

PORTABLE PILOT UNITS AND ECDIS – What does the user *really* need?

Thursday 12th May 2011: Southampton Solent University Conference Centre.

Post Seminar report

Over 100 delegates gathered in the Port of Southampton to take part in this 'landmark' event.

The Solent Branch of the Nautical Institute, in conjunction with The Hydrographic Society UK (Southern Region), and the United Kingdom Maritime Pilots Association, played host to an International gathering of Maritime Pilots, Hydrographers, Marine consultants, Regulators, Harbour Masters, Manufacturers and Trainers, and many from other sectors of the Shipping, Port, and wider marine industries.

Portable Pilot Units (PPU's) are now used in a number of ports to bring electronic charts and precise positioning together in a convenient and portable package for marine pilots, more recently the addition of a broadband link has facilitated 'real time information' being available on the Pilot's laptop to assist in onboard decision making. This *flagship* event allowed the exhibitors (manufacturers and trainers) to interact with the end users and other interested parties, in conference, in workshop sessions, and informally, for the first time on such a grand scale.

The Nautical Institute Solent Branch Chairman, Matt Winter FNI, welcomed the delegates, thanked them all for supporting the event, and explained the origins of the seminar. He gave special mention to those who had travelled from overseas to participate; Alaska, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Norway, The Netherlands, and Western Australia were all represented. He thanked the numerous sponsors for supporting the event and he hoped the seminar would make a positive contribution to safe piloting in ports worldwide.

Half of the delegates attending were Pilots from ports throughout the United Kingdom, including Bridgewater, Bristol, Clyde, Harwich Haven, Humber, Liverpool, Medway, Milford Haven, The Port of London, Southampton and Tees in addition to those throughout Europe and further afield.

Three 'Workshop events' comprising classroom sessions and a practical session were provided by some of the exhibitors prior to the seminar.

The seminar was split into three 'moderated' sessions, each with two speakers.

The first session - **Portable Pilot Units** – featured two presentations, the first by (Medway) Pilot Chris Griffiths, and the second by retired (Dutch) Pilot Maarten Betlem who is currently their R & D Advisor. (Southampton) Pilot Nigel Allen FNI moderated the consequent interactive session in which plenty of informed debate took place.

Issues

Manoeuvring ever larger vessels in confined spaces was significantly aided by having available a 'bird's eye view' of the vessel on a portable device with enhanced levels of accuracy

The use of PPU's where seen on the one hand to satisfy 'by all available means' assisted by the rapidly developing technology available, whereas the regulatory side significantly lagged these developments, which in turn created some perceived legal difficulties in their use aboard ships

The question as to why it was deemed necessary to carry aboard one's own navigation equipment was aired with difficulties relating to offsets incorrectly entered on board and unfamiliarity in using shipboard software cited as some reasons to do so

Training for PPU's was seen as an integral part of investing in the use of PPU's

No 'one size fits all' due to diverse nature of ports

The desirability (or not) of minimum standards to avoid PPU's interfering with bridge equipment, .e.g electromagnetic interference, safe interconnection of equipment, compass safe distance etc. Whether, minimum IMO standards for PPU's are required.

PPU assisted collision/ grounding etc – potential lawyer's field day

The mid- session – **ECDIS** - featured two further presentations, the first delivered by Nigel Allen on behalf of (PLA) Pilot John Clandillon-Baker FNI who had unfortunately had to withdraw at a late stage due to medical reasons and the second by Freidhelm Moggert of (Seven Cs).

William Heaps (ABP's Assistant Marine Advisor and Hydrographic Manager) moderated the second session in which many challenging issues were highlighted.

Issues

Dangers of using ECDIS (untrained- poor set ups etc)

The Legality of PPU's.

ENC's versus ECDIS.

bENCs (Bathymetric ENC's using the latest available high density data)

Master/ Pilot exchange – pre arrival passage plans

Should pilots work using hydrographic data from their own ports/ rather than use UKHO approved data.

The final Session – **The Human Element and Training** - comprised two presentations, the first by Harry Gale FNI (Technical Manager of the Nautical Institute), followed by (Hamburg) Pilot and Trainer Sven Stemmler.

Professor Andy Norris FNI moderated the session which again raised many issues.

Issues

The Legal/Training requirements for pilots for ECDIS.

Is there a need for type specific training?

How detailed does the generic training have to be? - developing an ECDIS mindset

The need for all to embrace technology – ‘all available means’ etc

Need for PPU's to use symbology (etc) familiar to bridge staff to enable cross referencing with ECDIS, etc

The bridge team role of the pilot

The forum proved to be a success with all parties aware of the challenges facing the industry wide adoption of PPU's. Some countries and some pilotage districts – particularly in Europe have embraced the concept of PPU's into every day usage, whilst many others are clearly interested in doing so, but finding it challenging to find out how to do so and avoid any potential pitfalls.

Exhibitors present

Atlantas Marine / Marimatech and ORCA

BMT Argoss (PC Rembrant)

ECDIS Ltd. (ECDIS Training)

Euronav (seaPro pilot)

OMC Europe (DUKC)

Positioning Resources Ltd.

QuayQuip (Navicom and QPS)

Ruco / AD Navigation and QPS

SevenCs (ORCA)

Transas

UKHO

Warsash Maritime Academy (ECDIS Training and Manned Models)

The seminar was bought to a close by the Guest Speaker.

In celebration of the Nautical Institutes 40th Anniversary, Captain Robert McCabe FNI (Vice President of the Nautical Institute and Deputy Head of Marine Commissioners of Irish Lights) was invited to speak.

Capt McCabe gave a brief History of the NI, shared his personal thoughts on the many positive benefits to NI membership and eloquently expressed his personal and very positive views on the day's proceedings. He then presented a number of prizes that had been generously donated by various sponsors including PPU software from Euronav and also Navicom.

Note: The Presentations are available for download -

<http://www.ths.org.uk/content.asp?management=true&page=44>



Maarten Betlem makes his presentation.



Sven Stemmler in debate.



Delegates from around the world.



Professor Andy Norris



Friedhelm Moggert addresses the seminar