

Contributing to a safer future

We are often asked by potential members what the Institute can do for them – what is the value of membership and does it equate to the outlay of the annual subscription (which, by the way, is still the lowest of all the international maritime professional bodies). Some members also ask the same question.

Part of the answer lies within the pages of *Seaways* and this month's issue is a particularly fine example of the Institute, through its members' contributions, exploring solutions to present and future needs within our profession. We are indeed fortunate to have so many members with the clarity of mind and ability to think about their work and propose improvements for the present as well as exploring issues that need to be addressed to ensure safe operations in the future.

In the present category this month we have the Captain's Column (pp 3-4) looking at the procedures and equipment involved in man overboard situations on cargo ships. While this may not be a common occurrence these days, it is, nevertheless, one that can and does occur so all ships should be adequately equipped and the crew properly trained to deal with the emergency. The same is definitely true of the far more frequent dangers associated with entry into

enclosed spaces. Captain Lloyd's article (pp15-16/21-23) focuses on UK legislation but the working environment, equipment, training, and legal issues he explores are international ones as the catalogue of deaths from this danger amply demonstrates. The Institute is committed to working with other international organisations and the IMO to ensure these safety issues are really addressed and lives are not endangered in this needless manner. Seafarers, or rather their employers, should not be exempted from regulations to deliberately face more danger than their shoreside counterparts.

ECDIS

There are many other safety issues of the present that need to be addressed: as an industry we are fortunate that we have many excellent, modern training colleges dedicated to ensuring that seafarers are properly prepared to face the inherent dangers of the job (see front and back covers). College and university staff, as well as forward-thinking professionals at sea and ashore are also applying their minds to the technological developments affecting the operation and, particularly, the navigation of ships. Over the past decade, the Institute has devoted considerable resource to this subject and will continue to do so as it is fundamental to the safety of shipping and the livelihood of our members.

It is a major theme of our publishing activities and Andy Norris' new book (see pp8-9). *ECDIS and Positioning*, is essential reading for all officers, college lecturers, and fleet managers, as is Harry Gale's *From Paper Charts to ECDIS*. Together, they will help with the transition to the mandatory carriage of ECDIS (if you are not already using it) which begins from 1 July 2012 and will be phased in over six years. That it is a fundamental change in terms of navigating practices, bridge layout and procedures, and training needs should not be doubted.

John Bazley of Warsash Maritime Academy and Captain Nick Nash, a serving cruise ship master, set this out clearly in their articles (pp 13-14 and pp 24-26 respectively). They acknowledge that international regulations, at least for training, will invariably lag technological developments, so it is up to the profession and employers to be proactive in ensuring that safe practices are developed.

The new decade will certainly be one of further rapid change, traditional navigating skills as we know them today, and which have been with us for centuries, may well be mourned – but before they are discarded entirely let us do all we can to ensure that technology and the people operating it are really making shipping safer.

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■ Cover picture: Anglo-Eastern Ship Management's new, state-of-the-art maritime academy will be formally opened this month. Institute Chief Executive Philip Wake will be reporting on the celebrations in next month's *Seaways*.

Sited at Karjat, about an hour's drive from Navi Mumbai, the academy is set in a 53 acre site and has accommodation for some 280 students. Captain Pradeep Chawla FNI, Anglo-Eastern Director, says: 'It has been a long wait to realise the strategic goal of full control of the quality of our young recruits right from the start.'