SEA TIMES

The Newsletter of the Nautical Professional Education Society of Canada
(Society founded in 1995 by the British Columbia Branch of The Nautical Institute)

November 2025

On our forum: The indispensable role of watchkeeping

"She's not answering the helm!" It was a call to chill the heart of any watchkeeping officer, at least in the days when there was a man on the wheel to react with such alarm. It happened to me just once, but in the middle of the Straits of Gibraltar, with lots of traffic around. Panic stations – call the Master – stop the engines – get the not under command signal hoisted – explain to the engine room that we really wanted to stop – it was an afternoon to remember. After the engineers had strewn the various bits of telemotor around the wheelhouse, the culprit was found in a plug of oily waste, left over from the ship's recent refit. The voyage was resumed, after a lot of bad language, with no near-misses and all of us just a little older, and perhaps wiser. In such events, the first reaction, and very human it is too, is one of confusion, before the proper reactions hopefully kick in.

If one has been a watchkeeper on any sort of ship, it is something of an education reading of accidents where confusion was not a momentary hiatus, but also can provoke a reaction of deep sympathy. There, but for the grace of God etc…Problems with controls seem to have been a perennial contributor to confusion in the preliminaries to an accident. The failure to switch from one set of manoeuvring controls to another has been the cause of a great deal of bent steel, and worse, over the years. There is a case in the current edition of the excellent Marine Accident Investigation Branch Safety Digest**, where a nice new trawler apparently went berserk when shifting ship in a fishing harbour, bouncing off a concrete wall and finally grounding. The skipper was vainly attempting to handle his ship with inert controls, as they had not been switched to where he was standing in the wheelhouse.

Confusion from poorly-designed controls: One might ask why, in a wheelhouse a few paces from one side to the other, it was necessary to have separate port, starboard and central controls, but I am told not to be old-fashioned, as convenience and labour-saving are the priorities these days. I recall a ferry master friend telling me that after confusion had reigned in his bridge, they

fashioned an enormous wooden "tablet" that distinguished the active console from the currently dead ones.

It was, he said, on the same principle as the huge tokens exchanged by the drivers of railway engines on single tracked lines. But these sort of "instrument enabled" accidents, which probably would not have happened before the multiplication of control stations, still occur on a fairly regular basis. And there is no denying that confusion is sometimes occasioned by poorly designed controls or switches, with vital functions insufficiently distinguished from others, sometimes badly lit.

It seems to be often a function of digitization, with touch-screens and pressure switches taking over from more "human-friendly" controls, where status was more immediately apparent.

Accidents from autopilots: Accidents involving autopilots also happen rather too often and can be a source of embarrassment and worse. A classic example which will be written into textbooks forever more is the stranding and subsequent loss last year of the New Zealand Navy's dive and hydrographic ship HMNZS *Manawanui*, which met her end amid confusion on the reefs of Samoa. The final report into the circumstances, which attribute the stranding to those on the bridge not realizing the vessel was on autopilot when they were trying to turn the ship away from the coast, makes sobering reading, with the (partially redacted) voice transcripts from the bridge recorder, of that career-ending evening. It will be little comfort to those involved to learn that their problems were pretty well identical to those on the bridge of the tanker *Torrey Canyon*, which, in 1967, ushered us into the age of the super-spill.

They too had wasted desperate final seconds trying to disengage the ship's autopilot, circumstances which have been repeated down through the intervening decades, aboard too many ships. Insufficient familiarity of the operating crew with their ship and her controls were suggested as one problem in the New Zealand report, which might seem surprising to commercial sector readers, as naval vessels invariably spend a long time "working up", where crews of merchant ships are expected to take their ships to sea without such a period of familiarization. But the old saw "different ships – different long splices" still manage a certain resonance in an era of infinitely more complex vessels and their sophisticated equipment.

By Michael Grey April 22nd 2025 https://maritimemag.com/en/the-indispensable-role-of-watchkeeping/

**Michael Grey, a past Master Mariner, is former editor of Lloyd's List. This column is published with the kind permission of The Maritime Advocate.*

**See *https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67ebba71e9c76fa33048c561/2025-1-SafetyDigest.pdf* Page 20.

Cap San Diego

The CAP SAN DIEGO spotted off Cuxhaven Photo :Gosse Nonkes (c)

The picture above appeared in the July 23rd edition of the "Daily Collection of Maritime Press Clippings" and immediately caught my eye – because it looks like a ship. I had not heard of this "museum" ship, for that is what it is. David

Take a look at: https://www.hamburg.com/visitors/museums/cap-san-diego-18804
and https://www.bremerhaven.de/en/events/sail-2025/ships/cap-san-diego-motor-ship.158886.html

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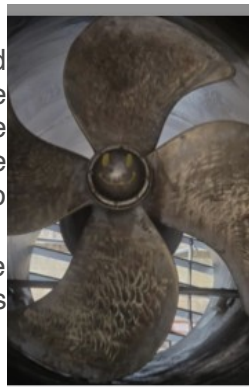
Why the *Algoterra* Is Docked: Understanding the Importance of Dry Docking

As part of the stringent SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea) requirements, all merchant vessels must undergo a comprehensive survey of their hull in a dry dock at least twice within a five-year period. This includes a special survey and an intermediate survey, which must occur within a maximum of 36 months. Recently, the *Algoterra* completed its third five-year docking in Portugal, ensuring it meets these essential safety standards.

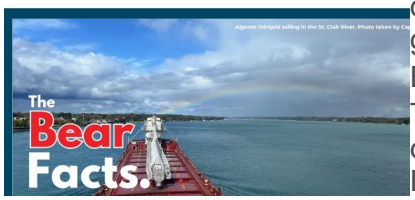


Dry docking is crucial for the maintenance of a ship's hull, propeller, rudder, and other components that are submerged in water and generally inaccessible while the vessel is sailing. A dry dock is a specially designed area where the construction, repairs, and maintenance of merchant vessels are carried out. The unique design allows water to be filled or drained from the area, enabling vessels to be maneuvered in and out.

Once a vessel enters the dry dock and is positioned on blocks, the gates are closed, and the water is drained. This exposes the hull and other underwater parts of the ship, allowing for necessary maintenance and repair work.

