



## Editorial

Welcome to issue 37 of AMERC News - *which doubles as **Circular 249** and, as such, must be circulated to all GMDSS instructors/ examiners by their AMERC centre contact. Circulars 246 (pre-AGM Notice – January 2011) and 248 (Notice of AGM – May 2011) have been distributed separately but are included at page 8 to ensure full distribution.*

In this issue we have the report on the most recent **Maritime Consultancy Group** (MCG- Page 2) - which reflects relevant items covered in the AMERC Executive Committee (EC) earlier the same day – including (amongst other things): information on the new **MCA/AMERC contract**; a decision to introduce an **AMERC candidate feedback process**; an update on the new **2011-2013 examination papers**; a review of requirements with regard to **classroom space and equipment accessibility**; a change of responsibility for compiling **multiple-choice questions** and the **latest quarterly figures** from the National Administration Centre (NAC).

That's followed by our **Member's Profiles section** (Page 3) – this time featuring **South Tyneside College**.

We've another '**GMDSS Criss-Crossword**' (Page 4) to help stretch candidates knowledge of international **geography** and the use of **Admiralty List of Radio Signals** (ALRS) publications. The answers to puzzle 36 are also included.

As before - we'd all be delighted to hear *your* suggestions (with examples please?) of how to get our students thinking 'out of the box' and improving their geography and/or publications knowledge.

This edition's section for **Explanation Please** (Page 5) looks at the new 'polar' NAVAREAS; and asks '*what's Norwich got to offer?*'

We've more **Tales from the Key-Side** (Page 6) – where we ask you to share stories showing the funny, confusing and/or tragic side of life – whether from experience at sea, in the classroom, or out in the wider world .

This edition's **Maritime Miscellaneous** (page 7) looks at the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway, connecting the North Atlantic with the industrial heartland of Canada and the USA. – with a link allowing you to see real-time vessel location and movements.

In addition to ensuring that all trainers and examiners read the News, centres are encouraged to forward a copy to anyone you think may be interested – whether it be a client company or other person/body with an interest in marine communications and/or training in radio communication or related subjects. A copy in the college library might also give an insight of our world to the many non-Maritime students in some establishments?

*Ian W*

Mail: [ian.waugh@btinternet.com](mailto:ian.waugh@btinternet.com)

The **Maritime Consultancy Group (MCG)** meets regularly - currently four times each year – for the AMERC Executive Committee ‘Open Meeting’. MCG membership consists of AMERC Executive Committee (EC) representatives; the AMERC Chief Examiner; the MCA Chief Examiner and the MCA Deck & GMDSS Team Leader; and AMERC/industry specialists. The open meeting can also be attended by other invited persons. (*You can ask to be invited by contacting the AMERC Secretary*). The following items from recent meeting(s) & follow-up are drawn to your attention:

**MCA/AMERC Contract:** AMERC has signed a five year contract with the MCA, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011, for the provision of course approvals and examinations for GMDSS GOC, ROC, LRC and GMDSS Conversions. AMERC is also contracted to approve ENEM, GMDSS Radio Maintenance, CSOC, RCSOC and SARROC courses. There are a number of new sections within the contract – including some covering Indemnity and Liability, audits, and confidentiality – which your EC are presently assessing the impact of, including any possible implications for RECs and Examiners. *Thanks are due to Mike Webster for his contribution to the successful outcome of the negotiations - the contract went through a number of draft versions which Mike spent many hours rewording, clarifying and resubmitting - in order to reach an agreement acceptable to both AMERC and the MCA.*

**AMERC Candidate Feedback Process:** it was agreed that the NAC should initiate a candidate feedback process, whereby candidates could be approached directly by telephone and/or email to elicit their comments about the training course they had recently attended.

