following are examples of calculated squat from the ten main study groups for a selection of typical vessels illustrating the range between the results. They are for bow squat in an unrestricted channel with an initial UKC of about 2.5m and speed through the water of 11 kts.

*The name of the research group is in brackets.*

**250,000 DWT Tanker**

Largest squat (Milward)	1.25m
Least squat (Eryuzlu)	0.50m
(Barrass)	0.80m

**65,000 DWT Tanker**

Largest squat (Milward)	1.10m
Least squat (Romisch)	0.43m
(Barrass)	0.90m

**Panamax Container Ship**

Largest squat (Milward)	0.75m
Least squat (Romisch)	0.20m
(Barrass)	0.30m

As can be seen there is a considerable difference between the various researchers so the allegation by the Houston pilots that squat is a "very poorly understood phenomenon" is fully justified.

**Resolving the anomalies.**

The existing calculations are nearly all based upon theory or laboratory testing methodology and PIANC has recognized this and produced the following recommendation regarding squat :

*PIANC recommends model tests for specific ship and channel conditions, especially if the conditions are new or novel. Many laboratory-based formulas are from captive towed tests that introduce unintended moments that can cause unrealistic trim of the towed models. The current thinking is to use free-floating, remote controlled models for physical model tests. Finally, full scale measurements are always a good check of design stage predictions.*

Until very recently the complexities of measuring the real time squat of ships under way were too great to enable any meaningful results. Fortunately the advent of DGPS and other technologies such as tide rate / height monitoring has enabled real time squat measurements to be made by placing specialist equipment on board which can generally produce accuracies to +/-10cm and the latest equipment is capable of accuracies to +/- 1 cm. Much of the pioneering work has been undertaken by the Australian company OMC who have developed and registered as a trade mark the concept of Dynamic Under Keel Clearance (DUKCC®) to permit maximum loadings of bulk carriers. The DUKCC® concept doesn't just allow for squat but also has to factor in the large swells that are a frequent problem in Australia and new Zealand. With dedicated precise instrumentation fitted on board several bulk

carriers and precise swell meters and tide gauges sited at critical points along the intended route, data is fed into computers at the loading terminal and these ships are thus loaded to the absolute maximum for the existing conditions. I understand that this loading method has resulted in additional cargo liftings of around 1,500,000 tonnes per annum at just the Hay Point terminal in Queensland alone.

Other real time measurements have been undertaken by the US Army Engineer Research Centre (USACE) and on the Elbe both live trials and specialist model tank tests have been undertaken by the Federal Waterways Engineering and Research institute (BAW).

**Results from Real observations and specialist "free" model tank tests.**

Although the number of real ship trials is still fairly low there is now real data beginning to emerge that confirms that the existing predictions are over pessimistic which of course comes as no surprise to pilots! Full details of many trials can be obtained via the links at the end of this article but the following are a small sample of results from trials undertaken by the above groups. Please note that these are very basic interpretations from detailed graphs.

**BAWTank test:**

Panamax Containership: Draft 12.8m, Initial UKC 5.7m

<b>Speed</b>	<b>Squat</b>
10kts	0.3m
12kts	0.4m
14kts	0.7m

Bulk Carrier (350m loa) Draft 14.5m Initial UKC 4.0m

<b>Speed</b>	<b>Squat</b>
8kts	0.5m
10kts	0.7m
12kts	1.0m

**BAW Live trials:**

Data was collected from 9 transits of large container ships on the Elbe. The results reveal an interesting difference between wide and normal transom ships with the wide transom displaying far less squat.

<b>Speed</b>	<b>least observed squat</b>	<b>largest observed squat</b>
10 kts	0.2m	0.5m
12 kts	0.5m	0.9m
15 kts	0.6m	1.7m

**USACE observations:**

In 1999 the USACE undertook live trials in Charleston. The following is a sample of the results which compares the observed and predicted bow squat.

<b>Ship</b>	<b>Observed Squat</b>	<b>Predicted Squat</b>		
		<b>Huuska</b>	<b>Barrass</b>	<b>Romisch</b>
PX Container	0.99m	1.86m	1.99m	0.99
190m Bulk Carrier*	0.53m	1.03m	0.94m	0.66

*\*Restricted Channel*

**OMC Observations:**

OMC have been undertaking real time trials using very precise measurements. Recently they have completed real time trials for the port of Port Marsden in New Zealand. The results are very detailed because the DUKCC® concept also factors in swell and other environmental conditions but as an example, measurements on a 100,000 DWT tanker with a speed through the water of 9 kts in a restricted channel gave an observed squat of about 0.4m.