Below are a few major jobs carried out on the *Algoterra*:

Ballast water treatment system (BWTS) installation: Installation of the BWTS was not only one of the major projects during this docking but also successful in its installation and commissioning!
Hull cleaning/ blasting and painting: The Algoterra hull paint was orange prior to this docking. The complete hull was cleaned, blasted using grit blasting, and painted in Algoma colours.
Main engine overhauling: The complete main engine was overhauled during this docking, this was done as per makers standard maintenance schedule. Steering gear complete overhauling.



Bow thruster complete overhauling.

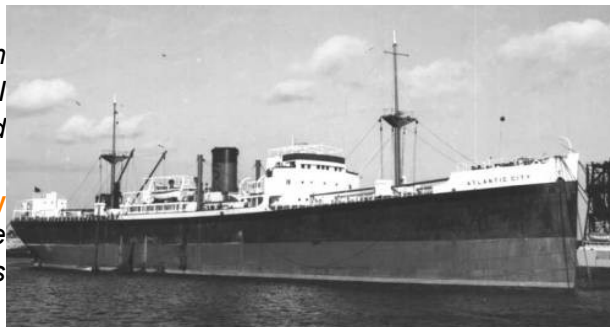
The comprehensive docking project took about 40 days to complete. The *Algoterra* is now back home, serving on the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Seaway with renewed efficiency and safety!

From "The Bear Facts" Q4 2024 https://www.algonet.com/bear-fact-newsletter/

This letter appeared in the June 2001 edition of "SHIPPING – Today & Yesterday".

I was delighted to see in the January issue a picture of one of my old ships, the 'Atlantic City' of Sir Wm. Reardon Smith & Sons, Cardiff.

In April 1941, having just had my 21st birthday in March and having recently passed my Second Mate's ticket, I was appointed Third Mate of the Atlantic City and joined her at the Wm, Doxford & Sons shipyard at Sunderland.



Three months later, on her second voyage in the middle watch, in the North Atlantic, west of Ireland, she was

torpedoed. When dawn broke and seeing the ship was still afloat, we re-boarded her. After inspection, finding that her main engines were undamaged, though the steering gear was destroyed between the bridge and aft, it was decided to attempt sailing back to land.

After rigging the emergency steering gear, in company with a naval escort we proceeded. It was our intention to try and reach Londonderry. Nearing the Irish coast, the ship's condition had worsened so it was decided to find a sheltered place to beach her. We sailed into Lough Swilly and beached her at Buncrana.

There the cargo of war materials was offloaded into coasters. With the steering gear repaired we sailed her to Glasgow where she was drydocked.

It was with great interest to see her in peacetime colours plus a cowl lip on her funnel and her topmasts refitted. ***T.J. Smith. Master Mariner. Trinity House Pilot.***

I copied that letter because I thought that a friend, Captain Tony Crowther, who's first ship was the *Atlantic* City, would be interested in it. He has many associates who sailed with Reardon Smith and I imagined he would like to share this story with them. I soon learned that he knew much more about the event. He not only knew about it but he had been acquainted with the Master of the ship.

He replied, "My uncle was married to the daughter of Captain Brice Thomas who had been the Master of the *Atlantic City* when she was torpedoed.

Some of the crew of the *Atlantic City* preparing to go ashore. Tony is the tall one on the right, with his hands in his pockets.

About 4 days before joining the *Atlantic City* I was instructed by my parents to walk to his house in my brand new uniform for his advice!....I was 17 years old and had no sea training but was looking forward to it all so much. He made me a cup of tea and told me that anything he told me would be forgotten by me as soon I left him. He did say that I should keep one hand for myself and one for the ship.....advice which I have tried to follow to this day!"

David Whitaker

(Note: Tony was the first Treasurer and the first Life Member **of the NPESC)**

Tony then continued with the following: -

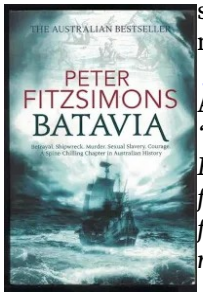
A TRIBUTE TO THE LATE CAPTAIN BRICE D THOMAS, O.B.E. 1892-1978

To all those who were privileged to have known him, Captain Brice Thomas was truly a gentleman. He was a son of the sea; his Cardiganshire roots were deep in the tradition of his calling. Those who had sailed with him recognised him as a complete Master of his ship. On shore he was of a quiet retiring nature. He had a good word for everyone. The writer remembers the first occasion seeing a Captain in the office. It was during the middle thirties when Captain Thomas called at the office at Merthyr House. On entering the Accounts Detainment he greeted everyone, even down to shaking hands with the humble junior as well as the Chief Accountant—truly the mark of a gentle-man whose greatness blossomed in his humility. That incident remained with the writer as an example of something worth emulating.