**New (2011-2013 series) GMDSS examination papers:** The new GMDSS question papers and associated encapsulated OPT scenario maps were circulated in April, for implementation on 1 May 2011. GOC Scenarios A, B and C are for use in the classroom; Scenarios 1-8 inclusive are for examination use only and should never be available in classroom during training sessions, nor released other than to examiners. Feedback will be sought at our upcoming Examiner’s Panel from those centres who have been able to conduct training/exams using the revised material.

**Classroom space and equipment accessibility:** a review is to be conducted to determine suitable (minimum) requirements for classroom space and equipment accessibility, for both training and examinations.

**Multiple-choice questions:** Willie Williamson has had responsibility for compiling the bank of multi-choice questions for the past fifteen years, and has now passed that responsibility to Ian Waugh (*who is grateful for last-year’s exercise to compile the new on-line question bank!*)

**GMDSS Examination Statistics:** National Administration Centre (NAC) examination statistics for the period

1 OCT 2010 – 31 DEC 2010 are shown below:

| EXAMINATION | ENTERED (1 <sup>st</sup> time) |       | PASSED (1 <sup>st</sup> attempt) |       | % PASSED 1 <sup>ST</sup> ATTEMPT |
|-------------|--------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|
| UK GOC      | 329                            | (267) | 262                              | (207) | 207/267 (>77%)                   |
| ALL GOC     | 660                            | (537) | 529                              | (420) | 420/537 (>78%)                   |
| UK ROC      | 36                             | (35)  | 35                               | (34)  | 34/35 (>97%)                     |
| ALL ROC     | 70                             | (67)  | 67                               | (64)  | 64/67 (>95%)                     |
| LRC         | 48                             | (48)  | 48                               | (48)  | 48/48 (100%)                     |

[Note: figures for Jan-Apr 2011, and full-year figures, will be made available at AGM/Examiner’s Panel]

## Member Profile(s)

This area is for you to tell us who you are and what you do.

For new members, we'd like to know more about you.

For existing members: the others - new and long established alike – would like to hear about your own operation. Or you can tell us about some event you've been involved in, or one that's going to happen in the future. The entry below from South Tyneside College shows the type of information that you may want to include – but, as it's your own area, you can say what you like (omitting, of course, profane, indecent and obscene language ;-))

**Member Name:** South Tyneside College

**Centre Location:** St George's Avenue  
South Shields  
NE35 6ET

**Main Contact:** Alan Burns  
**Phone:** +44 (0)191 427 3557  
**email:** [alan.burns@stc.ac.uk](mailto:alan.burns@stc.ac.uk)  
[www.stc.ac.uk](http://www.stc.ac.uk)

### Radio/Electronics Courses Offered:

GMDSS GOC (and refresher/revalidation training), ROC, LRC, and SRC; GMDSS Radio Maintenance.

