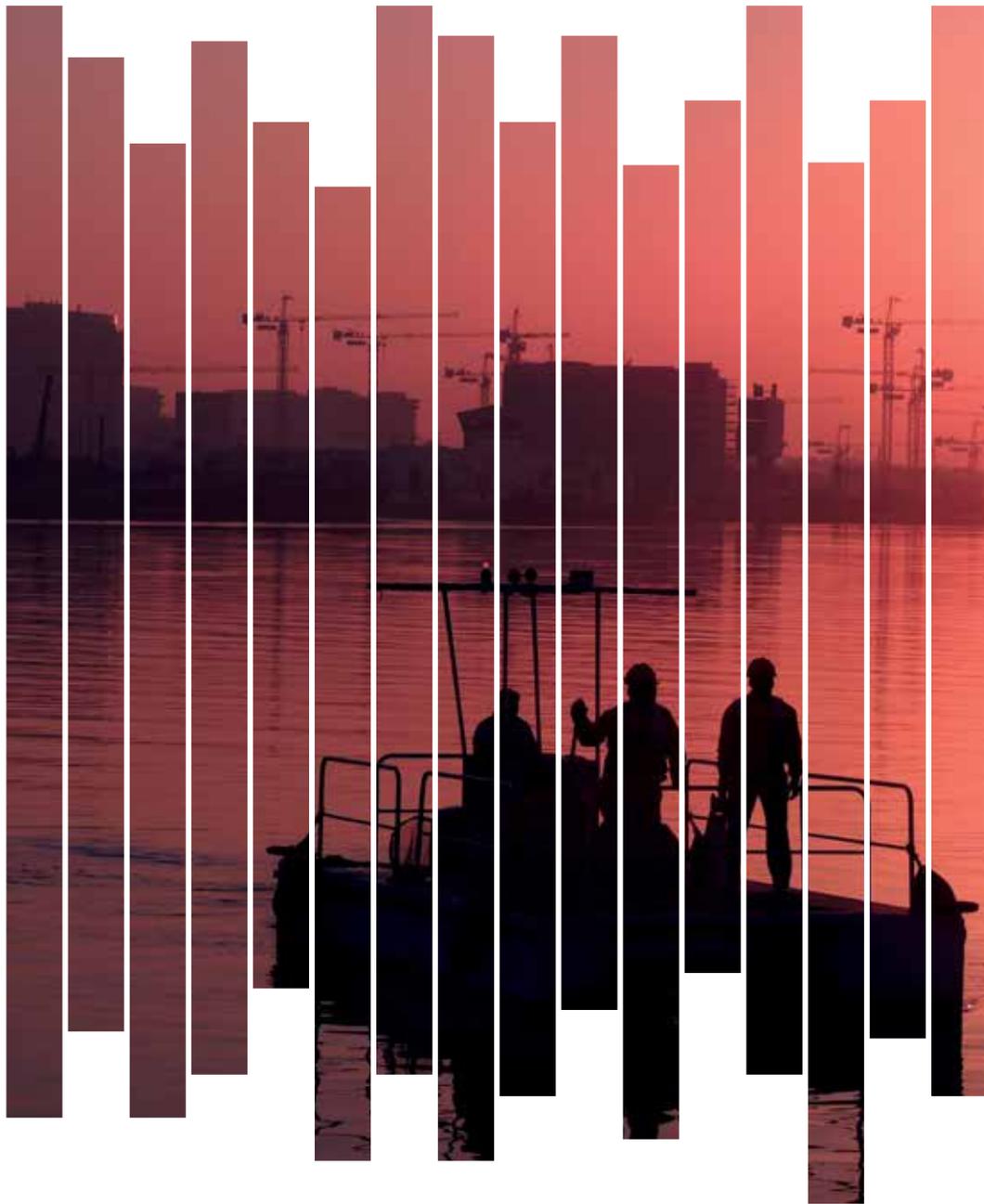


SEACURUS BULLETIN

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SAME OLD ABANDONMENT ISSUES

SAFETY CONCERNS STILL REMAIN | COUNTING THE CYBER COSTS
BACK TO THE FUTURE FOR SHIPPING



Inside this issue of Seacurus Monthly we look at some of the key maritime concerns currently face the industry, and assess which way now on issues such as cyber security, digitalisation, safety at sea and the problem which refuses to go away, abandonment of seafarers.



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Welcome

> As the maritime world descends on London for the International Shipping Week 2017, we have been looking at some of the key concerns that are the focus of those gathering. Inside this issue of Seacurus Monthly we look at some of the key points, and assess which way now on issues such as cyber security, digitalisation, safety at sea and the problem which refuses to go away, abandonment of seafarers.

Driving much of the debate is the fact that the business environment for shipping is changing, and changing fast. For instance, will automation really mean no crews on ships? Will the rise of artificial intelligence mean the end of the lawyer and less claims? Where will the burden of responsibility lie?

