



Editorial

Welcome to issue 45 of AMERC News - which doubles as **Circular 259** and, as such, must be circulated to all GMDSS instructors/examiners by their AMERC centre contact.

In this issue we have the our usual brief on the most recent **Maritime Consultancy Group** (MCG - Page 2) - reflecting relevant items covered in the AMERC Executive Committee (EC) meeting earlier that day and including: your **Invitation to AGM**; a reminder to members to **check their contact details** on the AMERC website; a note regarding **Course Approvals Certificates** from the MCA; an item regarding the future process for **developing new examination papers and the role of the Examiner's Panel**; an item on the **appointment of new examiners** - and what's required to stay on the list of examiners; a reminder that **Course Audit Documents** are available for download by centres; a **change to examination requirements for candidates seeking to upgrade from LRC to GOC**; another on the use of **Class-D VHF DSC Radio equipment for ROC** training and examinations; and our usual quarterly examination statistics.

We are (again) missing any **Member Profile** - but we do have a **GMDSS Instructor vacancy advertisement on the back page – Maritime Misc' 3 - for Member UKSA in the Isle of Wight**. A UKSA Member profile was included in Issue 38.

We do have another '**GMDSS Criss-Crossword**' (Page 3) to help stretch candidates' knowledge of **international**

geography and the use of Admiralty List of Radio Signals (ALRS) publications. The answers to puzzle 44 are also included.

Explanation Please? (page 4) answers one contributor's question on the use of the term 'announcement' when referring to DSC emissions.

Tales from the Key-Side (Page 5) includes the reminiscences of a one-time 3rd Mate (who subsequently 'retired' as a Class 1 Master Mariner (FG) and who's now teaching a range of subjects – including GMDSS – but will otherwise remain 'anon' in case Black Douglas comes back to get him!) – and a tongue-in-cheek 'as received on the Internet' tale purporting to relate to an exchange on an airband frequency.

Maritime Miscellaneous (page 6-11) gives some insight into **Manchester**, to help those arriving early, leaving late, or partnering those attending AGM to find their way around and sample the delights of the city ... and we've also included a review (Page 10) on a book on **the life and times of the MN Radio Officer, as described in a new book from the Radio Officers Association**. Followed by information on a **GMDSS instructor vacancy at UKSA**.

As usual – my sincere thanks to those of you who've provided feedback, tales, questions and other information for including in the News.

Sláinte!

Ian W

Mail: ian.waugh@btinternet.com

[The IMO Master Plan of shore-based facilities for the GMDSS \(GMDSS Master Plan\) has been posted on the USCG website as Circular 14, and can be downloaded using this link](#)

The **Maritime Consultation 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/or the MCA Deck & GMDSS Team Leader; and AMERC/industry specialists.

The open meeting can (occasionally) be attended by other invited persons.

The following items reflect discussions at MCG and/or associated items that are of immediate interested to Members and training centres (full minutes will be circulated appropriately).

Invitation to AGM: This was circulated by Julie, our Treasurer, to those concerned – all should have replied by the time you read this.

Members Contact Details: All members are asked to check their contact details as listed on the AMERC website, and notify the webpage administrator of any discrepancies.

Course Approval Certificate (CAC). Any centre that was audited by the Chief Examiner between June and December 2012 should have received their updated CAC from the MCA. If this has not happened, you should contact the Secretary. **And - a reminder that centres should confirm receipt of their new CAC, by email to the Secretary, as soon as possible following receipt.**

Future Examination Paper process: It is intended that, for future examination series’, examination questions and answers will be prepared in advance and presented to the Examiner’s Panel at AGM for final comment only. AGM and the associated Examiner’s Panel will not be used as a forum for developing new examination questions for an upcoming series. All trainers and examiners can, at any time, submit proposals to the Chief Examiner for consideration for a future series.