No greater tribute can be paid than to say Captain Thomas was a Christian gentleman, who practiced the basics of his Welsh Nonconformist background. We can surely say that his passing at the age of 85 will leave the world a poorer place for his departure. He will live long, however, in the memories of all who, down through the years, were privileged to have known him.
Our deepest sympathy is extended to his family.
Captain Thomas joined his first ship as a Deck boy in 1906. After serving “before the mast" for eight years he obtained his Second Mate's Certificate in Cardiff at the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. He joined the Reardon Smith line in January 1915.
January 1915 was to be the beginning of a long and devoted service to our Company which was to last until his retirement in 1953. He was appointed Second Officer in 1915 on the s. s. *Jersey City*. Chief Officer in 1917 on the s.s. *Atlantic City*, and was promoted to Master in 1919 on the same vessel. Some of the Company’s present staff, anxiously looking at the today's promotion ladder, will view such a rapid rise rather enviously, but war conditions are not a true picture of normal promotion prospects, and Captain Thomas’s meteoric rise to Master was not unusual in those hectic days.
The following thirty-four years saw Captain Thomas in command of thirteen of the Company’s vessels, finally retiring at the end of his career in February 1953 at the age of 60. A quiet, rather retiring man under normal conditions. Captain Thomas had the reputation of always being in command of his vessel and beware anyone who ever had the audacity to question his authority. At the same time, he was always fair and just in his dealings with his ship's staff and was highly respected by those he met on shore, not least by the Head Office staff he would meet on his visits to the Cardiff Office. As one would expect, his years as Master were not without their exciting moments and probably the early days of his command of the m.v. *Atlantic City* which lasted from January 1941 to August 1947 is a period he would have remembered as well as any.
The vessel loaded a part cargo of coal in January 1941 with equipment and munitions stowed over the coal, and sailed from the Clyde in convoy. The following day, the vessel was torpedoed off the north coast of Ireland. The torpedo entered the ship under the bridge in No. 2 hold, burrowed itself in the coal and exploded. Severe damage was caused to the ship and she sank heavily by the head. That evening as darkness descended, the destroyer which was standing by, deemed it unsafe for anyone to stay on board and Captain Thomas and his crew were taken off. When dawn broke the next day, the *Atlantic City* was still afloat. The Allied merchant fleet was suffering severely at this time from submarine attacks. The *Atlantic City* was an inviting target for any stray ‘U’ boat. Aid in the form of a tow was unlikely to materialise for some time if at all. The destroyer’s Commander was in a quandary. He felt the only answer was to sink the *Atlantic City,* a floating hulk and a danger to any convoy passing that way. but Captain Thomas in his most indomitable manner persuaded the Commander, much against the latter’s will, to allow him and a few volunteers to re-board the ship in the hope that she could be saved. A quick check after re-boarding showed bulkheads intact and engine room dry. The engines were started very gently so as not to put undue strain onto bulkheads in way of the flooded compartments. Slowly she moved towards the Irish Coast and some twenty-four hours later she was beached in Buncrana Bay. The forward draft was more than forty-two feet and the water was washing in over the fore deck—not hard to imagine in a ship with a fully loaded draft of twenty-six feet! A few weeks later the vessel was escorted to the Clyde and several months after that she sailed for the Middle East fully repaired and with Captain Thomas in command throughout.
For his devotion to duty and his bravery he was awarded the O.B.E., which was so richly deserved.

I do not need to tell you the meaning of Dead Reckoning. At least I don’t believe so. A few years ago a friend asked me for its meaning. Tim was a sailor but not a professional mariner. I defined D.R. for him and then he began to explain the reason for his question.

Tim and his wife first saw the term *Dead Reckoning* in the Ship Wreck Galleries of the Western Australian Maritime Museum in Fremantle, Western Australia http://museum.wa.gov.au/museums/maritime. They encountered it again when they visited the museum in Geraldton http://museum.wa.gov.au/museums/geraldton.
Exhibits referred to vessels engaged in the Spice Trade. Those ships sailed around the Cape of Good Hope and headed east, knowing their latitude but not the longitude. Hence they were sailing on *Dead Reckoning* and, because of that, some foundered on reefs off Western Australia.
The Geraldton website reads, "Discover the fascinating maritime history of the State's midwest, from the famous *Batavia* mutiny, to lesser known tales such as the inspiring saga of human ingenuity displayed by *Zeewijk* survivors and the unknown fate of other European shipwreck survivors stranded on Western Australian shores https://museum.wa.gov.au/maritime-archaeology-db/wrecks/zeewijk. The gallery features artefacts from four local shipwrecks including clay pipes, silver coins, cannons, the original *Batavia* stone portico and numerous other relics". Also see: -



https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/wreck-of-the-batavia
All of this led them to reading the book "Batavia" by Peter Fitzsimmons. A website says, *"Batavia is the greatest story in Australia's history, and history comes to life with Peter Fitzsimmons. The Shipwreck of the "Batavia" combines, in just the one tale, the birth of the world's first corporation, the brutality of colonisation, the battle of good vs. evil, the derring-do of sea-faring adventure, mutiny, ship-wreck, love, lust, blood-lust, petty fascist dictatorship, criminality, a reign of terror, murders most foul".*
I have just read the book "The Night Ship" by Jess Kidd, a novel about a girl who was a passenger on the *Batavia* in 1629, and about a boy in 1989 who was living with his grandfather on an Australian island where relics from the *Batavia* had been discovered. That reminded me of Tim's conversation with me.

Tim encountered "Dead Reckoning" in another place. He was curious to know why the "gps" in his car continued to work when he was driving through a long tunnel and had obviously lost any satellite signals. He googled the question and came up with some interesting sites.
One site said, *"So why did the GPS keep working? The answer is the unit was simply displaying an educated guess about the route while he was in the tunnel, based upon his speed and location at the moment it lost the satellite. Such calculations are generically known as "dead reckoning" and are commonly employed throughout the GPS industry".* http://archive.boston.com/news/local/articles/2011/07/07/how_gps_can_still_work_sort_of_in_a_tunnel_1309971757/
Another site contains the following paragraph: *Dead reckoning has a long history, particularly with seafarers who would calculate their estimated position by using their current speed and direction. It is thought the word comes from 'deduced reckoning'* http://gpssystems.net/no-gps-signal-satellites/. If "deduced reckoning" was the original term, this may have been shortened to "ded reckoning".
Another site, https://www.advancednavigation.com/tech-articles/an-introduction-to-dead-reckoning/#:~:text=Dead%2Dreckoning%20is%20a%20term,or%20stars%20could%20be%20seen says that Dead-reckoning is a term coined in the 1600s by ship navigators to estimate course and distance when no landmarks or stars could be seen. The history behind the term dead-reckoning reputes that a log or other floating object would be thrown overboard at the bow of the ship and observed as the ship passed it by to estimate speed. Using speed, a compass and the directional efforts of current and wind, ship navigators could plot or estimate a course with a reasonable degree of accuracy for the time, especially over short distances.

This website continues with a section on "Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) & Dead-Reckoning Today.

Enjoy the Autumn 2025 edition of Maritime Magazine
https://maritimemag.com/en/3d-flip-book/magazine-118/

This and other editions of Seatimes can be found at: https://npesc.ca/seatimes

Janelle Robertson,
with her NPESC Bursary Certificate.

(A letter from Janelle appeared in the August 2025 edition of Seatimes)

The August 2024 edition of Seatimes contained an article about a "Cadet Ship". Included was reference to "Soojiing". At the end I added this comment: -

*** Soojiing:** I had an article that described "sooji", what it was for and how to spell it but I just cannot find it. So, I would like to hear from any reader who can help me define that word for our younger generation of seafarers. Please send your comments to me. David Whitaker

I received no advice on the matter, but – I have just located my earlier article.