**My own observations:**

Totally unscientific but with nearly 20 years of piloting ships from small coasters to VLCC's in restricted channels my personal observations are:

- At speeds of less than 9kts through the water squat is negligible.
- Squat is to be taken seriously if the vessel is passing rapidly from deep to shallow water.
- If a vessel is already in shallow water squat doesn't seem to be an issue because the ship and environment will warn you (engine vibration and breaking quarter wave) that you are going too fast before a grounding occurs due to squat
- Modern pitch control propeller systems have overload protection that will prevent excessive speed in shallow waters
- It is important to discuss the UKC with the Captain! He will have been in and out of many ports and will normally have a good understanding of how his ship behaves in shallow waters especially if he has transited the Houston ship canal and played "Texas Chicken" ([www.texnews.com/1998/2002/texas/texas\\_Pilots\\_Se822.html](http://www.texnews.com/1998/2002/texas/texas_Pilots_Se822.html)) after which very little will perturb them!!

**Conclusions**

Squat is an extremely complex subject and is dependent on many factors including mud\*. Practical trials generally reveal the traditional tables to be over estimating squat which of course provides a safety margin. However if they are so inaccurate that they are unrepresentative of reality then they are an alarmist waste of time. What I find difficult to comprehend is that despite many real time observations indicating anomalies in the tables, these tables are still being provided for every ship and potentially introducing conflict in the Master / Pilot exchange. Fortunately most Masters accept that the port's own established guidelines, applied by properly trained pilots will result in safe transits but the overall situation is unacceptable.

<http://chl.erdc.usace.army.mil/library/publications/chetn/pdf/chetn-ix-14.pdf>

<http://www.omc-international.com/>

**Dr Barass: [www.ship-squat.com](http://www.ship-squat.com)**

*\*Next quarter I will be examining the linked concept of mud navigation and navigable bottom!*

JCB

**THE MYSTERIES OF PILOTAGE**

by *Barrie Youde*

The mysteries of pilotage are mysteries of trust;  
And the history of pilotage is archived, deep in dust.  
The Phoenicians knew the principle. Noah used the dove,  
Who came aboard alone to bring some guidance from above.  
It even seems that Adam wished that he had had advice  
Before he bit the apple and entangled in his splice.  
He didn't, but he wished he had. He somehow muddled through,  
While wishing that he'd had a bloke to show him what to do.  
So who, then, needs to be the man who's good enough to guide?  
And take a Master by the hand and tell him of the tide?  
And tell about the local dangers, eddies, ebbs and shallows,  
As farmers know the seasons and the harvests, ploughs and fallows?

He cannot be an ignoramus, knowing nought at all.  
He need not be a boffin, held by all the world in thrall.  
He must be a navigator, schooled in every sea-borne mark;  
He must know his true position in the daylight or the dark;  
He must fear no rock or tempest or the fogs of winter-freeze;  
He must recognise such matters and acknowledge them with ease;  
He must then advise the Master in a manner true and straight,  
Or put his whole repute at risk; as he may contemplate.  
He must be a true free-booter, in all ships which he may serve;  
He must never let administration undermine his nerve.  
He must be a human being, fit to sire the young to follow:  
He cannot have it said of him that anything is hollow.

So what's the basic principle of pilotage – in law?  
The answer is: – A pilot needs to learn it all before:  
And not by idle dreaming or by broad or curs'ry flail,  
But by study of the soundings and the laws of steam and sail;  
And by list'ning to his elders as they pass their wisdom on;  
Knowing well the debt which England owes to mariners long gone.  
And watching as they back and fill, and swing and read the lead,  
And all the time acquiring skill, where angels fear to tread.  
And watching, watching patiently, for regulated years;  
Assessed by high Authority and rated by his peers:  
Experience accounted for by proper regulation,  
At highest standard tested then, by strict examination.

And what of the Authorities, by what rules are they bound?  
That, of each pilot authorised, none better could be found,  
For the conduct of each vessel, as an independent man,  
By skill and local knowledge, then; that is the public plan;

The Powers must provide such men, in quantity and grade,  
In fiercely tidal estuaries to serve the national trade;  
On terms of due propriety as Parliament decrees;  
Protecting thus our property and lives upon the seas.

A scheme of such antiquity has not survived by dream.  
Who pays the independent man? Who funds the public scheme?  
The answer is:- The ship must pay. The carrier of freight,  
The carrier of goods by sea, the burdened heavyweight,  
Who undertakes each voyage to enrich his own account,  
He must pay a regulated fee. He pays the whole amount.  
Authority is thus relieved, and thus the public purse.  
Out of profit is the pilot paid, for better or for worse.  
A pilot then is self-employed, when authorised by law.  
No man can serve two masters.  
(Matthew, Six, verse Twenty-four.)

Some ships must take a pilot and some ships are ruled exempt.  
The rules are clear and simple; disagreements to pre-empt.  
But what then happens when a ship is bound by every law  
To have a pilot on the bridge? What happens then? What more?  
The ship is under pilotage. The law decrees it so.  
The Master, if so minded, may remain at ease below.  
The Master must assign the ship into the pilot's charge.  
And this is how the system works. It does so, by and large.  
The Master cannot intervene, but rather must assist,  
And listen to the pilot through the rain and fog and mist.  
And if the Master countermands and takes things on his shoulders,  
He re-affirms he takes the risk of running up the boulders.  
And that is why the knowledge of the pilot must be latest.  
He's there to be relied upon when dangers are the greatest.