Examiner Appointments and Currency: To be proposed as a probationer examiner, course tutors must have delivered a minimum of six GOC courses - and have taught all elements of the GOC syllabus during those courses. Probationer examiners, will, as now, be required to conduct 36 examinations under supervision of a current examiner. To remain on the list of current examiners, a minimum of one complete GOC exam’ must be conducted within the previous five years.

Course/Centre Audit Documents: audit documents are now available for download by individual centres – who are encouraged to view them as a reminder of what to expect during that visit, and to help them prepare.

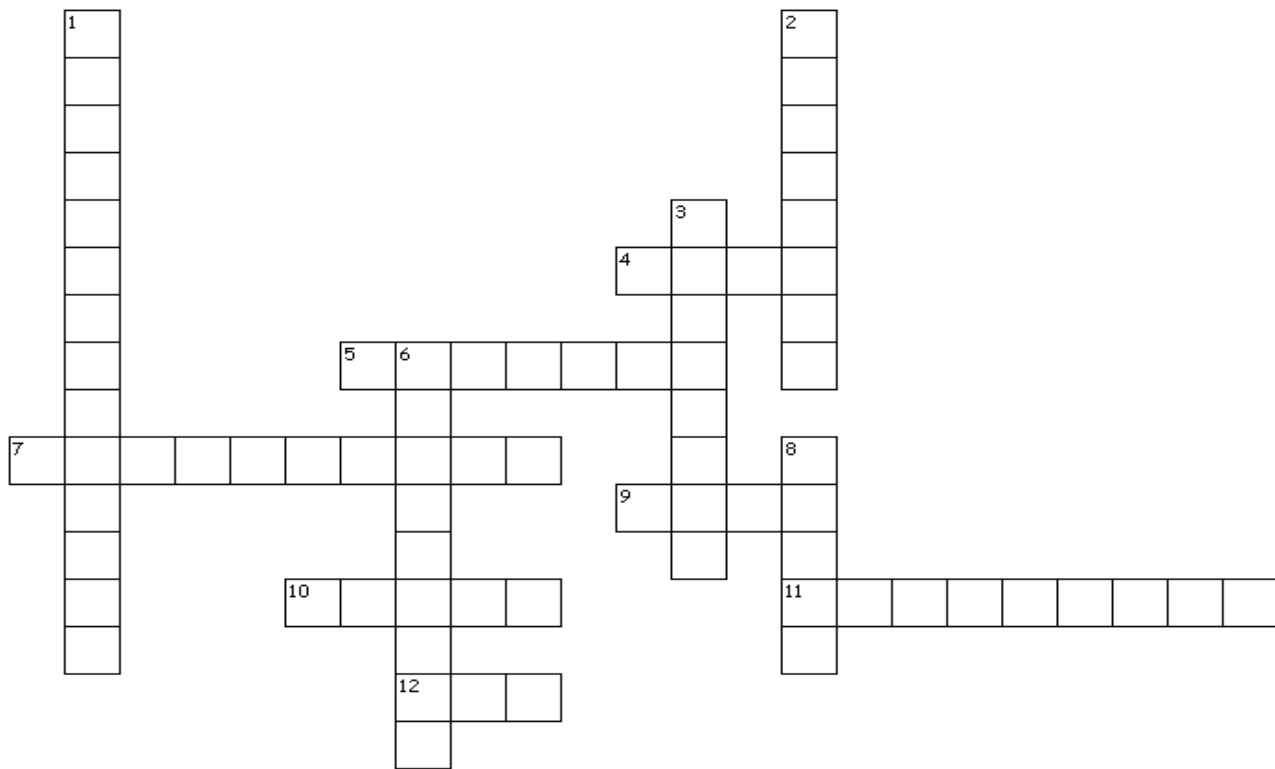
LRC-to-GOC Upgrade: Effective 1st May 2013, candidates upgrading from LRC to GOC will no longer be excused the RT exercise. All candidates will now be required to sit the full GOC examination.