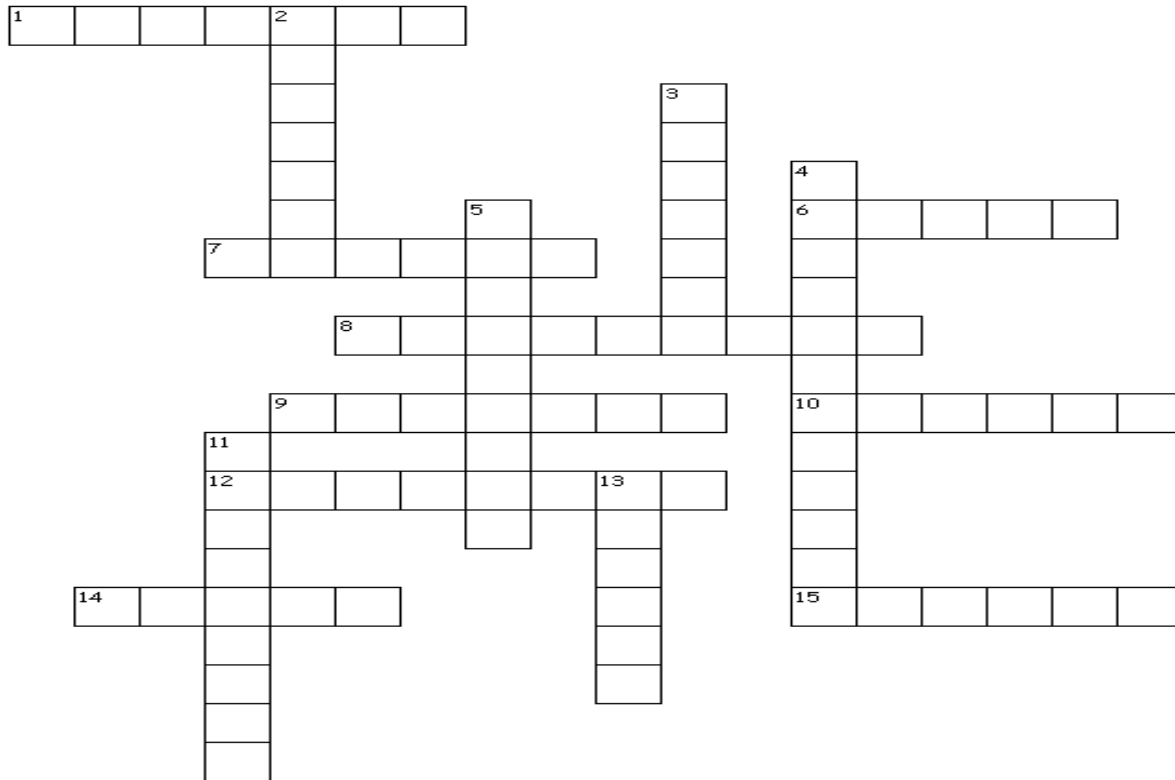
### Other Courses Offered:

Cadet Officer Training for Deck and Engineering disciplines; STCW-95 Basic Training modules; EDH; OOW; Oral Prep for Ch. Mate & Master; Proficiency in Survival Craft & Rescue Boats; Shipboard Safety Officer; Ship Security Officer; Advanced Fire fighting; Medical first Aid; Medical Care Onboard Ship; and Medical Care Refresher. Gas Tanker/Petroleum Tanker/Chemical Tanker Safety training; Tanker Familiarisation. VTS Operator, Supervisor and Instructor training. Offshore courses including Basic Offshore Safety Induction & Emergency Training; Further Offshore Emergency Training; Minimum Industry Safety Training; and Helicopter Safety & Escape Training. RYA Small Craft Survival; RYA Radar; and RYA Yachtmaster.

### About South Tyneside College (STC):

In addition to the (fully networked) TRANSAS GMDSS simulator, supported by live equipment, in the GMDSS suite; the college has six simulated navigational bridges in the Marine Simulation Centre. The bridge simulators can be used together or individually, and include two full mission bridge simulators - each with 360° field of view; a four bridge navigation simulation suite; and a 120° visual field of view using 50" plasma screens. When used as tugs the bridges are fitted with Azimuth thruster handles, hydraulic winch controls, Azimuth conning displays and a Voith control console. There's also a VTMS Simulator in the Port Operations Unit. The full mission engine room simulators feature a reproduction of the control and engine room of a large vessel powered by a MAN slow speed diesel engines; a reproduction of the control and engine room of a diesel electric power plant found on a cruise vessel; a control room with consoles which house main engine controls, plant alarm, generator control, pump and compressor controls and oil fired boiler control panels; a watchkeeping cabin for UMS operations; and emergency switchboard room. The workstation engine simulator has individual workstation units and is capable of representing various engine types - including slow speed diesels (MAN and Warsila); medium speed diesel; steam turbine; diesel electric; and gas turbine.