Automation in shipping is not a new concept; indeed, over the past decades crew numbers has been reduced. What we are likely to see first is a change in the relationship between the ship and the OOW. In aviation, the role of the pilot has evolved with each new generation of aircraft, and the levels of flying have shifted between humans and machine with each new design and development.

Ships have remained resolutely manual, but change is coming as vessel tests are already running ships controlled remotely. Though, it seems the near future will not be wholly autonomous, instead it will be about how machines learn from skilled and experienced mariners. It will be about how machines win our trust and show that the technology can do what seafarers have been doing successfully for centuries, if not millennia.

There is much fear and disquiet in the maritime industry about disruptive technology, and the ways in which traditional shipping companies are seen as dead men walking. In the face of upstarts and start-ups, what can shipping do to stem the tide of threats wrought by change or take advantage of potential opportunities?

Suddenly the accepted wisdom of decades, if not centuries is changing on its head. This is change on an epic scale. There is fundamental change, the construction of vessels will change, there will be no people onboard, the ship will bristle with sensors and be conducting billions of calculations about itself, its cargo and where it is. That is an incredible challenge for shipping to embrace.

An industry which has been renowned since time immemorial as being conservative, resistant to change, secretive and cut throat, is suddenly having to change the very fibre and fabric of its being. In fifty years shipping has come so far, it is almost mind boggling. The advent of containers was the last major leap, but by comparison that seems almost paltry and simplistic. The next 15 years will see change the like of which we can hardly comprehend. But comprehend it we must, and grab it with both robotic hands.

Another key focus of London International Shipping Week is how maritime and shipping businesses can ensure they remain efficient, competitive and profitable in a rapidly changing environment.

It is not just the business models which are changing, consumer attitudes

are shifting, the regulatory and environmental landscape is shifting and there is constant pressure to innovate while also remaining viable in the here and now. So just how will innovative maritime businesses solve tomorrow's known and unknown challenges?

What will the effects of so much rapid change mean to the business models employed, and what will seamless supply chains and automated ports mean for technology, for shipping and ports and for marine industry? So many questions, but the time to work out the answers is getting ever shorter.

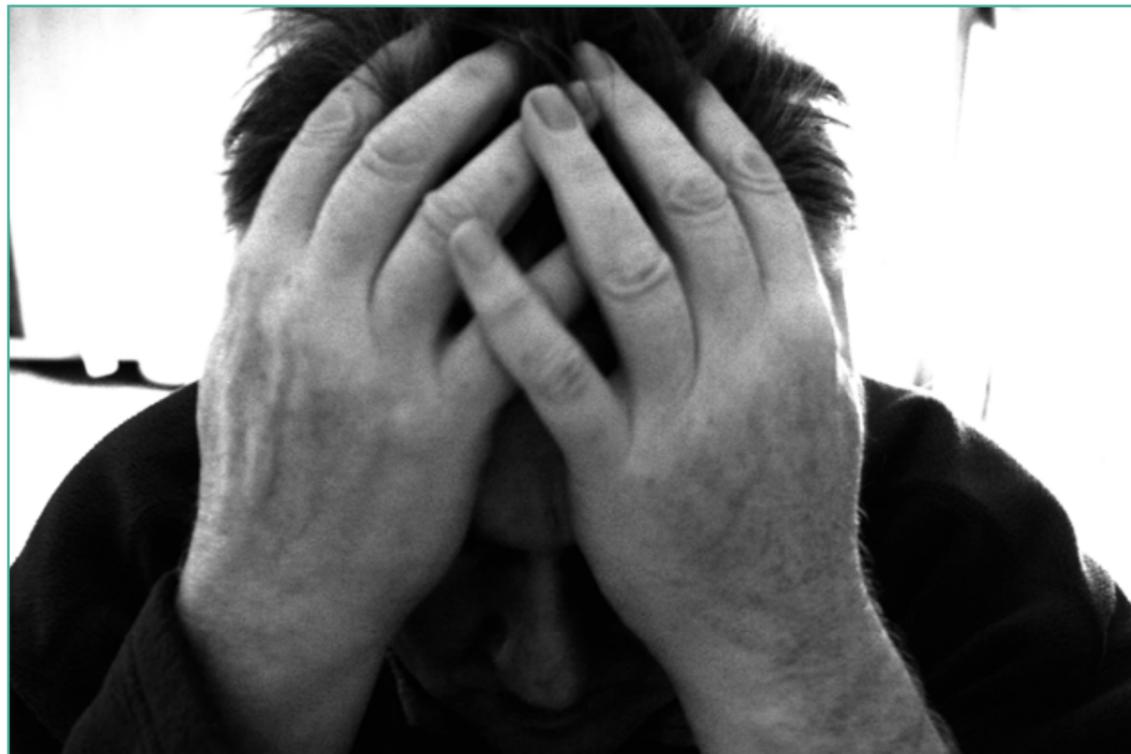
As ever we hope you enjoy this latest issue, and find the topics we have explored interesting, useful and perhaps even challenging. We look forward to hearing from you if you would like to discuss any of them further.