VHF DSC equipment for ROC: Class-D VHF DSC equipment currently meets examination requirements for the ROC OPT (VHF/DSC) tasks. Any centre using Class-D equipment for ROC OPT must accept that any future change to include, for example, DSC Distress Acknowledgement/DSC Distress Alert Relay, will have to fit equipment capable of performing those additional tasks.

GMDSS Examination Statistics – quarterly report: National Administration Centre (NAC) examination statistics for the period **1 October 2012 – 31 December 2012** are shown below:

EXAMINATION	ENTERED (1 st time)	PASSED (1 st attempt)	% PASSED 1 ST ATTEMPT
UK GOC	394 (326)	312 (259)	259/326 (>79%)
ALL GOC	638 (544)	526 (451)	451/544 (>82%)
UK ROC	58 (54)	54 (51)	51/ 54 (>94%)
ALL ROC	121 (113)	113 (106)	106/113 (>93%)
LRC	41 (41)	41 (41)	41/ 41 (100%)

GMDSS Criss-Crossword Number 45 - all answers should be researched and/or confirmed by reference to ALRS, *where appropriate*



Down

1. - Remote VHF DSC site for 2-down.
2. At latitude 78 deg 03 min North, is this the most northerly VHF/MF DSC control station location?
3. SE European country, bordered by Romania, Serbia, Macedonia, Greece, Turkey and the Black Sea
6. Remotely-controlled commercial VHF radio station for Oostende Radio, Belgium, using callsign (OSA).
8. Navarea XXI NAVTEX station serving part of the Northern Sea Route

Across

4. MF/HF DSC Station; port; and capital city of 9-across.
5. VHF/HF DSC station, and NAVTEX station, in N. Korea
7. (2, 8) The port of Tunis, capital of Tunisia
9. Island country located approximately 1100NM northeast of New Zealand
10. Commercial VHF/MF/HF radio station; VHF/MF/HF DSC station; NAVTEX station; RCC; and major seaport in 3-down.
11. JRCC associated with 12-across.
12. Inmarsat-C LES in Norway

Issue 44 answers: DOWN: 1. Qatar; 3. Australia; 4. Pakistan; 5. Istanbul; 7. Japan.
ACROSS: 2. Doha; 6. Thorshavn; 8. Xray; 9. Chile; 10. Valencia; 11. Delta.

Explanation Please?

This is the area for questions that may puzzle you – whether related to procedural questions, international regulations, or because it isn't clear why a specific answer is necessary when it seems 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 candidate should have to produce the level of detail being asked. Today's question explains the appearance of the term 'announcement' in our online

[GMDSS Quiz](#)

Question: I've noticed some changes in terminology in SOLAS and multi-choice questions (including those in the online 'AMERC Quiz') – in particular the introduction of the term '**announcement**' in place of 'alert' in some DSC-procedure questions – can you explain/elaborate please?

Reply: In common with a number of other organisations, we've been a bit remiss when using the term 'alert' when referring to DSC emissions other than Distress/Distress Relay. 'Alert' should only be used for DSC Distress Alerts, and for DSC Distress (Alert) Relays. For Urgency and Safety, whether it's an 'all ships'; an 'Area'; or an 'Individual' DSC Call - the term '**announcement**' is correct. A DSC (Urgency/Safety) announcement includes (a) the 'priority' (Urgency/Safety); (b) the 'address' (All Ships/Geographical Area/Individual); (c) the DSC calling frequency (e.g. Ch70/2187.5kHz); and (d) the frequency/type of subsequent communication.

A VHF DSC Urgency or Safety Announcement intended for all stations within range, therefore, includes the 'All Ships' and 'Ch70'; whereas an MF/HF DSC Urgency or Safety Announcement would include the 'Geographical Area' address. the DSC frequency being used - and whether we're expected to switch to the associated voice, or telex, frequency. Examples of complete DSC Announcements would therefore be:

**DSC Urgency Call
to All Ships
on Ch70
indicating Ch16/F3E to follow**

**DSC Safety Call
to Geographic/Area address
on 2187.5kHz
indicating J3E/2182kHz/working
frequency to follow**

VHF/MF DSC Calls could also use the 'Individual' address, when appropriate.

