NEW ZEALAND

DP seminar

➔ Twenty people joined us for the Dynamic Positioning (DP) seminar held in the learning commons at the New Zealand Maritime School in Auckland. We were joined online by members from Blenheim and Barren Island (Australia) – and by our chairman from Wellington via smartphone, using the gotomeeting app linked in the confirmation email. This allows for a limited view of the seminar, with just a single screen view rather than the multi-screen view afforded by a desktop/laptop PC, but is still successful in allowing remote attendance of meetings. The app allows attendees to chat among themselves, and to pose questions for the seminar facilitator.

Changes to the DP scheme

Our first guest speaker, Mark Pointon MNI, delivered his presentation online from Perth (Australia). Many people were familiar with Mark from his time as The Nautical Institute's DP Training Manager in London. He is now senior DP instructor for the purpose-built Farstad DP simulation centre in Perth. Mark delivered a clear presentation about the new NI certification scheme, highlighting the differences from the previous scheme. In particular he talked about the emphasis on assessment in both the DP Induction and DP Simulator courses, and the subsequent reduction in seatime requirements from 210 days to a total of 120 days. Mark then took us on a tour of the NI Alexis website, showing us the pathway from first application through to the final certificate, and the process for renewing the Dynamic Positioning Operator (DPO) certificate.

Following these very interesting slides Mark talked about the challenges that NI faces to maintain consistent high standards over the close to 100 NI accredited training centres. Training centres are grouped into three regions representing the industries from Asia, Europe (including the Arabian Gulf) and Americas. Mark emphasised that the industry itself owns and leads the DP scheme, and the Institute's task is to administrate and be the guardian of the scheme.

Mark was asked whether someone who started DP training under the old scheme would be able to transfer to the new scheme and qualify for the reduced sea time requirements. Under transition arrangements, this is possible if the trainee has passed the induction exam and is willing to sacrifice any sea time gained.

Understanding DP

The next speaker, Capt Rusty O'Kane AFNI, required little introduction. Most of the local members would count Rusty as a mate, or have at least met him during their careers. Rusty is Master with Farstad Shipping, and is the New Zealand Maritime School's senior DP instructor.

Rusty took us through the basics of DP operations in a very competent manner that got everyone in the room involved. He differentiated between the workings of a DP1 and a DP2 vessel, and outlined the various sensors involved. He introduced the International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA), which has set up industry best practice for tasks ranging from the design and specification of vessels and equipment through to work planning and procedures. He then talked about the numerous audits that every DP vessel has to endure every five years. He concluded with an urgent call for watchkeepers to continue looking out of the window, and most importantly maintain personal skill levels to operate the vessel under all conditions, and not overly rely on the automation.

Vessel types and operations

Capt Kent Smith AFNI is also a Master with Farstad Shipping. With the aid of a host of high quality shots he presented a very interesting overview of the many different types of operations and vessels within the DP industry. He started with the *Grampian Dee*, an Emergency Response & Recovery Vessel (ERRV) that was in action at the Piper Alpha disaster, before moving on to look at the 'standard' platform supply vessel and the *Far Shogun*, an anchor handling tug supply (AHTS) vessel that has 28 modes of operations. He showed pictures of the 2009 ship of the year, the *Far Samson*, a subsea vessel designed for ploughing, towing and subsea installation and the *Far Saga*, another subsea vessel equipped for remote operated vessel (ROV) work. The list went on with DP2 and DP3 saturation dive vessels, a 'floatel' accommodation work platform with accommodation for 600 persons and a swimming pool, a drilling ship and a self-propelled drilling semi-submersible as well as a self-propelled heavy lift floating crane capable of lifting 14,000 tons and a 100,000 tons pipe-laying vessel. The last pictures in Kent's photo gallery were of the high tech 3D seismic survey vessel *Polarcus Amani*, which is fitted out for work in the Arctic and meets the stringent DNV clean-design class notation, and of the *Joseph Plateau*, a rock dumping vessel that is used for precise rock dumping to a depth of 2,000 metres. There are a host of reasons why a DP vessel is needed for so many operations, including reducing risk; requirement of accurate position keeping; and client pressure, as well as the flexibility of many DP vessels.

Task planning

This flowed nicely into a presentation from Captain Mark Longstaff AFNI focusing on task planning and the human element on a DP vessel, including questions of BRM. Mark showed us clear slides of the Kongsberg DP system controls, and the many monitors installed on the bridge of a typical DP vessel, all of which the DPO has to monitor and control. Mark talked about the challenges for the DPO posed by the ergonomics of the bridge layout. He went on to look at the cargo in the holds, with several impressive photographs of a cargo-hold filled with pipes prior to drilling in deepwater, and the challenges associated with landing the drill-bit in exactly the correct position several thousands of metres down on the seabed.

Captain Kees Buckens FNI