What, then, about the mystery, if mystery there be?  
Reality will always govern mariners at sea.  
And recognise divisions in each line of proper thought;  
And recognise the judgments of the Admiralty Court,  
Where standards are acknowledged and expected of us all;  
And should be at the highest levels possible at all.  
And woe betide the ignorant who seek to criticise  
The pilot who is competent and fit to authorise:  
For such a man is qualified by Parliamentary Act.  
And thus he is a pilot, in both public law and fact;  
An honoured public office, since creation long ago,  
And likely to continue while the law decrees it so.  
The mystery, perhaps, is that some pilots rarely speak:  
Aware of their inheritance, blessed are the meek.

# PENSION NEWS

*Happy New Year to you All*

## THE SECRETARIAT

### Deputy Secretary

I have some bad news to impart to PNPf members and beneficiaries, in that Richard Wiscombe has decided that his career path does not lie with the PNPf and has taken another job in London. Richard will be leaving the Secretariat in March and the search for his replacement has begun in earnest. Not an auspicious start for 2008!

### Alternate Trustees

The Association of Participating Bodies has recently appointed Stephen Bracewell, Chief Executive of Harwich Haven Authority, as an Alternate Trustee Director.

### Benefit Statements 2007

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

### 2008 Pension Increases and Calendars

Just before Christmas all pensioners and widows were sent letters confirming the percentage increase they would be receiving from 1 January 2008, as well as a calendar for the year. If you have not received yours please let us know at the Secretariat and we will put another in the post.

### Triennial Valuation

Those of you who follow this sort of thing will know that the Fund is due a triennial valuation as at 31 December 2007. This means that 2008 will be a busy year for the Trustees as well as the Secretariat as this will be the first valuation prepared under

the requirements of The Pensions Act 2004.

Not only will the Trustees need to learn a whole new set of pensions jargon, they will also have to set the assumptions to be used in the calculations (*with advice from the actuary*). There is no doubt the whole process will be time consuming and drawn out. So do not hold your breath as the final results may be a long time coming.

### Fund's Solicitor

Many of you will know that Andrew White has been the Fund's solicitor since the mid 70s and has seen out many a trustee, well now it is his turn and Andrew retired at the end of 2007. We will now be looked after by another senior partner at Mayer Brown, Philippa James.

## NEW STATE PENSION RATES

The Government has announced the rates of State Retirement pension which will apply from 7 April 2008. These are:

	£ pw	Increase
Basic State Pension	£90.70	3.89%
Married woman's basic on husband's National Insurance	£54.35	3.92%
Age 80 addition	£0.25	0.00%

## NEW PENSIONS BILL

The Pensions Bill was introduced to Parliament on 5 December 2007. The Bill builds on the improvements to the state pension system contained in the 2007 Pensions Act. The Bill proposes;

- Automatic enrolment in a workplace qualifying scheme from 2012.
- Introducing a new Person Accounts scheme designed for those employers who do not currently offer pension schemes.
- An increased role for The Pensions Regulator as the compliance body that will ensure employers meet their new obligations.
- Further simplification to the additional state benefits
- Measures to ease the burden of regulations on employers.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME (FAS)

After years of naked protests to show they were "stripped" of their pensions, the Pensions Action Group's hard fought battle for better compensation appears to have paid off. The Pensions secretary, Peter

Hain, has offered a package that will increase the Financial Assistance Scheme payments to the value of 90% of the lost pension bringing it in line with the Pensions Protection Fund levels.

In addition more than 11,000 wind up victims whose employers remain solvent now qualify for FAS help. In total some 140,000 people should benefit from the government change of heart.

## STATISTICS

A recent survey by Alliance Trust has produced some interesting statistics in respect of the British adult population's retirement planning. 43% of U.K. adults expect property to be their main source of income in retirement. Belief that a company pension scheme will fund retirement has fallen to 36%. 18% of the population are hoping for an inheritance or windfall to fund their retirement and a further 19% expect to rely on their partner or spouse.

## NICE WORK IF YOU CAN GET IT

Did you know that the Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Speaker qualify for a full pension after just one day in office? It amounts to an annuity equal to half their salary irrespective of how long they have served.

MPs on the other hand do not get such a rapid accrual of their pension rights. They have to build it up in chunks of 1/40th of salary over a number of years.

Even then it is nothing as undignified as the rest of us who pay into a scheme for 40 odd years hoping that there will be a pension at the end of it.

Who says politicians have no understanding of pensions?