Note that the **HF** DSC Urgency/Safety (and Distress Alert Relay) **Area** call is appropriate to **shore-to-ship** transmissions; ship-to-ship would normally be on MF/VHF (though a 4MHz transmission – relying on ground wave propagation - might be appropriate in the tropical zones?).

Ships would normally only use HF for **ship-to-shore** – in this case using the '**individual**' form of address.

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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: m.v. Naess Trader – on the bridge – circa 1967
Time: 22:00
Frequency: Aldis signalling lamp; followed by Marine VHF

Many years ago, when there were lots of BISCO (British Iron & Steel Corporation) ore carriers with British crews and officers who moved between ships, and many knew each other, and when Aldis lamps were used to communicate and we had Sparkys (posh name, 'Radio Officers') - I was 3rd mate on the bridge of [Dennholm's Naaes Trader](#), and the Old Man was up on the bridge having his evening cocoa. We were northbound back to the UK from Monrovia. We got called-up by [Houlder Brothers southbound Oregis](#), using [Morse](#) on the [Aldis](#), and he requested VHF. Our Old Man hated the VHF.

I went on the VHF and talked to the 3rd mate on the *Oregis* and we swapped crewlists. *Oregis'* 3rd mate, on getting our crewlist said, '*Our Sparky knows your Old Man - he sailed with him a few years back*'. All this conversation is on the loudspeaker and our Old Man's listening.

The other ship then asked whether our Old Man was around, as their Sparky would like to have a word.

I asked my Old Man if he was there - he said '*NO!*'

I told *Oregis* he wasn't on the bridge, and their Sparky came on and said '*I sailed with that old b,,,,,,,d and hated every minute*'.

Our Old Man choked on his cocoa and left the bridge.

He made my life hell until he paid off ...

Dateline: Dublin Airport – Easter Sunday 2013
Time: 06:00
Frequency: Dublin Approach airband frequency

*"Dublin Approach – Foxtrot Romeo One five five – HELP! HELP! – Easter weekend!
Yom Kippur! New Year's Eve! Halloween! Novruz! Christmas!Aaargg!!!"*

Foxtrot Romeo One five five – Dublin Approach – ¿is it perhaps a MAY DAY ye have?"

[Got a Tale to tell? Got a Question? Want to say something?
Click on this link to the AMERC Website to generate a message to the
AMERC News Editor.](#)

Maritime Miscellaneous 1: A brief guide to Manchester city centre – our AGM location - for delegates/partners arriving early, or staying over for an extended visit.

Most of you will be arriving at Manchester Piccadilly railway station – whether arriving by train from Manchester airport, or from further afield. To get from Piccadilly station to the Mercure Hotel you can walk (around five or six minutes) - leave the station by the main entrance and walk directly up ‘Piccadilly’– turn left onto Portland Street at the main junction, and you’ll find the hotel on the right-hand side just after the next road junction.



Alternatively – from that same pedestrian exit (photo above left) from Piccadilly station, there are two free ‘Metro Shuttle’ buses - numbers 1 and 3. For both, their second stop is just past the Mercure Hotel – No.3 in Portland Street itself (see photo – right); No.1 turns right immediately after the hotel into Charlotte Street where there’s a convenient stop. You can download the full Metro Shuttle route map (extract above right), and other service information, from:

<http://www.tfgm.com/buses/Pages/metros Shuttle.aspx>



Details of other major attractions and things to see and do when in Manchester are listed on the following pages. The grid references refer to the map you can collect from the Visitor Information Centre – our hotel is situated right above that centre – or you can download in advance of your visit from:

http://www.visitmanchester.com/media/115401/pocket%20map%202011_2010.pdf

• CITY CENTRE ATTRACTIONS

Manchester Art Gallery (D4 on the map) <http://www.manchestergalleries.org/>

The gallery - two-minutes walk from our hotel – is best known for its Victorian paintings, especially the world famous Pre-Raphaelites collection. The historic galleries also display masterpieces of art and design from the 17th and 18th centuries, and also a large collection of modern pieces. The photo opposite features the entrance hall.