All the best

Capt. Thomas Brown
Managing Director



SAME OLD ABANDONMENT ISSUES



The Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) was meant to change everything.

No longer could owners abandon their crews, there was a safety net and it would mean that everything would always turn out alright.

Sadly, the problem is a tough one. Insurance has been an answer, and the innovative cover offered through CrewSEACURE has helped, alas bad owners are still doing terrible things.

SORRY STATS

According to data from the International Labour Organization (ILO, over the last five years, 12 to 19 crew abandonment incidents were reported annually and 1,013 seafarers have been left stranded by owners.

Furthermore, figures from this year, as of July 31, show that 28 abandonment cases were reported, involving 339 seafarers. Of the total number of 1,352 abandoned seafarers, 254 seafarers were from Ukraine, followed by India with 203 and the Philippines with 105 seafarers, rendering these nationalities among the most vulnerable categories of sailors when it comes to crew abandonment.

Jinhak Noh from ILO's Maritime and Transport Unit, Sectoral Policies Department, recently spoke in an

interview about the latest abandonment figures along with ILO's role in the process and the way forward. Noh is also in charge of the database on the abandonment of seafarers, something which has drawn criticism as some have expressed concern about the under reporting which seems to be prevalent.

According to Noh, the number of cases reported has increased drastically of late, something which appears to be down to greater awareness of the database or perhaps due to the publicity that has been given to the database at IMO meetings and events. Increasing interest in abandonment cases by the related stakeholders as well as by seafarers themselves have resulted in the higher number of cases being reported. Which can only be a good thing.

THE REPORTING PROCESS

The ILO database is the go to source on abandonments, but despite the improvements and an increase in reports, it still seems to lack many "abandonments" which are reported in the media. So, just how does the organisation assess what is going on, and how does it reflect the reality for abandoned crews? What happens for seafarers who are abandoned?

Noh states, if a shipowner fails to make arrangements for or to meet the cost of seafarers' repatriation, the competent authority of the IMO member whose flag the ship flies is in charge of arranging for repatriation.

Should a country fail to do so, the state from which the seafarers are to be repatriated or the state of which they are a national may arrange for their repatriation and recover the costs from the Flag the ship flies. Costs incurred from the process are recoverable from the shipowner by the member whose Flag the ship flies.

Anything which involves Flag States and nations is going to be drawn out. Alas, many cases have not been resolved for months and even years. Until each case is resolved, seafarers need due assistance to maintain their lives on board the ship. When they are not able to get

very basic provisions such as fresh water, food, medical care and fuel, every case can become the worst case.

GROWING PROBLEM

Responding to the ever-growing problem of owners abandoning their crews on ships without pay, in January this year, the 2014 amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), 2006 entered into force, requiring that a financial security system be put in place in order to ensure that ship owners provide compensation to seafarers and their families in the event of abandonment.

Abandoned seafarers are often reluctant to leave their ship until it was sold in a judicial sale to pay outstanding claims, including claims for unpaid wages. It is hoped that the new system and the payment of such claims will be expedited, and this may reduce the number of prolonged abandonment cases.

However, if a vessel is flying the Flag of a State for which the amendments are not in force, and if that vessel operated between Port States for which the amendments are not in force either, this would undermine protection. It is therefore important that all Flag and Port States ratify the MLC, 2006 and accept the amendments.

In theory the system can work, but there are gaps and problems which still remain. It is too easy for flag States to skirt or shirk their responsibilities. Alas, incredible as it seems there are still flags which exist to facilitate the machinations of sub-standard shipowners. For all the progress, there is a healthy maritime market in companies seeking to play the system, and they all too often succeed.

WHO WILL LEAD

One of the problems within shipping has been the failure to really tackle bad employers head on. As we have heard, the ILO database has had issues and has often been far behind the curve.

Then there is the fact that shipping companies are often incredibly litigious. One slipped mention of a vessel or company name, and threatening emails from lawyers will be pinged in very quick order.

That means that there is often a hesitancy to get involve. Yes, the ITF and unions do a great job. However, when they do it often descends into a slanging match. Also, depressingly often the ship's master will be on the side of the employer and that further complicates the narrative.

Thankfully change could be here. It comes in the form of the Indian governments' willingness to name and shame. A new scheme will allow Indian seafarers to find out all about their new employers. Seeing as even maritime lawyers are unlikely to want to threaten a Sovereign States, perhaps this is the answer. Hopefully other Flag States will be as thorough, committed and transparent.

SAFETY CONCERNS STILL REMAIN

Safety remains perhaps the single biggest issue in shipping. Lives, trade and businesses can be shaped when things go wrong. As the old saying goes, if you think safety is expensive, try having an accident. Shipping remains a dangerous game, and even the bright future of automation may not help.

PROBLEMS REMAIN

So, it seems a done deal – automated vessels will likely be churning their way up and down, and across the world's shipping lanes in a few short years. Something which seems to hint at a halcyon, accident free future.