"The delights of chipping, painting, sweeping out hatches, soojiing, doing the brightwork etc, were soon being introduced to me and it seemed that most of the jobs required getting wet or dirty"
J.M. Paterson
recall his service aboard
Cadet Ship 'Crinan'

I had written about it after I had seen reference to "soogeeing being a weird EastCoastism, meaning mopping basically". "East" was correct, but not "Coast". I think it would be fair to say that although the first letter below refers to the British India Company, the term suji was used throughout the British Merchant Navy.

It should be "Suji": Two letters appeared in the May 1976 edition of "Sea Breezes" in response to an earlier letter. They referred to a 'favourite task' of many a Cadet.

1. I have read with interest Mr. Braynard's letter under the heading "Sugeying or Soogeying?" I have pleasure in advising him as follows: -

- The correct spelling is suji
- The origin of the word is from the Hindustani "suji-mutti", which literally means "caustic earth".

In the vessels operated by BI (the British India Steam Navigation Co. Ltd.) prior to their merger into the P&O General Cargo Division, the word "Sujiing" (pronounced "soogeying") was a well-known term, and in each vessel the Cassab (Storekeeper) had his own particular brand of suji, which was made from caustic soda, soft soap and water in varying amounts and was used to wash down superstructure paintwork.
As all orders and discussions between the deck officers and crew were in Hindustani, it was necessary to be fully acquainted with all nautical terms and words in Hindustani.
If the vessel was in the tropics, her running gear and general maintenance up to standard, and particularly if the vessel was shortly to enter her base port, probably Bombay or Calcutta, then the Chief Officer's order of the day to the Serang (Bosun) would be "sujiwuji", i.e. make the ship spick and span.

2. In answer to Mr. Braynard's question on "soogey", may I make the following comment? "Soogey" was a watery mixture of caustic soda or lye. This is the basis for most of our soaps. It was used to wash down bulkheads and most painted surfaces. It caused a chemical dermatitis of the hands on the seamen who used it, "soogey hands". Basically it is a strong alkaline detergent and you get red hands from a bucket of "soogey".

Rule 14 or 15? That is the question. The latest interpretation of Rules 14 and 15 in the Collision Regulations by the English High Court. Captain Chris Bordas MNI MSc BA Hons (law) CMMar

Seaways. August 2025. The Journal of The Nautical Institute. www.nautinst.org/seaways

Rule 14. Head-on Situation
(a) When two power-driven vessels are meeting on reciprocal or nearly reciprocal courses so as to involve risk of collision each shall alter her course to starboard so that each shall pass on the port side of the other.
(b) Such a situation shall be deemed to exist when a vessel sees the other ahead or nearly ahead and by night she could see the masthead lights of the other in a line or nearly in a line and/or both sidelights and by day she observes the corresponding aspect of the other vessel.
(c) When a vessel is in any doubt as to whether such a situation exists she shall assume that it does exist and act accordingly.

Rule 15. Crossing Situation
When two power-driven vessels are crossing so as to involve risk of collision, the vessel which has the other on her own starboard side shall keep out of the way and shall, if the circumstances of the case admit, avoid crossing ahead of the other vessel.

With all due respect to William Shakespeare, determining which of the Collision Regulations apply when another vessel is closing on the starboard bow with a nearly reciprocal heading is a question that has vexed mariners and courts for many years. In recent years there have been a number of high profile end-on collision cases that were based primarily, but not exclusively, on whether Rule 14 (Head on) of the Collision Regulations applied, or alternatively, whether the Crossing Rules 15, 16 and 17 should be applied. These cases are balanced, with arguments going both ways – reflecting in part, the degree of uncertainty experienced by the respective Masters and OOWs.

Defining Rule 14 in the English Court: With successive recent judgements, English Courts are coming closer to defining what a *nearly reciprocal* course is (Rule 14a), and how close a vessel must be to your own vessel's heading to be *nearly ahead* (Rule 14b). The English Courts have been able to achieve this degree of analysis through the availability of Voyage Data Recorder (VDR) data which enables nearly every aspect of the behaviour of each vessel and its bridge team to be closely scrutinised so that a clear line of causation and liability can be established. After all, the purpose of a hearing is to establish liability. Once handed down, the judgement also affirms English Law or sets a new precedent into English Law for future cases.
Judges at all levels of the courts are very conscious that their findings must retain the degree of understanding and wording that the Collision Regulations were intended to have when they were published in 1972. the judgements are in themselves a *tour de force* of the application of the Collision Regulations, and in my opinion, they are recommended reading for all.
That said, I have to ask myself: would the collisions have been avoided if the bridge teams of the vessels involved in these cases had prior knowledge and understandings of the judgements? Sadly, the answer is probably not. All these collisions involved common factors which were recognised as being causative. Of these features, the major contributors were: -

- poor or non-existent lookout;
- poor communications procedures between the vessels involved;
- failure to take adequate action to avoid close quarters situation in plenty of time.

Ever Smart* and *Alexandra 1: A classic example is the collision between the container vessel *Ever Smart* and crude oil tanker *Alexandra 1* in the Jebel Ali approaches on 11 February 2015. Here we have the benefit of both the English Supreme Court Judgement which determines the liability between the vessel owners, and also the UK Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) report, whose purpose is to provide information to mariners together with recommendations to shipping companies and ports that will prevent such accidents from occurring again. The MAIB reports are to be found on the bridges of many ships, but leading judgements on collisions which contain valuable insight into the interpretation of the Collision Regulations and English Law are absent, even on UK registered vessels.

While the issue of the Collision Regulations is not discussed in the MAIB report, the Supreme Court judgement discusses the Collision Regulations in depth in order to to establish whether the Crossing Rules (15, 16 and 17) do apply *except* in the instance of a vessel approaching a narrow channel which is shaping to enter, adjusting her course so as to reach the entrance on her starboard side and on her final approach.

However, the judgement does not provide a definitive meaning to the 'approaches to a narrow channel'.