FREE: Open every day 10am - 5pm, Thursday until 9pm



John Rylands Library (B4) <http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/deansgate/>

The Library is on Deansgate and houses some of the most significant books and manuscripts ever produced. The magnificent neo-gothic building is a major visitor attraction as well as a research library of world renown. *FREE Open Sun & Mon 12 noon-5pm, Tue to Sat 10am-5pm*

Museum of Science & Industry (MOSI) (A5) <http://www.mosi.org.uk/>

Located on the historic site of the world's oldest surviving passenger railway station, housed in five listed buildings, MOSI's amazing galleries and collections tell the story of Manchester's scientific and industrial past, present and future. *FREE Open everyday 10am-5pm*

People's History Museum (B3) <http://www.phm.org.uk>

The new People's History Museum contains a refurbished Pump House with a spectacular new extension. It now contains the collections storage, the Textile Conservation Studio and the Labour History Archive and Study Centre. *FREE Open everyday 10am-5pm*

National Football Museum (D2) <http://www.nationalfootballmuseum.com/>

Experience the world's greatest sport, including the *National Football Hall of Fame*; have some fun, kick a ball, share some memories and discover more about your favourite game. Visit the Football Plus+ experience to test your speed, reactions and accuracy or have a go at commentating.

FREE (Football Plus requires payment) Open Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 11am-5pm

Manchester Cathedral (C2) <http://www.manchestercathedral.org/a-good-day-out>

Be sure not to miss the intriguing Angel Stone, the sixteenth century Misericord wooden carvings underneath the Quire seats, the fifteenth century roof angels playing musical instruments of the time, and the beautiful glass. *FREE Open Mon to Fri 8.30am-6.30pm, Sat until 5pm, Sun until 7pm*

Chetham's Library (C2) <http://www.chethams.org.uk/>

Founded in 1653, Chetham's is the oldest public library in the English-speaking world. The building dates from 1421, was built to accommodate a college of priests, and is one of the most complete medieval complexes in north west England. *FREE Open Mon-Fri 9.00-12.30 & 1.30-4.30*

• **OXFORD ROAD** (*Oxford Road map insert*)

A 20 minute walk from the new **Visitor Information Centre (D4)** or a short bus ride away:

Manchester Museum <http://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk>

Manchester's natural history museum is home to one of the largest and most important collections of ancient Egyptian artefacts in the UK . The Manchester Gallery allows visitors to explore the connections between the people of Manchester , the city's history and the Museum's collection.
FREE Open every day 10am-5pm (Tue-Sat), closes 4pm Sun & Mon

The Whitworth Art Gallery <http://www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk/>

Part of the University of Manchester and home to some of the UK 's finest collections of art and design. Including modern and historic fine art, prints, textiles and a rare collection of wallpapers.
FREE Open every day 10am-5pm (Mon-Sat), closes 4pm Sun

The Gallery of Costume <http://www.manchestergalleries.org/our-other-venues/platt-hall-gallery-of-costume/>

(Just off the map, at **Platt Hall**, a little further south than The Whitworth Art Gallery.)