*Debbie Marten  
Debbie@pnpf.co.uk*

## REMEMBER

*It is in your interest, if involved in any accident or injury, however trivial it may seem at the time, to inform:*

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Circle Insurance Services plc  
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Tel: 0141 249 9914 • Email via website:  
[www.circleins.com/ukmpa](http://www.circleins.com/ukmpa)

*Full policy details for all the insurances can be viewed on both Circle and UKPMA websites*

## Retirements

*August 2007 to October 2007*

<b>M Monday</b>	<b>Humber</b>	<b>Aug</b>
<b>GR Pargeter</b>	<b>Tees</b>	<b>Oct</b>
<b>IW Standen</b>	<b>Harwich</b>	<b>Sept</b>

## Pensioners Deceased

*August 2007 to October 2007*

<b>WE Blewer</b>	<b>Medway</b>
<b>KG Gough</b>	<b>London-North</b>
<b>G Munro</b>	<b>Clyde</b>
<b>E Wray</b>	<b>Shoreham</b>

# IS THIS BRIDGE FIT FOR PURPOSE?

Following my article in the summer issue concerning the *Crimson Mars* grounding and the visibility from the "conning position", the Southampton pilots notified me of a new class of ships that they have formally complained about.

The vessels in question are Wilhelmson's latest car carriers the *Tortugas* and *Toronto* which form part of a fleet of 12 identical new ships and the problem is that forward of the bridge, large ventilators have been located in positions which severely restrict the visibility to port and starboard of the bow. These vessels are sailing under the British flag and registered in Southampton so would have been surveyed and passed by the MCA. Although the visibility ahead complied with regulations the visibility on either bow is so restricted that the pilots felt that there must be a breach of the bridge visibility requirements contained within regulation 22 of SOLAS Chapter 5 2002. It is not just the Southampton pilots, the Captains and watchkeeping officers are also deeply concerned and believe that these ships represent an accident waiting to happen!

So what are the operational restrictions experienced on board?

*"I encountered great difficulty in being able to see objects such as buoys when passing nearby, in particular when turning at the Calshot and West Bramble Turns."*

*"The problem is caused by ventilators to port and starboard ahead of the bridge, whilst the horizon can be just seen from the conning position, great arcs of visibility are obstructed to port and starboard. This causes a problem with sighting objects (Buoys, small targets) at a close range, as they are obscured."*

*"Whilst outward at Calshot, I could not see the buoys that I normally reference from the centre of the bridge where all the bridge instrumentation is sited, in the event I had to move to the extreme wing of the bridge to sight the Calshot Light Float, which then means that I cannot see/use the bridge instrumentation (apart from a rudder indicator) or see any potential small craft ahead of or to the other side of the vessel."*

Other pilots have made similar adverse reports such as:

*"As I passed the North Sturbridge buoy inwards, I lost sight of the buoy from the conning position when the buoy was red 18 degrees at eight and a half cables. Whilst turning at the West Brambles and at Calshot I had to leave the conning position and go to the bridge wing in order to keep sight of the buoys that I was turning around. From this position my view of the*



*There is a tanker passing behind the vents, the bow is just visible under binoculars*

*other side of the vessel is totally obscured. With the concentrations of leisure traffic experienced at times in Southampton Water and the Solent, in my view, it is only a matter of time before an accident will occur."*

This is not just an issue with the Southampton pilots but apparently all pilots who have to pilot these ships complain and one Captain informed the Southampton pilots that entering locks presents an acute problem because you have to stick your head out of the bridge wing windows, as far as possible, to see the approaching lock. I understand that this problem has only arisen on the newest class of car carriers because the earlier class such as the *Tamesis* had an extra deck which permitted clear visibility over the top of the vents which are located in a similar position on the foredeck. It would appear that the air draft of the earlier class restricted entry into some ports such as Yokohama so for the new class it was decided to remove a deck without any thought to the consequences for keeping a safe watch!

So how on earth have such ships been granted safety certificates. Well the crucial legislation covering bridge visibility is contained within SOLAS Chapter 5 Regulation 22. Since this is such an important issue with respect to safe navigation it is worth reproducing Regulation 22:

**22.1** Ships of not less than 45m in length as defined in regulation III/3.12, constructed on or after 1 July 1998, shall meet the following requirements:

**22.1.1** The view of the sea surface from the conning position shall not be obscured by more than two ship lengths, or 500m, whichever is the less, forward of the bow to 10° on either side under all conditions of draught, trim and deck cargo;

**22.1.2** No blind sector caused by cargo, cargo gear or other obstructions outside of the wheelhouse forward of the beam

which obstructs the view of the sea surface as seen from the conning position, shall exceed 10°. The total arc of blind sectors shall not exceed 20°. The clear sectors between blind sectors shall be at least 5°. However, in the view described in (1), each individual blind sector shall not exceed 5°;

**22.1.3** The horizontal field of vision from the conning position shall extend over an arc of not less than 225°, that is from right ahead to not less than 22.5°, abaft the beam on either side of the ship;

**22.1.4** From each bridge wing the horizontal field of vision shall extend over an arc at least 225°, that is from at least 45° on the opposite bow through right ahead and then from right ahead to right astern through 180° on the same side of the ship;