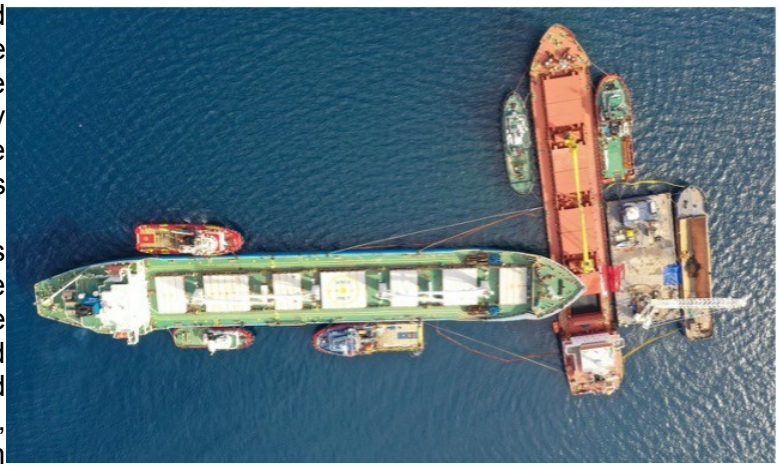
The MAIB takes a broader look at the events leading up to the collision. Communications on VHF, the lookout kept by the *Ever Smart* and the actions of the pilot and Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) were among the issues considered. It concludes by setting out 12 safety issues which contributed to the accident.

***Afina 1* and *Kiveli*:** The most recent collision to be examined by an English Court is between bulk carriers *Afina 1* and *Kiveli* – the full judgement can be found at:

https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admlty/2025/1185.html

Shortly before sunrise on 13 March 2021, the two vessels collided off the south coast of Greece. Their contact epitomises the classic end-on approach. It came close to being a green to green passing with a CPA of 0.26 nm. The vessels had been in sight of one another from over 8.6nm away, from 22 minutes before the collision. The collision occurred when *Kiveli* turned to port as *Afina 1* was turning to starboard, when the distance between the vessels was just over 0.5nm.

When the vessels came into sight of each other, the reciprocity between their courses was 7º. Their subsequent contact angle was 90º into *Afina 1* at midships. Crucially the bearing of each vessel from the other had not changed appreciably as they approached one another and therefore under Rule 7 there was a risk of collision, determined initially using radar as well as all available means, and again when these vessels were in sight of one another at 8.6nm.



When discussing this with many Masters on vessels I have attended as a Pilot, the overall conclusion is to wonder why the vessels left it so late to manoeuvre, and why *Kiveli* would alter course to port and collide, when doing nothing at all would, by a small margin, have avoided collision altogether.

The analysis by the Court focussed on which of the Collision Regulations applied: Rule 14 (Head on) or Rule 15 (Crossing). In deciding this, the Judge considered in some depth what would constitute a nearly reciprocal course (Rule 14a) and what angle on the bow would constitute being nearly ahead (Rule 14b). For the purpose of Rule 14a a difference of up to 6° or slightly more between the heading of one vessel and the reciprocal heading of the other would suffice. The basis of this value is that the crossover point of sidelights is up to 3° on the opposite bow. This falls within the provision of Rule 14b of being able to see the *mast head lights of the other in a line or nearly in a line and/or both sidelights.* Importantly in this case, this is not an absolute provision It is only there to assist the OOW in determining whether Rule 14a applies or not. Obviously in daylight conditions, when the navigation lights are not visible, it cannot alone assist the OOW in determining this.
The Judge sought advice from the highly experienced marine adviser to the Court regarding what a competent OOW would consider to be *ahead or nearly ahead* in respect of Rule 14b. This was considered to be plus or minus 5° from the heading. It was not necessary for Rule 14b to be satisfied by both vessels. On this point the Judge was influenced by the fact that one vessel cannot know what the other vessel will see of it.

The importance of lookout: Importantly for the seafarer, Rules 14 and 15 fall within Part B Section II of the Collision Regulations (Rules 11 – 18) for the conduct of vessels which are in sight of one another. Commendably the judgement also remarked on the use of other equipment which in my experience is carried on all ships' bridges, namely a pair of binoculars. These comments on the use of binoculars go further to emphasising the importance of keeping a good visual lookout at all times.
The principles of what constitute good seamanship and the *ordinary practice of seamen* (Rule 2) were also discussed together with a warning to mariners that some nautical practices do not justify the disapplication of the Collision Regulations. This in particular referred to the practice of some vessels to make small alterations of course to port in order to disapply Rule 14a once it had been engaged. The judgement firmly rejected this practice.
To summarise, I believe that anyone reading the judgement of *Afina 1 v Kiveli* (which I recommend) may come away with the intention of firstly keeping a better lookout and secondly taking early and substantial action to avoid close quarters situations from developing at all.
Remember that for a Rule 14 scenario, action to avoid a close quarters situation can be taken as soon as the vessels are in sight of one another. Under a Rule 15 crossing situation, there is an obligation on the stand-on vessel to wait until it has been determined that the give way vessel is not taking appropriate action (Rule 17).
To use the words from another judgement, *The Majola II*: -

"The officer in charge of each ship should not have found himself in such difficulty which could easily have been avoided."

Captain Chris Bordas is a full time working pilot in the Thames Estuary and Medway. He has held the position for 35 years. **Seaways. The Journal of The Nautical Institute. August 2025**

Editor's Comments: I try to include an article from Seaways if one is suitable but it is not always easy. Some are too long for our Newsletter and others are difficult for me to understand. For instance, the August 2025 edition has articles on "Quantum Navigation and The Science behind Atom Interferometry", "Safeguarding the Digital Compass" and "ECDIS familiarisation". I try to understand them – but I am lost. I have been ashore for 60 years now. But, then I found the article about "Rule 14 or 15". This I felt I could understand. I googled "Collision Regulations" to remind myself about them. Of course they have changed since I learned them. Right away I saw a difference, because the Rules I learned began, "*These Rules shall be complied with by all vessels and seaplanes upon the high seas and in all waters navigable by seagoing vessels, except*

as provided in Rule 30". At that time, the "Head-on" situation was in Rule 18 and the "Crossing" situation was in Rule 19 I believe.
But, this article was interesting to me and I was soon reminded of the radar simulator course I took in London in November 1963*. After each exercise all participants would gather and discuss what happened, and one question was frequently asked – "Why did you alter course to port?" It seemed there was always a valid reason.
* *I remember the date and where I was because, as I headed home after the course had finished at the end of the week, President Kennedy was assasinated.*

Report warns shore leave is in danger of extinction

A new report from the ITF Seafarers' Trust and the World Maritime University (WMU) highlights the continuing absence of shore leave for the world's seafarers. Analysing the data from 5,879 seafarers who responded to the trust's shore leave survey, WMU researchers concluded that more than a quarter of seafarers did not get any shore leave at all, and a third only got ashore once or twice during their entire contract, based on an average of 6.6 months onboard.

