



## Editorial

Welcome to issue 52 of AMERC News - *which doubles as **Circular 268** and, as such, must be circulated to all GMDSS instructors/examiners by their AMERC centre contact.*

In this issue we have a brief on the most recent **Maritime Consultation Group** (MCG - Page 2) - reflecting relevant items covered in the AMERC Executive Committee (EC) meeting earlier that day and including: using **Digital publications** for classroom training and examinations; updated **equipment requirement** for demonstrating **OPT tasks for ROC and LRC examinations**; further information on dealing with **Accreditation for Prior Learning for ENEM/ETO** applications; final information on the introduction of the **2015-16 series examination papers**; information to Members regarding the **logo carousel** on the AMERC Website; and information on the **location of the 2015 AGM**. The **quarterly statistics for GMDSS examinations** from the NAC are also included here.

**Explanation Please?** (Page 3) Has questions on the use of **different terminology for Routine priority** for Inmarsat-C; and on **the need to select the appropriate priority** when using Fleet 77 equipment, if full marks are to be gained during the examination process.

We have another '**GMDSS Criss-Crossword**' (Page 4) to help stretch delegates' knowledge of **international geography** and the use of **Admiralty List of Radio Signals** (ALRS) publications. The answers to puzzle 51 are also included – **again with hyperlinks** for those interested in learning more about the featured locations/stations.

**Tales from the Key-Side** has two 'classroom' stories (page 5) – from different generations of Radio Officer/Operator examinations; but **Member Profile(s)** and **Maritime Miscellaneous** are both 'resting' for this issue, in the absence of any submissions from Members or other readers.

Your submissions will be welcome for **Member Profile, Maritime Misc**' and **Tales from the Key-Side** - and/or anything else you think would be of interest to readers. Further suggestions to help students with their knowledge of international geography – a continuing issue – will also be welcome!

As usual – my sincere thanks to those of you who've provided feedback, questions and other information for your newsletter.

Sláinte!

*Ian W*

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## [Nostalgia – Portishead Radio](#)

And here a wee link to an online item compiled by an ex-GKA R/O - for those of you who will have worked Portishead and who might like to see some 'faces' .. and also for those more recent 'recruits' to marine (GMDSS) radio, who thought our 'modern' equipment was not user friendly ... take a look at this Coast Radio Station kit and compare ☺

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; the NAC and other AMERC/industry specialists.

The latest meeting was held in London, in December 2014. The following items reflect discussions at MCG (full minutes will be circulated appropriately) - and/or associated items that are of interest to Members and training centres. The items are placed according to size - not in any ‘priority’ order.

**Digital Publications:** The MCG agreed that – for training and examination purposes - multiple digital publications can be held and accessed using a single PC, acting as your ‘bookcase’, with each book being accessed as required. Currently this might include, for example, the digital editions of the ‘*ITU List of Ship Stations and MMSI Assignments*’, and ‘*ALRS Volume 6*’. It is understood that other ALRSs may become available in digital format during 2015, and that a significant discount may be granted for training centre licenses – more information will be circulated when available.

**GMDSS Equipment – ROC/LRC Exam requirement:** Training providers should note that the new series ROC OPT requires exam candidates to demonstrate Distress Alert RELAY, which was not included in previous series ROC practical exams. Venues running ROC courses must have equipment/approved simulator that allows the candidate to demonstrate that task. For LRC-only centres the Distress Relay/ACK can be ‘demonstrated or explained’ – so centres with Class-D/E equipment will not be affected.

**ENEM/ETO Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL):** It has been confirmed that the MCA, and not AMERC, will be dealing with applications for APL for those wishing to qualify for ENEM/ETO certification. Contact points within the MCA are awaited.

**New Series Examination Papers:** The 2015-16 series examination papers were published within the secure area of the AMERC website during November 2014. Those new papers should have been used exclusively since 1 January 2015, at which time previous series master sets should have been destroyed.

**AMERC Website – Logo Carousel:** AMERC members wishing to have their logo displayed on the (already operating) carousel on the [home](#) and [members](#) pages should send a copy of their logo to [admin@amerc.ac.uk](mailto:admin@amerc.ac.uk) Logo images should be of the highest available quality, as they have to be modified to fit in with the website design. It is suggested that Members obtain suitable quality images from their graphic design or printer services supplier. Another potential source of high quality logos can often be found in electronic copies of company headed paperwork. Logos taken from websites are unlikely to be of the required quality.

**Annual General Meeting 2015:** The 2015 AGM will be held at the [Thistle ‘Atlantic Tower’ Hotel](#), Liverpool. AGM itself is due to start on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June at 1530; followed by the AGM Dinner in the evening; and Examiner’s Panel at 0930 Thursday 11<sup>th</sup>. Car-parking etc arrangements can be found on the hotel website, using the above link.

**GMDSS Examination Statistics – quarterly report:** National Administration Centre (NAC) examination statistics for the period **1 July 2014 – 26 September 2014** are shown below:

EXAMINATION	ENTERED (1 <sup>st</sup> time)	PASSED (1 <sup>st</sup> attempt)	% PASSED 1 <sup>ST</sup> ATTEMPT
UK GOC	277 (225)	220 (178)	178/225 (>79%)
ALL GOC	496 (418)	412 (346)	346/418 (>82%)
UK ROC	43 (42)	40 (39)	39/42 (>92%)
ALL ROC	53 (52)	50 (49)	49/52 (>94%)
LRC	19 (19)	19 (19)	19/19 (100%)

## Explanation Please?

This is the area for questions that may puzzle you – whether you're a trainer without a specific 'radio' background; a seagoing operator who's finding that the 'real world' doesn't seem to be fully in tune with what you learned in the classroom (or with what you've read in publications – official or otherwise); or because it's not particularly clear why a specific answer to an examination question is necessary when it appears that other answers may also appear appropriate.