One of Britain 's most important costume collections, displaying fashions from the 17thCentury to the present day. There is a programme of temporary collections too.
FREE Open Mon-Fri 1pm-5pm, Sat & Sun 10am-5pm

• **SALFORD QUAYS** (*The Quays map insert on the downloadable map – link earlier*)

A unique waterfront destination, only a 15-minute Metrolink tram-ride from the city centre. Catch an Eccles or MediaCityUK tram from Piccadilly Gardens (E4) or St Peters Square (C4), to MediaCityUK or Harbour City - It's then only a short walk to the attractions. The Piccadilly Gardens station tram stop is just across the road from our hotel (photo opposite). An off-peak Day Travelcard costs £4.90 and allows full use of the tram network after 0930. Buy from the machines at the tram stop – you can pay by credit or debit card. **DO NOT** travel without a valid ticket or you'll be charged a £100 penalty fare. You can pick-up a tram route map from the visitor centre below our hotel, [or download using this link.](#)



Ordsall Hall <http://www.salfordcommunityleisure.co.uk/culture/ordsall-hall>

Salford's newly restored Grade 1 listed Tudor Manor House, with an exciting programme of activities for all ages and abilities. Exchange Quay Metrolink Station (on the Eccles line) is just a 5 minute walk from the hall. *FREE Open Mon-Fri 10am-4pm, Closed Sat, Sun 10am-4pm*

The Lowry <http://www.thelowry.com>

A theatre and art gallery, it displays many of LS Lowry's famous works, amongst other exhibitions. *FREE Open Sun-Fri 11am-5pm, Sat 10am-5pm* **The Lowry Shopping Outlet Mall** – directly opposite – offers discount shopping and restaurants, cafes and bars situated *Open every day 10am onwards.*

Imperial War Museum North <http://www.iwm.org.uk/visits/iwm-north>

One of the most celebrated Museums in Britain today, Imperial War Museum North is about people and their stories, about how lives have been and still are shaped by war and conflict. *FREE Open every day 10am - 5pm*

Manchester United Football Stadium Old Trafford <http://www.manutd.com>

Re-live the clubs triumphs, tragedies and trophies at the Manchester United Museum. Follow the history of the club from 1878 to the present day, including the Hall of Fame and dazzling Trophy Room. Delve behind the scenes at the Theatre of Dreams on the Stadium Tour. *TICKETED See website for opening days, times and prices.*

• **SPORTCITY** (*Eastlands map insert*)

Manchester City Football Stadium The Etihad <http://www.mfc.co.uk/>

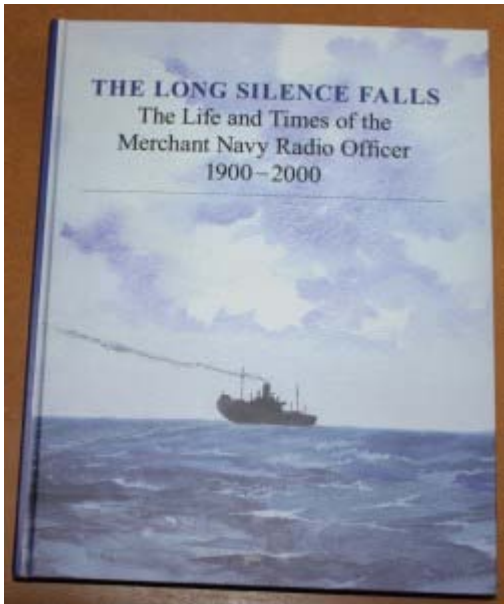
In normal times, a guide would take you on a 60 minute tour of the stadium, focusing on areas such as the Directors' box, Executive lounge, players' tunnel, Home dressing room, press conference room and pitchside/the dug outs. However – due to concerts by Coldplay and Bruce Springsteen, and some stadium upgrades, there are to be no tours in June! Thought I'd better mention this to avoid disappointment ☹

Editor's Note: Most of the Manchester information was provided by the Visitor Information Centre – you can probably judge for yourself the bits I've added regarding local directions. Quite a few of the locations are in easy walking distance from our hotel (as you'll see from the downloadable map – click the link on page 6); some are also on the free Metro Shuttle bus routes (get the map from the Visitor Information Centre or download in advance from the link provided on page 6); and some are on the Metrolink tram route (again – pick-up from the visitor centre, or download using the link on page 8). Enjoy your visit!