The ITF Seafarers' Trust opened the shore leave survey in mid-2024 to test the concern that shore leave seemed to be progressively harder to access.
Working with the team at the WMU to analyse the data, the resulting report seeks to give a true picture of the current levels of shore leave available to seafarers, how often it happened, how long it lasted, and to look at possible barriers.
The report paints a sorry picture of access to shore leave and shore-based services.

More than a quarter of seafarers do not get any shore leave at all

Officers were least likely to get shore leave, and seafarers on offshore vessels and tankers were the least likely to get ashore. Across all respondents, even when seafarers did get shore leave, 47% were able to spend less than three hours ashore and overall, 93.5% spent less than six hours ashore.
The data shows that the barriers to shore leave are multiple and systemic: minimal crewing and high workloads, increasing inspections, port security and operational efficiencies leading to lack of time in port, lack of shore-based facilities and costs of transport. All these and multiple other issues result in a situation where the current system means that for seafarers to recuperate with shore leave is an unattainable dream in many ports.
Katie Higginbottom, head of the ITF Seafarers' Trust, said: "This survey confirms our fears. Seafarers are not getting shore leave because it hasn't been prioritised as essential for crew wellbeing and the safety of the vessel. This is about setting the scene, and it is stark. We hope that the findings will promote discussion and acknowledgement that seafarers deserve a break from the vessel. Action must be taken to preserve the possibility of shore leave."
At a time when mental health and well-being are recognised as important considerations for seafarers' health and safety on board, access to shore leave should be promoted to ensure the safe management of the vessel, the 47-page report states, adding that given the looming crew shortages, affording decent opportunities for relaxation from work should be a priority for attracting and retaining crew.
"All stakeholders, from flag states to port states, agents to shipping companies and seafarers themselves, need to recognise that the current regime is leading towards the extinction of shore leave as a viable concept," the report urges.

Splash 247.com

Aug 11th 2025 https://splash247.com/report-warns-shore-leave-is-in-danger-of-extinction/

Correspondence received re: Seatimes August 2025

Good morning Dave. Thank you for your latest edition of 'Sea Times' & the passing of Capt. David Batchelor & with specific reference to the letter he wrote you. I am not sure that I ever met him but his name is very familiar.

I was drawn to the part where he describes the sailing of the Union Castle ships from Southampton to Cape Town. It is interesting to note that the very same ships sailed from Cape Town to Southampton, after coming down the coast from Durban, precisely at 4 pm every Thursday with great fanfare, streamers etc. **Mike Tinkler**

(Readers who know Mike will also know he hails from South Africa)

NPESC Bursary Certificate Presentation

On September 9th Captain Stan Bowles (Chairman) and Ms. Vivienne Siddall (Director) attended Camosun College in Victoria to present a Certificate to Bryan Bowles (no relation), the recipient of this year's Award in Memory of Captain Brian Silvester. Stan reported that they had a "very good discussion with Bryan about his career and about who Brian Silvester was".

World Shipping Council launches industry-first Cargo Safety Program to prevent ship fires

The World Shipping Council (WSC) today announced the launch of its Cargo Safety Program, an industry-led initiative to detect misdeclared and undeclared dangerous goods in order to prevent ship fires, protect crews, vessels, customers' cargo, and the marine environment.

The program combines AI-powered cargo screening and common inspection standards to identify misdeclared and undeclared high-risk shipments before they are loaded.

Ship fires are at their highest level in over a decade, according to Allianz's Safety and Shipping Review 2025. Misdeclared dangerous goods are a leading cause of ship fires, reported as responsible for more than a quarter of all cargo-related incidents.

"We have seen too many tragic incidents where misdeclared cargo has led to catastrophic fires, including the loss of life," said Joe Kramek, President and CEO of the

World Shipping Council. "The WSC Cargo Safety Program strengthens the industry's safety net by combining shared screening technology, common inspection standards, and real-world feedback to reduce risk."

At the heart of the program is a digital cargo screening tool powered by the National Cargo Bureau's (NCB) technology. It scans millions of bookings in real time using keyword searches, trade pattern recognition and AI-driven algorithms to identify potential risks. Alerts are reviewed by carriers and, when needed, verified through targeted physical inspections.

The program also establishes common inspection standards for verifying shipments and an incident feedback loop to ensure lessons from real-world cases strengthen prevention. At launch, carriers representing more than 70 percent of global TEU capacity have joined the program.

"By working together and using the best available tools, we can identify risks early, act quickly, and prevent accidents before they happen," Mr. Kramek said. "The Cargo Safety Program is a powerful new layer of protection, but it does not replace the fundamental obligation shippers have to declare dangerous goods accurately. That is the starting point for safety, and it is required under international law."

The launch builds on WSC's longstanding work to improve maritime safety, from developing cargo handling rules to supporting environmental protection measures. The program will continue to evolve, with regular updates to its technology and standards to address new and emerging risks.

"Ocean carriers transport the goods vital to the flow of global trade, and we have a responsibility to move them safely," Mr. Kramek added. "By raising the bar on cargo screening, we are protecting lives, safeguarding the environment and improving the integrity of the global supply chain."

Maritime Magazine

By Maritime Magazine. Sept 15 2025

https://maritimemag.com/en/world-shipping-council-launches-industry-first-cargo-safety-program-to-prevent-ship-fires/

Vancouver Transportation Foundation Scholarships

This year the NPESC administered the VTF Scholarships. They had been handled by the BC Branch of The Nautical Institute for the previous twelve years.

Eleven scholarships were awarded for a total of $14,200. The winners all from BCIT, were: -

Tyus Barfoot, Seth Cutter-Stovicek, Bhupinder Dhesi, Shifani Hans, William Lea-Smith, Dhruva Maru, Kayley McEachern, Dillon Plouffe, Marisa Price, Jihwan Seong and Joseph Wang.