The reality may be somewhat different though, as the recent fire onboard a Bibby Line vessel perhaps hints. The UK flagged bulk carrier, "Cheshire" saw her cargo of fertilizer ignite off the coast of the Canary Islands last month. Something which has allegedly been blamed on spontaneous combustion within the holds.

The fact that a cargo of bulk fertilizer can burst into flames is very, very troubling. It also shows that even an unmanned ship would perhaps suffer in the same way. Thankfully the crew were evacuated safely, and the vessel was eventually brought under tow and the fire was extinguished.

The lesson is clear, shipping is a dangerous, risky business and while the technology "snake skin oil" sellers suggest that accidents are only caused by people, the reality is somewhat different. You can take the people away, but problems will still remain. Automation is not a silver bullet.

SAFETY FEARS

There are a myriad of potential safety concerns when it comes to shipping, and a number have bubbled to the fore in the past month. Away from self-igniting cargoes with the fertilizer really hitting the fan, there have been other concerns growing.

The tough market for shipping has seen a cluster of supertankers anchored off the Suffolk coast in the UK has fuelled fresh fears about the potential for pollution on the beaches of one of the country's best-loved resorts.

According to the local media, 15 crude oil tankers have been sitting close together between 10 and 15 miles off the coast at Southwold – an area designated by Government as a zone for ship-to-ship transfers. The local Council has asked ministers to reconsider because of alleged pollution.

Ships can often make the local populace twitchy, and that in turn can definitely influence politicians. When the aforementioned "Cheshire" was ablaze, there was nowhere to take the vessel. The Canary Islands shut access, and the vessel was left to whims of nature and thankfully the expertise of the salvors. However, this could have had a different ending.

OTHER ISSUES AIRED

The U.K.'s Marine Accident Investigation Board (MAIB) has been in the news recently, as two reports examining accidents in 2016 have been released, while its 2016 annual report highlighted the sheer scale of accidents facing the investigators.

According to the MAIB, in 2016 there were 687 accidents involving 750 commercial vessels. The most notable incidents include the foundering of the fishing vessel "Louisa", off Mingulay, Outer Hebrides, with the loss of three of her four-man crew, the grounding of the semi-submersible rig "Transocean Winner" on the Isle of Lewis and the grounding of the ultra-large container vessel "CMA CGM Vasco de Gama" in the Solent.

The US National Transport Safety Board (NTSB) has also released its 2016 "Safer Seas Digest" for 2016 including lessons learned from the investigation of 27 major, maritime accidents. In 2016, the NTSB continued its investigation into the October 2015 sinking of the "El Faro".

After three separate search and recovery voyages, and with the help of many federal and private institutions, the El Faro's voyage data recorder (VDR) was recovered in August 2016. Specialists in the NTSB recorders laboratory documented the words of the crew, barely audible among the sounds of hurricane winds and relentless seas. The final report is not yet complete.

SAME OLD PROBLEM

There are some problems which seemingly will just not go away, and perhaps one of the most challenging is deaths relating to enclosed spaces. Incredibly, not only do seafarers succumb, but time and time again others follow them in to rescue, but collapse themselves.

A horrific chain reaction can see multiple casualties, as one collapses, then another rushes in. It is, of course, a natural reaction to want to rescue someone, but without proper equipment such actions are doomed to fail.

The Standard P&I Club recently noted that enclosed space-related casualties stem from poor training and knowledge of the correct entry procedures, or a disregard for them. Shockingly, the message is failing to get through.

In response, the Club has published a comprehensive guide to address all key issues and assist seafarers to enter enclosed spaces safely. The guide highlights shortfalls in individual company procedures in equipment, training and onboard practices. Analysis of incidents have helped the Club to address key factors that contribute to enclosed space incidents.

You can access the guide here <http://www.standard-club.com/media/2533840/a-masters-guide-to-enclosed-space-entry.pdf>

PERFORMANCE MATTERS

The fact that seafarers still have blind spots when it comes to some safety issues is deeply concerning, especially when it has lethal consequences. It seems to beg the question as to whether the industry is doing enough on training and performance management.

"Performance management", yes, it may be a concept that sounds more at home when discussing elite athletes. However, in a new data driven age it seems that such understanding, appreciation and data relating to how seafarers are actually coping is vital.

Shipping needs to rethink its views on managing performance of seafarers. There was a time when training for seafarers was all about compliance. The industry had found itself trapped on a slippery slope of seeking competency, whilst also lowering some of the standards surrounding it. Maritime colleges were often dubbed "ticket factories", and newly minted seafarers were churned out.

Then with certificates in hand, it was only at sea that they began the really journey to learning. It was a cat and mouse game, in which seafarers would either sink or swim, as they gathered the skills and knowledge which would actually turn them into a marine professional. That laissez faire attitude has to change, people are dying and there needs to be action to help them.