**GMDSS Criss-Crossword Number 37** - all answers should be researched and/or confirmed by reference to ALRS, *where appropriate*



**Across**

1. Kenya's main **port**; and **RCC**
6. Ukrainian Black Sea **port**; **VHF/MF DSC station**; and **RCC**
7. .... BAY Largest **port** in Namibia; **NAVTEX** station; and **MRSC**
8. Cape ... N.W'ly point of Spain; **antenna site for Coruna Radio**; **RCC**; **DSC station**
9. Major German **port** on the River Elbe
10. Turkish Black Sea **port** & **NAVTEX** station
12. The other Namibian **port** listed in ALRS Vol 6
14. Russian Black Sea **port**; **DSC station** remotely controlled from 4-down
15. Signal Station located at 1-across

**Down**

2. Turkish Med' **port**; **NAVTEX**; **VHF/MF DSC Station**; and **MRSC**.
3. Cape St .... SW'ly point of Portugal
4. Russian Black Sea **port** at 44 43N 037 48E; **DSC Station**; **RCC**; and **NAVTEX** station.
5. **NAVTEX** station located at 9-across
11. Spanish **port** directly west of Gibraltar; **MRSC**.
13. - Arctic NAVAREA between 30 and 120 degrees East (you'll need a very recent ALRS Vol 3/5 for this!)

**Issue 36 answers:** **DOWN:** 1. Red Blue; 3. Olympia; 4. Duluth; 6. Dakar; 7. Iraklion; 9. Reyes; 10. Sixteen; 11. San Francisco; 12. Sandakan **ACROSS:** 2. Callao; 5. Guangzhou; 8. Portpatrick; 13. Balikpapan; 14. Freetown; 15. Tauranga; 16. Eleven

## Explanation Please?

This is the area for questions that may puzzle you - because it's not particularly clear why a specific answer is necessary when it appears that other answers may also appear to be appropriate – or, even if you as an instructor are satisfied with the question, you may want to know why the candidates should have to produce the level of detail being asked. This edition has a question on the new 'Arctic NAVAREAs', for use when programming Inmarsat-C/EGC receivers for SafetyNET; and some information about Norwich from Chris Harrison.

**Question:** I see from recent correspondence that there are now a number of new 'Arctic' NAVAREAS, numbered XVII – XXI (17-21) for use with the Inmarsat SafetyNET service: but – when I try to enter those areas as 'additional NAVAREA' in my Inmarsat-C equipment (and in our TRANSAS simulator) – the software will not accept any number higher than 16. *How should we handle this problem during training and examinations?*

**Answer:** Candidates will still have to indicate/demonstrate *where and how* they would enter the 'additional NAVAREA' information when using equipment that has been updated to allow this. But: they should also understand that - as may be the case when using 'live' equipment they may encounter onboard their vessel - the classroom equipment (and/or simulator) will have to be updated (by the equipment supplier/shore-based maintenance contractor) to allow numbers 17-21 to be entered. Peter Blackhurst of Inmarsat is due to speak about Arctic NAVAREAs, and Inmarsat's method of addressing this type of issue, at our upcoming AGM/Examiner's Panel.

**Question:** *We're coming to Norwich for AGM - what's it got to offer?*

**Answer:** Welcome! This is the first visit for AMERC to East Anglia and I thought it might be useful to point you in the direction of some of the finer places of interest in the neighbouring counties of Norfolk and Suffolk. Norwich is a good starting point for anyone visiting Norfolk for the first time and has many attractions – not only "The Canaries and Delia Smith"!