Congratulations to all recipients

All were advised that certificates will be presented to them at the Marine Campus when a time can be arranged. One wrote to say: -

> Hello Captain Bowles,
> Thank you very kindly for the funding from VTF and NPES, I am very grateful for this aid and opportunity.
> Unfortunately I will not be around on campus for the next few months to take a photograph for Seatimes. I will be away on sea phase with Royal Caribbean in the Bahamas working, if you would like I could absolutely get a photograph on the bridge in uniform with the certificate if that suits.
> Thank you kindly!
> **-Kayley McEachern**

And here is the promised photograph:

(Editor's Note: Kayley is doing something that I would never have dared to do in the wheelhouse – sit down. The wheelhouse is different today.)

Enclosed-Space Fatalities Continue Despite New IMO Safety Rules, Industry Survey Seeks Answers: Following the International Maritime Organisation's newly tightened rules on enclosed-space entry, InterManager is urging all seafarers to participate in its global survey aimed at understanding why fatal incidents in enclosed spaces continue to occur, despite decades of safety campaigns and regulatory updates.

The IMO's recent amendments strengthen requirements for training, hazard identification, space-specific registers and rescue preparedness. Only trained and authorized personnel should enter or stand by during enclosed-space operations, and all ships must now maintain detailed registers of potential hazards.

Yet despite these measures, tragedies continue to occur. In 2023 alone, 14 enclosed-space incidents were reported, resulting in 34 fatalities, almost double the number recorded in 2022. Bulk carriers account for around 41% of all enclosed-space incidents, with most fatalities occurring in cargo holds or access areas. Oxygen depletion remains the leading cause of death, often linked to poor ventilation or incomplete risk assessment.

The number of enclosed space accidents occurring on an annual basis has not reduced significantly since 1998 when InterManager began compiling statistics.

"We've been discussing enclosed-space safety for many years, and despite the rules, people are still dying in confined spaces at sea," says Captain Kuba Szymanski, Secretary General of InterManager. **"The IMO has now strengthened its rulings, but we need to hear from those on the front line to understand what's really happening onboard. Please take part and share your experiences." InterManager's survey, conducted in co-operation with The Nautical Institute and IMarEST, seeks honest, first-hand insight from those who face these risks daily. The aim is to identify what barriers remain in practice, not just on paper.**

All seafarers, shipboard officers, superintendents, HSEQ staff and contractor personnel are urged to take just a few minutes to complete the anonymous online survey and share it with colleagues and fleet networks. All feedback will directly inform industry action plans on training, equipment, and safety culture.

The IMO introduced its first Assembly Resolution on enclosed space entry in 1997, revised in 2011. In January 2015, regular drills became mandatory for crew with enclosed space responsibilities, and from July 2016, ships must carry portable atmosphere testing instruments.

In September 2024, the IMO Sub-Committee on Carriage of Cargo presented an amended resolution. While the objective remains unchanged, the IMO now requires a more structured approach to identifying, assessing and managing enclosed space risks, emphasizing personnel understanding of hazardous atmosphere causes.

Key amendments include recommendations for enhanced training for designated competent persons, maintenance of a ship-specific enclosed space register recording all space hazards, making shipper's declarations available to the master in crew-understandable format, and better planning to prevent time pressure or simultaneous operations from compromising safety.

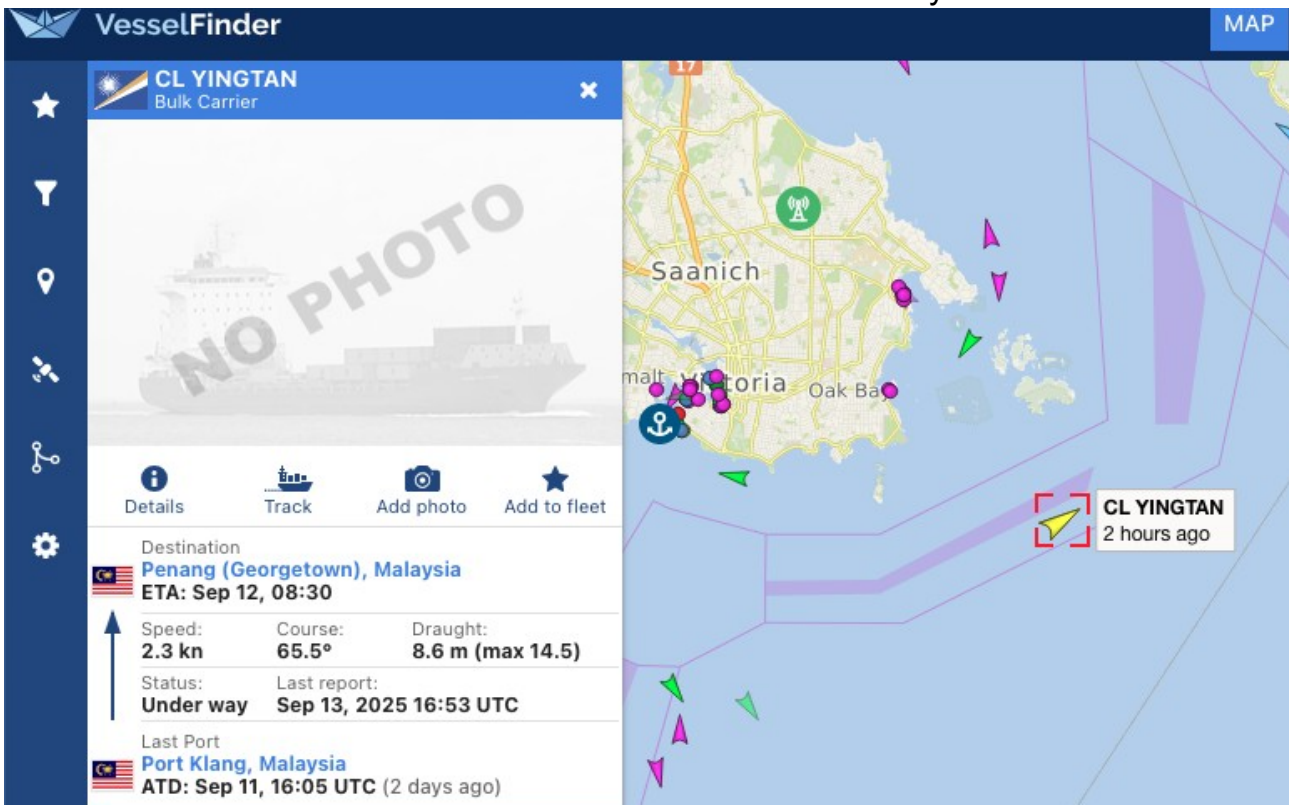
The amendments also call for establishment of clear emergency response plans that are regularly practiced and strictly followed. In emergencies, crews must follow established rescue plans and never attempt independent rescue operations in enclosed spaces.