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Maritime Miscellaneous 2: Information regarding ‘The Long Silence Falls’ – subtitle ‘The Life and Times of the Merchant Navy Radio Officer 1900-2000’ – published by the Radio Officers Association.

This book was brought to my attention by a (AMERC News) contributor, by which time all but the last 25 copies of the initial book run had been sold. [The ROA has commissioned a further print run which is now available for purchase from the Radio Officers Association – follow this link for details.](#) It is not the work of a single person telling his/her life story – it is a collection ‘the best’ articles published in QSO – the Radio Officers Association newsletter – between 1999 and 2012.



The foreword, by Captain Richard Woodman FRHistS. FNI begins:

‘It is an irony that the fate of the marine radio officer was both engendered and destroyed by technology. Unlike the other technical branches of ship management, the deck officers and the engineers, his world was not modified, it was obliterated. Whereas the mate with his sextant and chronometer was merely gelded of his prime skill, and the engineer was overwhelmed by the size of his plant and was made a minder rather than a fixer, the radio officer was made extinct.’

And ends with:

‘The Long Silence Falls is both a tribute and a record. Without it, an important slice of social history would have faded from the nation’s collective consciousness, and we would have been the poorer without it’

A review in the March 2013 [RSGB magazine RadCom](#) tells us ‘... *this is a joyful celebration and full of vibrant anecdotes and stories drawn from a century of colourful exploits. I found it a pleasure to read ... The chapters cover areas such as wireless colleges, first trips to sea, life at sea, war stories, The Queens (Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth ... QE2), flight radio officers, humour and the intriguingly-named East of Suez, West of Panama. That chapter paints a colourful picture of the Middle and Far East by way of the Indian coast, with many stories encapsulating long-gone ways of life ...*’

‘The Supplement part of the book comprises two fascinating true stories: a biography of Jack Binns (of Titanic fame); and the true story of the first SOS, which was sent in April 1910 by the Minnehaha and not the Titanic in April 1912, as popularly believed’

‘The stories are very human and cover a range of conditions from joy to misery, from enforced idleness to frantically copying the ‘Press’ for cruise-ship daily newspapers ...’ and

‘I found this a delightful book [and] a fascinating read. Whether or not you have the sea in your veins, I recommend it’.

And some comments from ex-ROs themselves on the [‘Ships Nostalgia’](#) website include: *‘It’s so authentic that I could feel myself back on board as I read those pages. It’s graphic, detailed, technical in places, full of stories both witty and tragic, and the best read I’ve come across in years’* and *‘At long last a book about Radio Officers that hits every spot. The ROA intended this to be their legacy to we sparks, and it has succeeded far beyond expectations. This is the one book that can ensure we will never be forgotten, and which will ensure future generations really understand what we did and our raison d’etre. A tremendous read and a great achievement by the ROA. Buy it!’*

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Maritime Miscellaneous 3:

Item: GMDSS INSTRUCTOR VACANCY.

Location: UKSA, Isle of Wight

Information: A vacancy for a FULL TIME GOC / ROC INSTRUCTOR will arise at the UKSA in COWES on the Isle of Wight in the near future.

This will be a FULL TIME position with the successful candidate teaching between 20 and 25 courses a year on site at Cowes as a full time employee of the UKSA.

Training can be given however preference may be give to someone with previous experience in this field.

A competitive (industry standard) salary and employment terms will be offered upon completion of training.

Assistance with some re-location expenses may be available for the right applicant.

For further details or an informal discussion please contact:

Suzanne Hopkins
personnel@uksa.org
Tel +44 (0)1983 294941

The UKSA is an equal opportunities employer and a registered charity.

Ends:

Editor's Note: A UKSA Member Profile was included in [AMERC News issue 38 \(August 2011\)](#)

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