The Norwich Museum is an impressive building and well worth a visit, in addition there are two shopping Malls; but to get a true feel for the City, head for the outdoor market and explore some of the narrower streets and alleyways that lead away from the centre. The Museum, Cathedral, Malls, and Market are all within easy walking distance of each other. If you are a member of the National Trust, don't forget your membership card. If you arrive by car then Blickling Hall, Felbrigg Hall and Oxburgh Hall can all be visited in a day, [provided you do a whistle stop tour of each] <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-vh/w-visits/w-findaplace/w-blickling-estate.htm>

Talking of 'Whistle stop's', Norfolk and Suffolk are renowned for their interest in steam and hardly a weekend goes by without there being a steam rally taking place somewhere. One of the finest places to see some 'real' locomotives is Bressingham. This is a combination of the great loves in Adrian Bloom's life – plants and steam engines. It is the home of Bloom's Nursery and the Bloom's private gardens are open to the public to inspire and make you spend all your money in their Garden Centre. <http://www.bressingham.co.uk/default.aspx>

Still on the subject of steam, there's the Bure Valley Railway <http://www.bvrw.co.uk/> and the Thursford Collection <http://www.thursford.com/thursford-contact.aspx>

Before leaving Norfolk you may want to squeeze in a tour of the Broads, or the Sandringham Estate - or perhaps visit Lord Horatio Nelson's birthplace at Burnham Thorpe <http://www.northnorfolkimages.co.uk/location/burnhamthorpe.html>

Then there's the coastline, of course, but you won't have time for that before pushing south to meet the South folk in Suffolk. Naturalists [yes there's an 'l' in there!] might want to head for the RSPB reserve at Minsmere - you could go via Lowestoft and Southwold. Further south you run into John Constable country with Willy Lott's Cottage and Flatford Mill, quite unspoilt <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-vh/w-visits/w-findaplace/w-flatfordbridgecottage/w-flatfordbridgecottage-walk.htm>

I think I've probably done my bit for the East Anglian Tourist Board and I have hardly scratched the surface. Hopefully - if you were undecided on whether to stay a few extra days or if the choice between public transport and car was an issue - this may have helped. Either way I hope you have a useful AGM and enjoy any free time that you may have in Norwich and the surrounding area. Chris

**Next Issue:** Your question(s)?



## Tales from the Key-Side - by AnonyMouse ...

This is the page for your stories – whether from personal experience at sea, at work, in the classroom or life generally – recent past or distant past. Or it may be something you've heard. Doesn't matter – we're looking for interesting, funny or informative stories that may make us laugh, cry or look for someone to hit. Submissions may be edited, and the writer's name will, of course, be withheld on request ...

**Dateline:** BA Flight xxx: London Heathrow-Glasgow – one Saturday in 1983

**Time:** Just before take-off – trundling towards the runway (again) ...

**Frequency:** Cabin PA system – cabin steward affecting a 'camp' accent

*'... the lifejackets are fitted with a light and a whistle – for attracting sailors ...'*

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**Dateline:** Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2011 – Heathrow Airport (again)

**Time:** Shortly after I picked-up (as you do) a discarded (Kenyan) newspaper

**Frequency:** 'Saturday Register' – National News pages

*'The Party of National Unity has vowed to pull out of the grand coalition government'*

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**Dateline:** Portishead Radio – February, some years ago.

**Time:** 2000hrs – excellent propagation conditions (propagation expected to cover North & South Atlantic, the Caribbean Sea, the Med/Black Sea and much of the Indian Ocean)

**Frequency:** One of the 8MHz RT(HF) working channels which, like most channels, was shared with Coast Radio Stations in other parts of the world (modulated with a Welsh accent ...)

**Operator 1:** *'B.....r – I had six ships standing-by on this channel but that last guy had so many calls that the others have all f.....d off!'*

**Operator 2:** *'(uncontrolled laughter)'*

**Operator 1:** *'What are you laughing at? I had them all lined-up and now they've gone to someone else!'*

**Operator 2:** *'Sorry ... (more laughter) ... just thought that ... if you're going to use that kind of language ... you might want to switch-off the transmitter first!'*

[the Deputy Chief Examiner (a.k.a. Op'.1) - like most contributors admitting to a bit of a gaffe - has asked that I don't use his name ...]