**22.1.5** From the main steering position the horizontal field of vision shall extend over an arc from right ahead to at least 60° on each side of the ship;

**22.1.6** The ship's side shall be visible from the bridge wing;

**22.1.7** The height of the lower edge of the navigation bridge front windows above the bridge deck shall be kept as low as possible. In no case shall the lower edge present an obstruction to the forward view as described in this regulation;

**22.1.8** The upper edge of the navigation bridge front windows shall allow a forward view of the horizon, for a person with a height of eye of 1,800mm above the bridge deck at the conning position, when the ship is pitching in heavy seas. The Administration, if satisfied that a 1,800mm height of eye is unreasonable and impractical, may allow reduction of the height of eye but not less than 1,600mm;

**22.1.9** Windows shall meet the following requirements:



**22.1.9.1** To help avoid reflections, the bridge front windows shall be inclined from the vertical plane top out, at an angle of not less than 10° and not more than 25°.

**22.1.9.2** Framing between navigation bridge windows shall be kept to a minimum and not be installed immediately forward of any work station.

**22.1.9.3** Polarised and tinted windows shall not be fitted.

**22.1.9.4** A clear view through at least two of the navigation bridge front windows and, depending on the bridge configuration, an additional number of clear-view windows shall be provided at all times, regardless of weather conditions.

**22.2** Ships constructed before 1 July 1998 shall, where practicable, meet the requirements of paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2. However, structural alterations or additional equipment need not be required.

**22.3** On ships of unconventional design which, in the opinion of the Administration, cannot comply with this regulation, arrangements shall be provided to achieve a level of visibility that is as near as practical to that prescribed in this regulation.

Being convinced that these ships didn't comply with these regulations the Southampton pilots contacted the MCA and received the following response:

The requirement in reg. 22.1.1 is as follows:

"The view of the sea surface from the conning position shall not be obscured by more than two ship lengths, or 500m, whichever is less, forward of the bow to 10° on either side under all conditions of draught, trim and deck cargo."

According to my calculations the sea surface from the conning position is visible at a length of approximately 250 metres (I based my calculations on measurements taken from the general arrangement plan) and approx. 40 degrees to either side when

the vessel is at its summer draught on even keel. These results satisfy the SOLAS requirements as the vessel's length is 200 metres and the required angle is clearly achieved. Even though vent heads port and stbd forward could well block the view of the sea surface such blockage would not appear to be in contravention of SOLAS requirements. The only recommendation I can make at this stage is to require the master to post a lookout on the foc'sle if it is felt that otherwise small and close targets might be missed out.

To me it beggars belief that in 2008 you can still get a full safety certificate for a ship with a severely restricted view from the "conning position" and that the MCA suggest posting a lookout on the foc'sle if there is a problem. Welcome the 19th Century!

In the opinion of the MCA such restrictions do not represent "blind sectors" because a bit of sea below the horizon is visible from the conning position. They have come to this conclusion because the regulations only specify the 500m requirement for right ahead to 10° either side of the bow and therefore so long as the horizon isn't totally obscured by a "blind sector" there is no minimum visibility requirement outside 10° either side of the bow!! This would appear to be bureaucratic whitewash because the SOLAS regulations also contain Regulation 15 and the pilots therefore challenged the MCA by quoting from the guidance notes for rule 15 which state the following:

All decisions which are made for the purpose of applying the requirements of regulations 19, 22, 24, 25, 27 and 28 and which affect bridge design, the design and arrangement of navigational systems and equipment on the bridge and bridge procedures shall be taken with the aim of:

1. facilitating the tasks to be performed by the bridge team and the pilot in making full appraisal of the situation and in navigating the ship safely under all

operational conditions;

2. promoting effective and safe bridge resource management;
3. enabling the bridge team and the pilot to have convenient and continuous access to essential information which is presented in a clear and unambiguous manner, using standardized symbols and coding systems for controls and displays;
4. indicating the operational status of automated functions and integrated components, systems and/or sub-systems;
5. allowing for expeditious, continuous and effective information processing and decision-making by the bridge team and the pilot;
6. preventing or minimizing excessive or unnecessary work and any conditions or distractions on the bridge which may cause fatigue or interfere with the vigilance of the bridge team and the pilot; and
7. minimizing the risk of human error and detecting such error if it occurs, through monitoring and alarm systems, in time for the bridge team and the pilot to take appropriate action.

The reply from the MCA went into great detail interpreting each clause but the MCA conclude that they are satisfied the vessel is fully compliant and that rule 15 is irrelevant with respect to the vents because:

"It would be illogical if SOLAS in one regulation (reg. 22) requires certain standards which it in another regulation (reg. 15) declares to be insufficient. It appears, therefore, that when SOLAS V, reg. 22 is complied with, reg. 15 is not asking for different arrangements."

