

Message from The President of The Nautical Institute

Opening Address for TransNav'07 at Gdynia Maritime University

The Nautical Institute congratulates its Poland Branch members for pro-actively working together with the Gdynia Maritime University to organise this impressive Conference. The issues facing the maritime industry today are certainly no fewer than those that drove the Founding Members to form The Nautical Institute back in 1971 so the need for our members to work with other professionals from diverse sectors to address issues facing the industry is as important as ever. Indeed the tasks and regulations with which today's mariners have to cope are even more complex and extensive. Evidence of this complexity can be seen in many different ways:

- The increase in technology aboard ship with integrated bridge and navigation systems in some cases and an array of stand-alone equipment in others.
- The increase in alarm systems, each of which is designed to help the mariner, but which may actually distract and confuse the watchkeeper.
- The increase in the regulatory burden which can be accurately measured by the doubling in size and content of the 2nd Edition of the Institute's publication "The Shipmaster's Business Companion" in just six years.
- The changes in the structure of shipping as regards manning and management.
- The detrimental effect these changes are having on the experience and competence of watchkeeping officers worldwide, and the increasing workload this is putting on the senior officers.

Many of these changes have had a positive effect on the safety and efficiency of shipping but all change needs to be managed in a thoughtful and properly planned manner. This requires leadership and ensuring that those affected by the change understand it and have a constructive input into it. In this way, the change will be made more effective. The Nautical Institute continues to play an important part in this process of change and constructively questions particular proposals, practices, or regulations where we feel it is professionally necessary to do so. The branches have a major role in this process on both an international and local level and working with the maritime universities and colleges is essential in ensuring that future generations of seafarers are properly educated and training for their responsible and demanding role of providing a safe and efficient shipping service.

The Council of The Nautical Institute and the Secretariat will continue to work closely with the Poland Branch and Gdynia Maritime University in helping to resolve the professional issues of today and the future so as to promote and develop high standards of education and training. It is indeed impressive that over 130 Papers have been received for this Conference on a wide range of relevant issues, and, having reviewed some myself, I am aware that they are of a high quality. I congratulate the authors for the work they have put in and I am sorry not to be able to attend in person to hear the best presented but I have had to return to my ship.

*The President of The Nautical Institute
Captain Nicholas Cooper, FNI
Shipmaster*