COUNTING THE CYBER COSTS

The latest bogey man to stalk shipping is the “hacker”. 2017 has definitely been the year in which we have moved from paralysis when talking about pirates and terrorists, to being in a thrall to the cyber attackers which can cause untold damage to vessels and companies

SCALE AND QUANTUM

The recent cyber-attack on AP Moller-Maersk will cost \$200m-\$300m but container shipping conditions are the best since the financial crisis, the Danish conglomerate reported last month.

The bulk of the impact from the so-called NotPetya attack will be felt in the third quarter, due to lost revenues in July after the company’s IT system, including booking applications, was brought down by malware hidden in a document used to file tax returns in Ukraine.

However, Soren Skou, Maersk’s chief executive, struck an upbeat note. “We have the strongest fundamentals for container shipping since the financial crisis, or at least 2010,” he said. Which may well be true, but \$300m is a massive hit.

The fact that it was seemingly so avoidable is even more troubling. One minute some Maersk executive in the office was sat at their desk, perhaps slurping their morning coffee. They decide to open that attachment, and then bingo...mass panic, a paralysed company and huge costs. Loose clicks sink ships, and companies.

INDUSTRY STRUGGLING

It seems, despite various campaigns, guidance, even new rules, shipping is still struggling to come to terms with the harsh new reality of being under cyber threat.

Companies are really struggling, and a recent announcement by cyber security experts, reveals that it is not just about safety, there are real business threats too. “Hackers” may be the word on everyone’s lips, but it seems “scammers” may be a more appropriate tag.

When staff at cyber security experts CyberKeel recently investigated email activity at a medium-sized shipping firm, they made a shocking discovery. “Someone had hacked into the systems of the company and planted a small virus,” explains co-founder Lars Jensen. “They would then monitor all emails to and from people in the finance department.”

Whenever one of the firm’s fuel suppliers would send an email asking for payment, the virus simply changed the text of the message before it was read, adding a different bank account number. “Several million dollars,” says Mr Jensen, were transferred to the hackers before the company cottoned on.

SAFETY IMPACTS TOO

So, cyber threats can impact businesses ashore massively. The real costs of a hack, or the associated ones can be huge. Reason enough, you would think for companies to invest in the necessary technology and resources to counter them. According to the TT Club, this is not always the case.

In a recent statement, the Club stressed how the uncomfortable realities of maritime cyber risk are hitting home. The fact remains that the global intermodal supply chain is vulnerable, indeed there is some surprise that it has not been more exposed and disrupted through cybercrime activity to date.

In part, this may be due to low level of transparency and reporting; anecdotes certainly suggest that many stakeholders are the subject of prolific ‘attacks’ of various kinds on a continuing basis.

It is understandable that organisations tend to be coy about the incidence and manner of cybercrime activity; A P Möller’s undertaking to reveal lessons learned from the recent event is welcomed, but there are concerns that the sheer scale of losses could force some lesser lights to bury their heads in the sand.

PECULIARLY EXPOSED

According to the TT Club, the intermodal supply chain is peculiarly exposed to cyber risks. It is increasingly reliant on information and communications technology (ICT) linking offices between different countries in each individual organisation, depending on interactions with multiple third-party stakeholders and often operating on custom-built/proprietary applications, where security protocols may not be alert to recent vulnerabilities.

There is a potential for a perfect cyber storm at the heart of these interconnected exchanges. Something which the current tough market may make even worse. TT Club senses that companies are coping with the ongoing economic and competitive environment by embracing risks, but also by scaling back in their budgets on areas such as cyber security.

Organisations need to do more to protect themselves, and also their clients and suppliers. An assessment of cyber risks needs to lead to mitigation that recognises that perimeter defences are insufficient on their own, recognising the human factors alongside additional detection and remediation techniques.

Experience to date may yet be minor skirmishes, companies have bounced back reasonably well. However, in the face of a major attack, especially if it also gets out into the fleet, it is unclear how it will play out.

WHACK AFTER HACK

It is not just Maersk which has had a bad time of it lately. The US Navy seems to be wrestling with all kinds of problems too. Some of which, it has been suggested could be related to cyber security.

A “steering casualty” onboard the “USS John S. McCain” was last month cited by one US Navy official as the reason for a horrific collision with a Stealth Maritime tanker, “Alnic MC”, off Singapore. The navy source told CNN that the destroyer lost control of its steering while beginning its approach into the Strait of Malacca.

This has prompted a review by Admiral John Richardson, chief of naval operations, into whether the USS McCain was hacked. Yes, incredible as it may seem, the US Navy could be suffering from hackers. Which is perhaps both comforting for those who are wrestling with their own problems, but it is scary too.

It could well be that bad seamanship was to blame, and that the “hack” narrative is simply convenient. Better to blame a bad guy than bad navigation...but the fact remains all businesses and vessels are at risk.

WHAT ABOUT ANSWERS

There are a number of answers coming to the fore. One, and perhaps the most important is to ensure that staff are able to deal with threats. Campaigns such as “Be Cyber Aware at Sea” are doing a great job of ensuring that seafarers know the basics.