So there you have it. You can ignore all the MCA notices and recommendations concerning keeping a visual lookout because they are perfectly satisfied if from the "conning position" a watchkeeper with a height of eye of 1.8m above the bridge deck can see 500m ahead and 10° either side of the bow and from there to 22° abaft the beam on either side can just see the horizon then a vessel will be fully compliant. The Southampton pilots however continue to challenge such nonsense but meanwhile the shipyards are happily building the sister ships to the *Tortugas* which will continue to severely hamper both the Masters' and pilots' ability to navigate the ship safely. Such appalling disregard for safe operation would never be allowed in any other transport mode but this scenario sums up the commercial maritime world of the 21st century.

JCB - Based on information supplied by the Southampton pilots.



So long as you can see the horizon the obstruction doesn't represent a "blind sector"!  
Both photos: N. Allen

# Pilot gigs update

Further to the feature on pilot gigs in the Autumn 2007 issue I have had interesting feedback from both working and retired pilots down on the SW peninsular. It would appear that Cornish pilots are or were actively involved gig rowing racing on a regular basis and were also involved in the renaissance of these craft. There is too much information to place within these pages so I have added the responses to the feature on the website. However, of particular interest is a response from Falmouth pilot, Nicholas Martin, whose father, Peter Martin, is the renowned gig builder based in St Mary's, Isle of Scilly and who is currently building a gig for a club in Holland. Nicholas' step mother is the niece of the late Tom Chudleigh, another well known gig builder.

Peter Martin was part of the crew on the 1972 Truro to Roscoff adventure, mentioned in the article, rowing the gig *Campernel* and apparently they got within 10 miles of the French coast but turned back because of concerns regarding the port approach in the bad weather. Apparently several quite large vessels got into difficulties in the gale but none of the *Campernel's* crew had any qualms regarding riding out the storm in an open gig!

Nicholas himself was involved in gig rowing and racing from an early age and recounts that "when I was 14 I rowed a 10 mile race with a men's gig crew against all sorts of equivalents of the Cornish gig. The race was from mainland France to Ile d'Ouessant and should have been cancelled due to very strong winds and high seas but the French pressed ahead. During the race the safety boats were busy attending many casualties with red parachute flares going up all over the place. Needless to say the gig performed well, and apart from shipping some water we made very good time and crossed the line first, way ahead of the nearest competitor, although just completing was a success on its own".

Although Nicholas had to give up racing when he went to sea, he still owns a rowing boat that was specially built for him by his father and Ralph Bird.

Sam Guy (Fowey) is also an old gig hand and has a part share in *Golden Eagle* and provided the following update regarding gigs being used to ship pilots "Jack Hicks was probably the last of the Pilots to board a ship from a gig when they were used as the sole means of boarding however, my brother, Roy Guy boarded Richard Branson's boat from a gig following his *Trans Atlantic Blue Riband* success. I believe a Falmouth Pilot boarded a yacht off Falmouth from a gig and I boarded a *Square rigger*, Endeavour, off Fowey from a



Frank Peters watches the arrival of the 3 oldest gigs, racing (and winning) against the young upstart Sussex (1886) which had recently been restored by Ralph Bird.

Photo: Falmouth Packet 18/05/1984

gig rowed by a girl crew!!" It is indeed a small world down in Cornwall!

Finally, retired Liverpool pilot, Jim Delacour-Keir, who retired to Cornwall sent me further information regarding the Scillonian pilots and he also enclosed several old newspaper cuttings covering the gig revival. One fascinating cutting from the Falmouth Packet newspaper dated 18th May 1984 contained photographs of the return of the gigs *Newquay* (1812), *Dove*

(1820) and *Treffry* (1838) to the boatyard in St Mawes where they were constructed by William Peters. This was one of the very rare occasions where these historic craft were permitted to leave their home in Newquay and the occasion was in honour of William Peters' descendent, the (then) 82 year old Frank Peters who was still running the family boat building yard at St Mawes.

For the full gig story update visit the magazine website at [www.pilotmag.co.uk](http://www.pilotmag.co.uk)

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## Letter to the Editor

In light of the usual doom and gloom we encounter regularly as part of our job lot as a pilot I would like, on behalf of Belfast Pilots, to present an update on a good news story. It is our first anniversary of the changeover to self-employment on the first of December and I am glad to report it has been a huge success for all involved. One of the often quoted, but rarely achieved win-win situations, for all those concerned. The transition from employees to self-employment has been smooth and much hailed by port users and management alike. The new Pilot House has been transformed into a homely but efficient office come staging post. Our first acquisition, i.e. the plaque dedicated to the efforts of Dave Devey (Liverpool Pilots) and the T&G, is polished every day and serves to remind all of tougher times past and obstacles overcome.

As Dave often quoted, there was indeed a radical change in the perception of us as a body within the port. We are now on first name terms with the senior management and meet regularly to update, chat and exchange ideas regarding shared problems we encounter. Our opinions are requested, from source, and we are able to represent ourselves in a professional and positive manner. We are considered a part of the port "family" and are even invited to the Harbour Christmas Ball as welcome friends. Unfortunately the Harbour Master has recently moved on to pursue further opportunities but we wish him well in his endeavours.