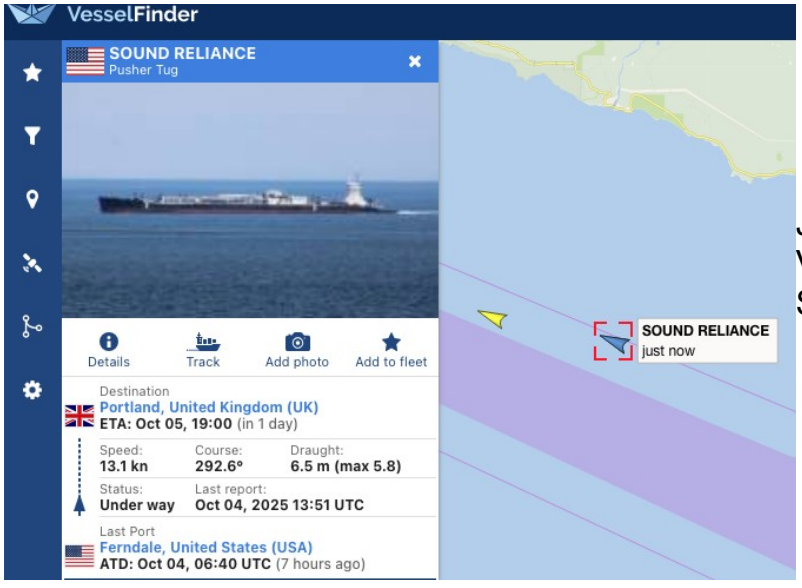
gCaptain daily

Mike Schuler October 27, 2025

November 10th 2025 is the 50th anniversary of the loss of the *Edmond Fitzgerald*. Read about it at: -
https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/weather/2025/11/03/edmund-fitzgerald-wreck-at-50-years/86802697007/

AIS – why did this vessel appear to be close to Victoria, BC on Sept 13th 2025 when the information on Vessel Finder indicates it is in Malaysian waters.





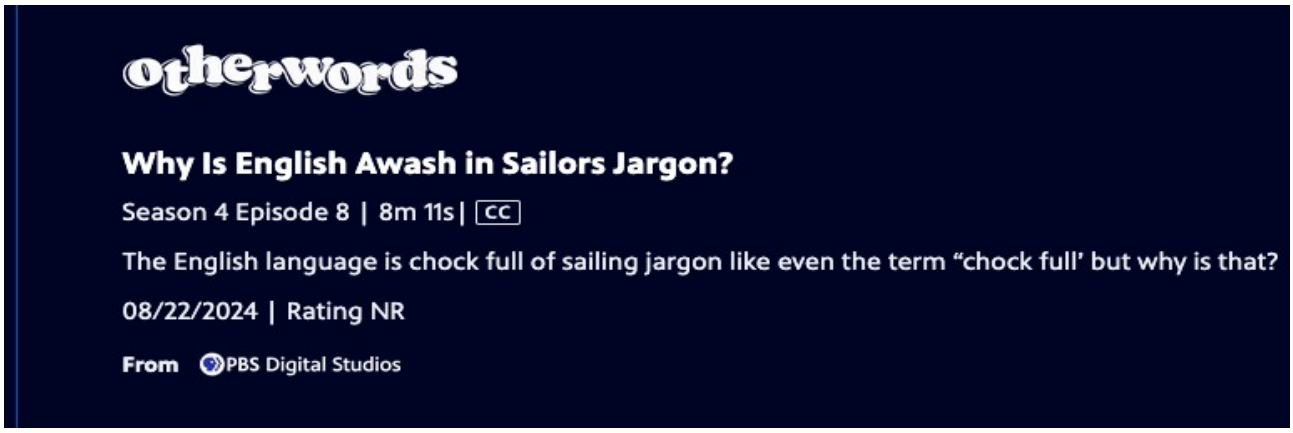
AIS – this pusher tug is in the Juan da Fuca Straits, between Vancouver Island and Washington State.

Bound for the UK?

I don't think so.

Portland, Oregon maybe.

The Steam Engine: "Men might as well project a voyage to the moon as attempt to employ steam navigation against the stormy North Atlantic Ocean".
Dionysius Lardner, in a speech to the British Association for the Advancement of Science. 1838



English has an outsized number of nautical terms because , especially during the 18th and 19th centuries when Britain was a major global power, sailors developed specialized jargon for their profession, and this terminology was introduced to the broader population through literature and daily interaction, eventually becoming common English words and phrases.

Take a listen to: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rt6orh_lc7c

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Hidden at the bottom of page 124 of "Sea Breezes", February 1972.

The Nautical Institute: With the support of a large number of members of the nautical profession an Institute has at last been formed which will be able to represent authoritatively the professional interests of qualified members. Although much work remains to be done, *The Nautical Institute* was formed on January 1st, 1972 with a foundation membership of over 1,500. The headquarters will be in London and there will be branches in Liverpool, Plymouth and the North East Coast.

Your Society.

Do you wish to make a financial contribution to the NPESC? Is it time for you to renew your membership? The Annual Membership Fee remains at $40.00 but any amount that you can donate will be greatly appreciated.

The Society is able to accept Membership Fees or Donations via e-transfer by using the email address treasurer@npesc.ca, or you may send a cheque payable to: -

NPESC, c/o 1004 – 110 Brew Street, Port Moody, BC V3H 0E4

Tax Receipts will be issued promptly in return by the Treasurer.

Thank you.

Contributions to the NPESC are tax deductible. Charitable Registration # 891775447 RR0001

Nautical Professional Education Society of Canada
Founded by The Nautical Institute of BC

Articles or comments for inclusion in future editions of Seatimes can be sent to me at whitknit@telus.net
David Whitaker FNI

The Nautical Institute
British Columbia Branch