However, it is likely to take more than that to protect shipping. There has been a slew of guidance and guidelines released of late. BIMCO, the ICS, Intertanko and Intercargo, CLIA have all worked hard to get guidance out. As has the US Coastguard. Latest to join the rush has been the Indian Register of Shipping, last month they released new class rules and cyber safety guidelines, based on guidelines set by IMO. The rules, guidance and guidelines are there, now they just need to be followed.

Another answer is to wean shipping off its GPS addiction. The latest systems on ships rely so heavily on GPS, and modern seafarers are so beholden to the “facts” that the satellite positions provide, it means that ships are hugely vulnerable of signals are spoofed or manipulated. As such, there are suggestions that going back to older technology is the answer, and there is a clamour for e-LORAN to come to the fore.

Perhaps the biggest issue is about reporting and learning. There is a real weakness when it comes to data on cyber-attacks, and as we know shipping is notoriously bad at reporting. So, it seems positive to hear that Airbus Defence and Space has partnered with CSO Alliance, a maritime community of company security officers (CSOs), to build a tailor-made, secure online reporting platform. Let’s hope it can head off the hackers.

BACK TO THE FUTURE FOR SHIPPING

Shipping markets are at a very unusual, even pivotal time in history. While there have been major companies folding, huge alliances forged, there is also confusion about what the future holds. For all the talk of the blockchain, will it be new technology that disrupts the markets, or old business practices which don't evolve effectively?

MANAGING RISKS

We may be operating in interesting times, but some old skill sets remain. One of the most important is the ability to effectively manage risk. According to the third annual Shipping Risk Survey from international accountant and shipping adviser Moore Stephens, there is a real need to improve in this regard.

Shipping needs to up its game in terms of managing its exposure to risk, which is increasing and changing in nature. Survey respondents rated the extent to which enterprise and business risk management is contributing to the success of their organization at an average 6.8 out of a possible score of 10, compared to 6.6 last time.

Overall, respondents rated the extent to which enterprise and business risk was being managed effectively by their organizations at 7.1 out of 10. Demand trends are seen as posing the highest level of risk, closely followed by competition and the cost and availability of finance.

Respondents to the survey felt that the level of risk posed by most of the factors which impacted their business would remain largely unchanged over the next 12 months, with the exception of ballast water management legislation, cyber security, geopolitics, operating costs and other changes to laws and regulations, which were all perceived to have the potential for increased risk.

EMBEDDING SOLUTIONS

Michael Simms, Moore Stephens partner stated, "Embedding proper and effective risk management controls into daily operating procedures is a huge challenge for companies in the shipping sector, where high risk levels are an accepted and fundamental part of the industry. This is particularly the case, as is now, when the industry is ultra-competitive and grappling with an imbalance in tonnage supply and demand, and when wider global economic conditions remain extremely tough".

"In such a scenario, it may be tempting for companies to take their eye off their exposure to risk in pursuit of retaining or securing new business. And although the survey suggests that this is not the case, it also reveals that the standard of risk awareness and response capability in many shipping companies is below the required levels.

"The good news is that there is greater acknowledgement that sound enterprise and business risk management is contributing to the success of those shipping organizations which responded to our survey. More companies are now formally documenting the way in which such risk is managed, with a healthy level of involvement by senior management. Moreover, there has been a noticeable increase in the deployment of third-party software to manage exposure to risk.

"The effective management of risk is fundamental to both safety and commercial success in the shipping industry. The level of effective management of risk must continue to improve. The challenge for companies operating in the shipping sector is to balance risk awareness and risk management with the pursuit of commercial success in an industry which traditionally rewards success commensurate with the informed and acceptable taking of risk. Those who fail to meet this challenge may pay a heavy price in terms of performance, and even survival."

WHEN RISKS TAKE OVER

It is all well and good to theorise over risk management, but lest we forget, when things go wrong they can go south fast, and in a big way. As was illustrated last year when South Korea's flagship carrier Hanjin Shipping sought court protection. Last month saw the one-year anniversary since Hanjin went pop, sparking global supply chain chaos and ultimately the largest container shipping casualty to date.

A year on the question remains whether liner shipping has learnt its lesson from such a high-profile bankruptcy? Approximately \$14.5bn of goods were left stranded on Hanjin ships around the world, and hundreds of seafarers were marooned in international waters as the Seoul-headquartered firm sought in vain to try and keep its fleet intact.

When a company is too big to fail, but still manages to slip under, it is interesting where the finger of blame lays. According to a recent survey, one in 3 South Korean maritime experts blame the government for the bankruptcy of Hanjin Shipping Co. The company, previously the world's seventh-largest shipper, was put under court protection as its creditors refused to save the failing company before being declared bankrupt in February.

According to the survey, 37 percent of the respondents said Hanjin Shipping's failure was caused by the government's lack of awareness of the shipping industry's importance. Which is fascinating when you think about the implications, and indeed the parallels with the global banking sector. Banks over stretched, but when their grip on capital slipped, the governments had to step in. It seems, that is exactly what experts wanted the South Korean government to do.

LESSONS LEARNED?