This changed perception has led others within the organisation to realise we are a valuable asset. The Public Relations officer is now a valued friend and has utilised our broad pool of expertise for various publicity promotions for the port. Captain Billy Esler and I recently took one hundred,



*Billy Esler with school group*

cross community, school children on a boat tour to highlight the good work being carried out within the Harbour. (Pictures attached). We have now been asked to care for our first "career week" youngster to shed light on the marine world and highlight the various career prospects available in the Harbour and beyond.

On our own behalf we have actively investigated this "new world" of possible opportunities. Approaches recently resulted in our conducting a three day seminar for senior international safety executives. This was our first foray into the field of education and training. Suffice to say those involved shone and the whole adventure was a huge success. We hope to follow up shortly with similar, and more frequent, events. After years of self depreciation it is now becoming evident that we have underestimated ourselves and with the dawning realisation of our worth comes pride and the confidence to approach new ventures without apprehension but with renewed

assurance.

This is now a successful and most importantly a "happy" Pilotage service. However we can also appreciate the difficulties some of our colleagues are undergoing elsewhere. We understand the frustration and despair felt by those in our profession currently undergoing hard times. We are in communication with some of those involved and are happy to advise and assist as required. We are not experts but we can empathise and sometimes even that means a lot. I cannot say that self-employment is the be-all and end-all of all Pilotage problems but I look around now and see how we were, and how we are now. We are proud of our current standing and will remain forever grateful to the UKMPA, the T&G and the newly-wed Dave Devey, whose wedding we were delighted to attend.

Best wishes to all.

*Captain William Magee, Chairman,  
Belfast Lough Pilotage Services Ltd.*

JMU Liverpool Lairdside Maritime Centre

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## OBITUARY

### Eric Wray (1923 -2007)



Retired Shoreham pilot Eric Wray died on the 7th of October 2007. He was born in Richmond North Yorkshire in 1923, the son of a policeman he lived in various locations around the county acquiring a broad education and an enduring love for the area.

With the war clouds gathering Eric was determined to do his "bit" by joining the R.A.F. However he was too young to enlist and so decided to follow his elder brother

into the merchant service. Indentured to the Rowland and Marwood Steamship Company (later Hedlams of Whitby) and not yet sixteen Eric shipped out of Hull in the *Kildale* during August 1939 bound for the river Plate to load grain.

His war service was spent mainly in the Atlantic theatre. He was within earshot of the Battle of the River Plate in December 1939, mined in the North Sea in 1940 and involved in the evacuation of Norway. His indentures were mutually closed, before expiry, in February 1942 "as a wartime measure" to enable him to sit for 2nd mates. However by the time the "Pool" allowed him sufficient leave it was early 1944 before he attended the Nellis Brother's navigation school in Newcastle and passed. Eric served as 3rd and 2nd mate in a variety of wartime tonnage including Park, Empire and Fort class ships, his experiences were too numerous to recount here.

After five years engaged on Atlantic convoys and with the end of the war in sight he married Margery in January 1945, the beginning of what was to prove a long and happy marriage. However a voyage on the *Prince Albert Park* in 1948 provided for an unusually long separation of nearly two years. A coal cargo to Australia had to be discharged and loaded twice on passage due to spontaneous combustion. On final discharge, because of the delays and costs

involved, the ship was newly chartered to trade around the Australian coast. Eric finally returned and signed off in Avonmouth during August 1950.

After passing for Master in 1951 Eric looked towards the coastal collier trade and by 1954 was Mate of the *Pulborough* being promoted Master the following year. A regular trader to Shoreham Eric was appointed and subsequently licenced by Trinity House to the district on the 14th of May 1957. A new power station, lock, improved harbour entrance and deeper channel promised future prosperity.

Eric served the port and its shipping for 28 years, he became senior pilot in 1974 and was appointed a Sub-Commissioner on the Pilotage Committee, where he served until his retirement in 1985. A man of few words, he spoke ill of no one and took his responsibilities seriously ensuring the Shoreham pilotage service continued to provide the level of expertise and satisfaction for which it was justly proud.

He and Margery loved their caravan breaks and post retirement developed an interest in sheep dog trialing after moving back to North Yorkshire. Finally settling in Worthing Eric bore the last few years of deteriorating health with great fortitude and undiminished dogged spirit. He will be sadly missed.

Ken Wilcox

## *Meester pilot where are you? Again!!*

You will recall that in 2006 the APL *Panama* spent a 4 month Holiday on the beach off Port Ensenada in Mexico (Summer 2007 issue). Last September the news had obviously reached Maersk that beach holidays were available in Mexico because on September 1 2007, the 291m container vessel *Maersk Diadema* (ex *Charlotte Wulff*) ran aground on the approach to the Mexican port of Lazaro Cardenas. No pilot was aboard at the time of the incident. Although there are very few details concerning this incident, it would appear that the *Maersk Diadema* was inbound while another Maersk vessel was outbound. The outbound pilots were supposed to board *Maersk Diadema* and take her in but bad weather and the excessive speed of the vessel resulted in the vessel going aground on a sandbank before the pilot could board. Three local tugs were despatched to tow the ship off but were unable to do so. Titan Salvage were contracted by the German owners on 4th September to refloat the vessel and successfully completed the salvage on 5th September. Fortunately there were no casualties and no pollution.

