



1 May 2013

To: BTA Members (BTA 13-14)

1934 – 2013

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND ANNUAL CONFERENCE
AT THE MARRIOTT MEON VALLEY HOTEL & COUNTRY CLUB
17-18 APRIL 2013

CONFERENCE REPORT

The British Tugowners Association enjoyed a very successful Annual Conference this year at the Meon Valley Hotel and Country Club, near Southampton, 17 -18 April. Including guests, there were 52 delegates present, 40 of whom were Members representing 7 companies.

THE AGM

At the AGM on 17 April, the Chairman, Tom Woolley, welcomed delegates and gave a précis of his annual report. He mentioned that tug numbers were down slightly to 140 (from 159) and that membership has reduced by two; Londonderry has resigned and Rosyth had been taken over. The financial position was sound allowing the fee to remain the same. The relationship with the UK Chamber had been cemented and the Technical Committee was working well as the engine of BTA activity, with the Executive back in place as the policy body. Tug safety had been at the core of activity during the year, with the benchmarking and safety statistics providing a valuable means of prioritising efforts. The annual Safety Seminar was a key means of understanding and communicating issues and the combined audience of tug operators and pilots has worked well. The BTA will also make a presentation to the IMO, along with Don Cockrill, Chairman of the UKMPA, on the subject of safe tug operations. On training, it has been frustrating that the new route to deck officer and tug master certification is still not out, having been caught by the Government's Better Regulation initiative; it is expected to take a further month before it is ready for issue. Separately, the MCA has promulgated the Voluntary Towage Endorsement scheme which will help raise the safety bar in the industry, particularly in the workboat sector, but the Chairman emphasised that this is not a replacement for the formal route to full certification as a tug master. The new version of the Coastguard Agreement for Salvage and Towage has also been promulgated and the MCA are sending out letters inviting tug operators to join. The Chairman then offered congratulations to Capt Douglas Pincho, Ernest Lara,

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Wayne and Tommy Peñalver of TP Towing for being awarded the Merchant Navy Medal in recognition of their courageous action during the oil terminal fire in Gibraltar in May 2011. The Chairman ended by saying what a great honour it had been to serve in the position and wished his successor every good fortune.

Later during the AGM Marc Niederer, Managing Director of Svitzer Europe, was elected as Chairman, with Tom Woolley then being elected as Vice-Chairman.

THE CONFERENCE

Following the formality of the AGM, David Brown, Chairman of the Technical Committee, introduced the Annual Conference and the first speaker Sir Alan Massey, Chief Executive of the MCA. Sir Alan gave an upbeat, informative, but honest update of MCA activities, fully recognising many of the issues close to the BTA, namely training and certification, CAST and MCA surveys.



He was followed by Captain Andy Moll, Deputy Chief Inspector Marine Accidents, who set out the function of MAIB and provided a round up of incidents. VHF assisted collisions are now receiving attention, with poor look out, fatigue, declining standards of seamanship and complacency with electronic navigation aids all note worthy factors in recent cases.

Martin Phipps, Harbour Master at ABP Southampton then talked about the challenges of running a major port with ever larger ships, as well as managing the conflict between leisure and commercial traffic.

Richard Bird, Executive Director, UK Major Ports Group, described what is happening in the ports, stating that the UK's sector was the largest one in Europe and investment suggested it was in a healthy state. On a cautious note, he suggested watching out for new Directives

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on port services from the European Commission. Safety of course remains fundamental as with the BTA.

ANNUAL DINNER

That evening at the Annual Dinner, Tom Woolley handed over the badge of office of Chairman to his success Marc Niederer. Steve Jellis, BTA's President, then thanked the sponsors, ABP Southampton, Damen Shipyards Group and International Marine Coatings for their very generous support of the Conference and thanked the speakers for the day. He presented Captain Andy Molly, Deputy Chief Inspector Marine Accidents, with the 'Tug Personality of the Year' award for his steadfast support in assisting the BTA to set higher safety standards in the industry. The BTA photographic competition winner was also announced; John Bateson of Shetland for his seascape of tugs escorting a tanker through stormy seas into Sullom Voe.



THE CONFERENCE DAY 2

To launch the second day, Julie Carlton, Safety and Health Manager at the MCA unravelled some of the mysteries of the Maritime Labour Convention, which is due to be ratified by the UK in August, and hosted questions on the subject.

Arjen van Elk of Damen gave a comprehensive description of the impressive range of tugs Damen have on the market and Trevor Solomon, International Marine Coatings followed with a convincing description their latest products, in particular Intersleek.

Hugh Shaw, SOSREP, explained his role and gave a very dynamic account of recent shipping catastrophes.

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The final session was a Safety Panel led by Tom Woolley, which included Hugo Callens, Secretary General of the European Tugowners Association, Paul Wibberley, a Firth of Forth Pilot and David Brown. The Fairplay 22 tragedy was used as a means of initiating discussion on safe tug procedures. The key question of "why centre lead bow tow at all, if push pull is practical alternative? That would totally eliminate the possibility of being run down?" was posed. Issues such as safe speed for connecting at the bow (6 knots max), awareness of the pressure waves around the bulbous bow and hull interaction, tug watertight integrity and control of openings, tug stability and design or suitability of the assisted ship's towage arrangements, risk assessment, planning and communication, training and experience for all parties were all discussed.

As the new Chairman, Marc Niederer concluded the Conference by saying that he would continue to emphasis safety and the sharing of safety data. His style was to be impatient to ensure things got done and did not linger. He would also ensure Members understood the benefits of their membership and would highlight the importance belonging to the BTA to others. He finally closed proceedings saying how enjoyable it had been, reiterating his thanks to speakers, sponsors and all those that had attended.

SIR WILLIAM CROSTHWAITE CUP

The traditional game of golf was played in the afternoon by 10 Members and guests. The Sir William Crosthwaite Cup, kindly sponsored by Targe Towing, was won by Tony King (Targe).

Yours sincerely

Adrian Muddin

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Secretary

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