So, given that companies are beginning to focus on risks, and given the very stark lessons provided by Hanjin and others. Do we see that shipping is ready and eager to manage itself better? Alas, according to research by BIMCO the answer is "no"!

Hungry shipyards and shipping companies eager to be top dog is a toxic cocktail which, combined with market optimism amid higher freight rates, is likely to distort the low ordering activity in the container shipping sector. The new report from BIMCO pulls no punches, and sees tough times ahead.

This is especially so in the container market. BIMCO seems to be rattled by the idea that shipping majors such as CMA CGM, and most recently Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC), are still being tied to 22,000 TEU boxship orders.

It has been said that the shipping business is not about owning or running ships, it is about knowing when to buy and sell them. This is an asset play business, the middle ownership bit is a distraction, the horseplay that gets in the way of the horse trading.

So, while CMA CGM and MSC are busily buying up vessels, Maersk is hedging its bets. The big blue has claimed it won't be buying any more mega box ships, while the other sides of its business are being hedged and sold off. Just last month Maersk Oil was bought for \$7.45 Billion by Total. That is how business is done.

TRANSPARENCY IS COMING

So, while the real magic behind shipping is the effect of sale and purchase, it is not likely to stay that way forever. For now, there is a Wizard of Oz style mystique, but very soon that could be stripped away. The new near future for shipping will be about transparency, and of business conducted in the harsh spotlight of the blockchain.

Yes, that word again, "blockchain", the harbinger of gloom for those who like their shipping to be opaque and mysterious. It seems there is going to be no escaping the move to digitalisation and the transparency that will inevitably bring.

What does it all actually mean though? The blockchain rests on the concept of allowing digital information to be distributed but not copied. So, the blockchain is an "incorruptible digital ledger" programmed to record data.

Picture a spreadsheet that is duplicated thousands of times across a network of computers, and constantly updated. So, there can be no hiding place for shipping companies when charterers begin to seek out more information. The things of interest will be recorded, and will exist as globally shared information. This has obvious benefits as decisions can be made on factual, objective, agreed and undeniable data.

MORE COMING TO THE PARTY

Just last month, IBM began to coax shipping into the blockchain era. The firm has signed a memorandum of understanding with two of Singapore's leading maritime firms, port operator PSA International and boxline Pacific International Lines (PIL). The three parties will work together to explore using a blockchain approach to achieve better security, efficiency and transparency, as well as facilitating faster approval and fraud prevention.

IBM and friends are not alone, Japan's Mitsui O.S.K. Lines (MOL) has announced it will participate in a Japanese consortium to developing a trade data sharing platform also using this new technology.

There are new players too. Mizzenit.com, a global marketplace for freight forwarders has been launched to book containerised spot market space, based on live pricing. While a Hong Kong start-up has launched a new initiative, it claims could transform container shipping with a brand new crypto currency called "TEU".

The moves are all about efficiency, and the UK P&I Club estimates that carriers could save about \$38 billion a year by using Blockchain technology. The average saving is estimated to be about 15-20% per one container shipment. Which really does begin to add up.

MONTHLY NEWS ROUND-UP

More of the past months news that caught our eye

Greek Shipowners Make Threats -- Delegations from maritime clusters around the world are likely to descend upon Athens in ever greater numbers on news that Greek shipowners have increasingly itchy feet. A study by Ernst & Young shows that 56% of Greek owners would consider relocating their administrative bases abroad. The study titled 'Repositioning Greece as a Global Maritime Capital' warns, not for the first time, that unless regulations change Greek owners will relocate. "If the local shipping sector's legal framework becomes non-competitive, or far more attractive offers are made by other countries, then a major exodus...is possible."

<https://goo.gl/QL9p1d>

Suez Still Shaping World -- Egypt's Suez Canal has maintained its classification as the most important and fastest maritime shipping corridor despite the economic challenges faced by the world in 2015 and 2016, the head of the Egyptian Suez Canal Authority Mohab Mamish has said. The revenues of the Suez Canal amounted to 2.94 billion U.S. dollars, equivalent to 52.5 billion Egyptian pounds, during the first seven months of 2017. The Egyptian official added that the canal's revenues represented an increase of 19 million dollars year on year.

<https://goo.gl/8vttDG>

UK and Singapore in Spat -- The head of the Singapore Shipping Association (SSA) has hit back at claims the Southeast Asian nation panders to shipping lines. Guy Platten, the CEO of the UK Chamber of Shipping, had slammed Singapore for "pandering" to businesses. Esben Poulsson, president of the SSA, responded, saying he took issue with this assertion. "Singapore has created a global hub through a far sighted, long-term strategic approach, with great care being taken not to move the goal posts in terms of rules and regulations," the SSA boss said. So there...

