

Report on the Technical Presentation to The Nautical Institute-Queensland
Branch Thursday 24th April 2008

A most interesting and informative Technical Meeting was held by the Nautical Institute Queensland Branch on the topic of the "Future Challenges of Cruise Ships in Queensland".

Queensland and especially the waters of the Great Barrier Reef are an area that is experiencing increasing numbers of Cruise Ships as Cruise Companies search for more interesting and safe areas to visit. The meeting which was well attended by Members and Associates was hosted by Maritime Safety Queensland and their assistance and hospitality was much appreciated.

Following refreshments the welcome and introduction was by, Queensland Branch Chairman, Captain Chris Kline MNI. A presentation was made to outgoing Branch Secretary Captain Iain Steverson FNI by Captain Arthur Diack MNI, Branch Committee Member and Federal Master of The Company of Master Mariners, Australia (COMMA) for service on behalf of both the NI and COMMA.

First speaker was appropriately Branch Member Captain David Richardson FNI a veteran Great Barrier Reef (GBR) Pilot having commenced piloting in 1976 who spoke on "Cruise Shipping in the Barrier Reef".

David gave a potted history of Pilotage in what is an environmentally fragile area. He detailed his contrasting experiences in piloting a basic log carrier from a Papua New Guinea out port one day to a large highly sophisticated luxury liner the next. A description was given of the changes that David had seen in 32 years especially what had taken place following deregulation in 1994 when the area that is under the jurisdiction of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRPA) with the actual navigational administration carried out by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA). This has resulted in five areas comprising North East Channel, Inner Route, Hydrographers Passage, Whitsunday Passage Transit, and GBR Anchorages now requiring appropriate licences renewable at two year intervals, together with check pilots, pilot development courses, fatigue breaks etc. David indicated that the Cruise Industry was currently worth about \$130million to the Queensland economy. He concluded his interesting presentation showing graphically how the cruise ship The World was manoeuvred into the narrow anchorage in the Whitsunday Group, Hamilton Island.

Second speaker was Captain Rob Crozier, Brisbane Marine Pilots (BMP) Training Officer. Interestingly both Rob and David had served their cadetship with former well known British ship owner Reardon Smith.

Rob gave an impressive presentation describing the process that BMP Pilots under take from pilot selection, initial training, continuing professional development, mentoring, simulator training, ship model training and advanced marine pilot training. The BMP programme has been modelled closely on that undertaken by Qantas and the aviation industry and is one that is continually evolving as more sophisticated technology and automation is introduced in modern shipping. The BMP Management Systems are programmed to be able to react to these evolving training requirements especially with the latest technology and limitations incorporating clearly defined procedures and standards. Consequently various Navys and Ship owners visiting the Port of Brisbane are able to have total confidence that their vessels are in the hands of up to date Professionals.

Third speaker was Captain Mike Drake MNI Director of Navigation, Carnival Cruise Lines, Australia. Mike who is based in Sydney came from a P&O background and explained the structural arrangement of the various shipping components that make up the Carnival Line. This comprises 85 ships which visit 500 different ports each year. The ships having been built for various owners prior to the rationalization under the Carnival banner results in a variety of machinery, differing navigation equipment etc which no doubt results in the normal difficulties that are associated with this scenario.

Larger ships from the group are being positioned to Australasia and these are suitably reconditioned for specific markets. Recently inaugurated is a round Australia voyage by the "Princess" ships which is proving popular with Australians.

Mike explained that Carnival under the Princess Cruises banner operate from Los Angeles with a regional office in Sydney.

At the conclusion of proceedings Captain Kline thanked the three speakers especially Captain Drake for travelling from Sydney, our host, Maritime Safety Queensland General Manager Captain John Watkinson FNI for assistance and hospitality and attendees for coming.

Iain Steverson