## Maritime Miscellaneous: Highway H2O – the Great Lakes St Lawrence Seaway

The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway System is a deep draft waterway extending some 3,700 km (2,340 miles) from the Atlantic Ocean to the head of the Great Lakes, in the heart of North America. The St. Lawrence Seaway portion of the System extends from Montreal to mid-Lake Erie. Ranked as one of the outstanding engineering feats of the twentieth century, the St. Lawrence Seaway includes 13 Canadian and 2 U.S. locks. A further 4 US locks – the Soo Locks - connect Lake Huron and Lake Superior.



The distance from the Atlantic Ocean to Duluth, Minnesota on Lake Superior, is approximately 2038 nautical miles (3,700 kilometres) and would normally take 8.5 sailing days to cover.

Sailing time (normal conditions) between the intersection of the Seaway ship channel and Montreal Harbour, to Chicago, would be 105 hours at an average sailing speed of 10.4 knots - plus 17 hours lockage time.

Almost 25% of Seaway traffic travels to and from overseas ports, especially in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The availability of a specialized 'laker fleet' - many equipped with self-unloading devices for unloading at shore facilities (ship to land), or trans-shipping bulk cargo from larger 'salties' (ship-to-ship) – facilitates local port delivery whilst the 'salties' move on to the next job.

The St. Lawrence Seaway opened to navigation in 1959. Construction of the 189-mile (306-kilometer) stretch of the Seaway between Montreal and Lake Ontario is recognized as one of the most challenging engineering feats in history. Seven locks were built in the Montreal-Lake Ontario section of the Seaway, five Canadian and two U.S., in order to lift vessels to 246 feet (75 meters) above sea level. The 28-mile (44 kilometer) Welland Canal is the fourth version of a waterway link between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, first built in 1829. The present canal was completed in 1932, deepened in the 1950s as part of the Seaway project, and further straightened in 1973. Today it's eight locks, all Canadian, lift ships 326 feet (100 meters) over the Niagara Escarpment.

[You can view the real-time seaway map - including ports, locks, and vessels in transit - by clicking on this link](#)

## **ASSOCIATION OF MARINE ELECTRONIC & RADIO COLLEGES (Duplicate Circulars)**

### **Circular 248 - May 2011 – AMERC Annual General Meeting**

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the company will be held at The Park Farm Hotel, Norwich on Thursday 9th of June 2011 at 0900.

You should have received Pre-AGM Notice Circular 246 dated 31st January 2011. Conditions related to vacancies and appointments were detailed therein.

Keith Mitchell  
Company Secretary  
3rd May 2011

Please note that the AGM papers are now being readied for printing and circulation – *the Secretary reminds us that it would be very helpful if members would bring their copy to AGM ....*

### **Circular 246 – January 2011 – Pre-AGM 2011 Notice**

In accordance with the rules of the Association (accessible only by members - see link on original circular) I have to give notice of the following.

Willie Williamson will be resigning from the Executive Committee (EC) in 2011 as this will mark the end of his 3 year tenure. Willie is entitled to seek re-election if he so wishes.

Mike Webster kindly agreed to be Vice-Chairman during this past year but will not be standing for the Executive again.

It is the intention of the current Company Secretary not to seek re-appointment and a vacancy will therefore exist.

That being the case there could be up to two vacancies on the Executive Committee and nominations from the representatives of full members are invited.

In the event that more nominations are received, the election will go to a ballot at AGM which will be voted on by FULL Members only. Nominations, duly proposed and seconded should be with the Secretary by the end of April 2011. Term of office will be for three years.

The Secretary and Treasurer of AMERC Ltd are annual appointments made by the Executive Committee. These posts are available to all Full Members and Job Descriptions and Job Specifications are available from the Company Secretary.

The posts of Chief Examiner, Deputy Chief Examiner and Assistant Chief Examiner (Overseas) are not up for renewal in 2011.

The role of Editor, AMERC News is not up for renewal in 2011.

Keith Mitchell  
Company Secretary AMERC Ltd  
31st January 2011