<https://goo.gl/qBeNoU>

Ban for Non Payment -- The Bahamas flagged bulk carrier "MV Rena" has been banned from Australian ports for six months after the ship repeatedly failed to pay outstanding wages and maintain a safe workplace. On 30 June, AMSA was notified by ITF that the crew onboard the bulk carrier had not been paid for several months and upon inspection Maritime Authority issued the following serious deficiencies: Failure of the emergency generator to start; Failure of the life boat starting arrangements; Short comings in the safety management system (ISM); and Failure to pay crew the cash component of their wages which totalled about \$53,000 US.

<https://goo.gl/L39zze>

1000 Inspections No Detentions -- The Norwegian Maritime Authority said that it carried out approx. 1,000 inspections focused on MLC items during 2016, however, not even one ship reported to have been detained due to serious MLC deficiencies. The MLC certification and inspections on Norwegian ships was carried out by the Norwegian Maritime Authority (NMA) and the six recognized classification societies (DNV GL, BV, ABS, LR, RINA, ClassNK). 249 deficiencies on Norwegian ships with an MLC certificate were found, the NMA received 10 complaints on Norwegian ships in 2016. No complaints resulted in detention.

<https://goo.gl/iUBkNo>

Amazon Head in Hall of Fame -- Jeff Bezos, founder and CEO of Amazon.com, has been elected to the Logistics Hall of Fame as a revolutionizer of e-commerce and logistics. Bezos revolutionized logistics in the mail order sector. In the words of the jury, he was the first to realize that software and logistics are key to the shift from purchasing-driven trading to demand-driven online trading. Thanks to a combination of software, efficient delivery, automation and long-term strategy, the computer scientist transformed transport logistics and intralogistics from the ground up, making Amazon a benchmark for the sector as a whole.

<https://goo.gl/bFhmCJ>

Bulk Guidance Announced -- RightShip and The Nautical Institute are partnering with a number of industry bodies to prepare and peer review a best practice guide for the bulk cargo sector. The proposed International Safety Guide for Bulk Carriers and Terminals (ISGBCT) will provide best practice guidance to ship and terminal personnel on the safe carriage and handling of cargoes on bulk carriers and in terminals, just as ISGOTT does for liquid cargoes.

<https://goo.gl/9EAKyn>

Modern Slavery Ship Detained -- A ship has been detained in port near Bristol after 'modern day slavery' conditions were found on board. Crew members were reportedly living off sea water and out-of-date food on freighter docked at Severnside port of Sharpness. Described as having conditions close to 'modern day slavery', the Panama-registered Tahsin has been prevented from sailing from Sharpness by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. Maritime officials found failings with navigation equipment, invalid employment contracts, non-payment of wages, damage to cargo and expired licenses.

<https://goo.gl/FyflMk>

Crew Forgotten Victims -- Seafarer welfare charity Apostleship of the Sea says that the CSCL Jupiter became a tourist attraction when it ran aground in Antwerp. Onlookers climbing onto the sand bank the bow of the ship was stuck on. But Fr Jos Vanhoof, AoS port chaplain in Antwerp, said, "It was sad that nobody seemed concerned about the welfare needs of the 26 crew members. Everyone was preoccupied with who would pay for the refloating operation and other things."

<https://goo.gl/BaChNV>

Indian Seafarer Wage Success -- Indian sailors stranded in Scotland are a step closer to home after a court ruled they are due more than £668,000 in unpaid wages. The crew of the Malaviya Seven have not been paid in a year and the ship has been barred from leaving Aberdeen since October. Many of them have not seen their families for even longer and several have been forced to take out loans to provide for their loved ones.

<https://goo.gl/8VsH7j>

Fatigue Factors Examined -- Fatigue is a well-known factor as a cause numerous maritime and non-maritime accidents worldwide. In fact, driving while fatigued is considered just as bad as driving while under the influence. The requirements under the new Manila amendments call for vessels and seafarers to log their work or rest hours to meet the standards set out under STCW 2010 or the MLC 2006. Anyone who has ever gone to sea however can tell you that these measures, although a step in the right direction do not necessarily mitigate fatigue anywhere near as well as the IMO and ILO lawmakers expect.

<https://goo.gl/XadM7f>

Training on Harassment -- The Ship Operations Cooperative Program (SOCP) has released a new computer based training on prevention and response to sexual assault, sexual harassment, retaliation, bullying and other prohibited behaviors in the U.S. maritime industry. The training is designed to help mariners and shore based personnel better identify and prevent such behaviors as well as assist industry efforts to aggressively promote a culture of zero tolerance for such behavior. It can run on Windows or Apple computers without requiring an internet connection and is designed for easy integration into any organization's learning management system.

<https://goo.gl/o5ND4p>

Perfect Recruitment Storm -- A perfect storm of retiring baby-boomers and the ongoing global economic downturn, are causing the number of skilled seafarers in the global industry to shrink dramatically, but apparently automation and advances in connectivity could solve the looming skills crisis. Captain Lloyd of the Nautical Institute commented: "The increasing sophistication of technology is opening the door to serious discussions about the remote control of ships, perhaps one day leading to completely autonomous vessels." Something the Nautical Institute members will be watching with increased horror no doubt, as jobs are threatened.

<https://goo.gl/4WttwY>

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