At a time when pilots are under attack from many industry sectors for failing to

integrate into the ship's "bridge team" this is yet another incident that seems to confirm that when vessels are approaching pilot boarding areas, the bridge team seems to switch off in anticipation of his arrival. I (and I am sure the majority of you) have been horrified to see ships placing themselves at extreme peril by ceasing to navigate once they see the pilot cutter approaching. Just recently, one remarkably brave (stupid) Master decided to anchor his ship right on the pilot boarding "diamond". This diamond is of course used as a waypoint in the GPS so vessels head

straight for it. Although my vessel had been advised of the boarding heading to provide a lee, myself and the cutter crew watched in amazement as my vessel scraped past the anchored ship prior to altering course for the lee and the cutter crew informed me that they had witnessed other ships do the same. The ship at anchor remained there for over 24 hours and it seems quite remarkable that no other vessel collided with it. Pilots are being blamed over "one person error" but the facts are that the navigation of some "bridge teams" is alarmingly incomprehensible!

JCB



# Dave Devey Awarded the Merchant Navy Medal



Having been nominated by his colleagues and the UKMPA, Retired Liverpool pilot Dave Devey was chosen to receive the Merchant Navy award for "Services to UK and European Pilotage"

The medal was presented by the Patron of the St Paul's Trust Centre, Admiral, The Lord West of Spithead at a ceremony held on December 5th last year, in the St. Michael Paternoster Church Royal.

The Merchant Navy Medal was introduced because British registered seafarers are employed by companies rather than the State and they have never had a decoration of their own to reward meritorious service or acts of courage afloat. Yet the British Merchant Navy continues to be, as it always has been, a uniformed service, called upon frequently to play its part in war as well as in peace. Seafarers themselves know only too well that they may be "in peril on the sea" on a daily basis.

The medal was inaugurated during the Trafalgar Bicentennial year of 2005. Nelson's head appears upon it as a reminder of the time he spent on a West Indies merchantman at the tender age of thirteen which played a formative part in the development of his outstanding seamanship skills. Nor should it be



*Dave Devey receives the prestigious MN medal from Admiral The Lord West of Spithead*

forgotten that the ships of Nelson's fleet at Trafalgar had many merchant seamen in their crews, although most would've been press-ganged into service!

The medal has been founded as a charitable initiative with the support of the Chamber of Shipping, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, the RMT, other trade unions and senior British seafarers in order to supply a proper system of public recognition for all ranks within the industry. It was designed by Sir Robert

Balchin, an expert on the subject of decorations. The ribbon is half green and half red, watered and with a narrow vertical white stripe dividing the two, the three colours echoing the navigation lights of a ship.

The St Paul's Trust Centre is a charity and full details regarding the charity and the medal can be found at the following weblink:

[www.stpaulstrust.org/Medal.html](http://www.stpaulstrust.org/Medal.html)

## New Mooring Rope

I recently piloted a 100,000 DWT tanker where the traditional mooring wires had been replaced by what seemed a totally inadequate mooring rope of similar dimensions to the old wire! The Master informed me that this was a new type of very high strength mooring rope. This is an excellent development because the (delighted) boatmen were able to run the moorings in around half the time normally required. The only problem was during paying out the slack because, in a similar manner to wires, the small diameter means that when the rope is recovered the turns occasionally jam between each other and thus when paying out the slack these cause the line to momentarily heave in before the jam releases itself and the line pays out again. This is more of a problem than with wires because with wires the sheer weight of the wire over the side coupled with the large catenary is usually sufficient to clear the jam before it becomes a problem for



the, usually slow moving, boat and crew. With these lightweight ropes which also float, the boat tends to speed off towards the dolphin and with no catenary any jam will cause the boat to pull up sharply with obvious risks to the crew. I always feel that it beggars belief that in 2008, mooring winches are not fitted with self spooling arrangements.

The captains of ships fitted with this rope have informed me that they are very effective but have a major flaw in that they chafe rapidly at the fairleads and therefore

crew have to fit leather chafing pieces at the fairleads. Whilst this isn't generally a problem whilst alongside a jetty, the chafing is a major problem during ship to ship transfers where the constant movement and varying loadings makes it impossible to keep the chafing pieces in place.

I have learned that these ropes are manufactured by a company called DSM and called Dyneema® rope.

[www.dsm.com/en\\_US/html/hpf/home\\_dyneema.htm](http://www.dsm.com/en_US/html/hpf/home_dyneema.htm)

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