The exchanges below include questions the terminology used by different equipment manufacturers to specify 'Routine' priority on Inmarsat-C; and on why it is considered necessary to select the correct priority when demonstrating an Urgency (or Safety) telephone call when using Fleet 77 equipment.

**Question:** Noted that some new exam papers insist on the word 'Routine' when asking for the priority of a non-Distress message on Inmarsat-C equipment. Our Furuno Inmarsat-C does not offer 'Routine' but 'Normal' – should 'Normal' not be published as an option for the correct answer to such questions?

**Answer:** No – not published as such - but an acceptable alternative answer in those centres with equipment that displays 'Normal'. Delegates/candidates should, however, understand that 'Normal' in this equipment will only get Routine priority, even when used with an Urgency or Safety message – we don't want people to go away thinking anything else. After all: the 'normal' priority for a distress message is 'Distress' – but we can't accept 'Normal' as the correct answer when sending a Distress message ☺

**Question:** On Fleet 77 questions where, for example, Medical Evacuation is required, the answer paper insists on the candidate specifying 'Urgency' priority, despite that fact that anyone dialling 38# will be connected to the correct centre ashore, albeit with Routine priority – why should a candidate lose marks for not changing the priority to Urgency?

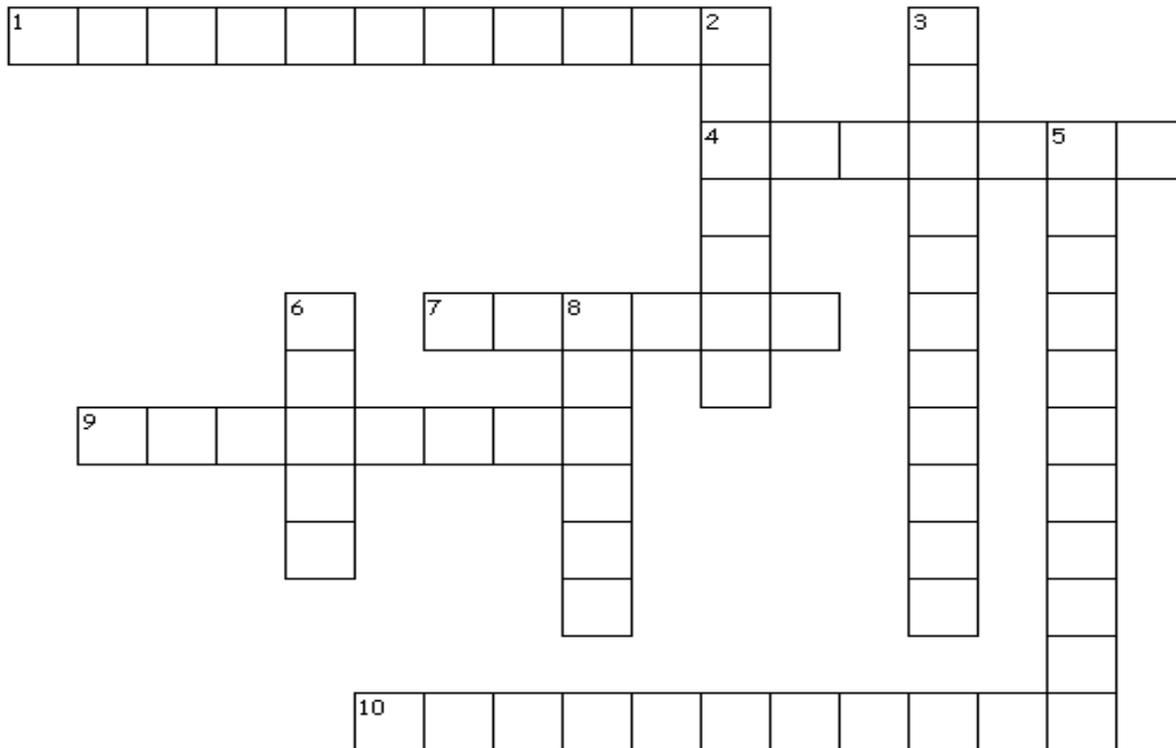
**Answer:** The type of question referred to asks for the FULL procedure which, for Fleet 77 equipment, should include selecting the correct priority (hence, as you'll be aware, pre-empting any lower-priority call already in progress). Where a candidate lets the call go through as Routine then (s)he will not get full marks. Similarly, in the OPT (practical) exam, where a candidate selects the correct 2-digit code and then hits the # key – initiating the call before changing priority – the candidate should not be 'grey boxed'; but neither should (s)he be awarded full marks for that task.

**Question:** We might be spending a little additional time in Liverpool at AGM time – can you suggest any attractions/activities close to the hotel that we might be able to take in?

**Answer:** If you're only going to have a little time to pass, probably your best bet – within walking distance from the hotel (0.5 mile/10 minutes along the main road – a bit longer if you stroll along the riverfront), is the [Albert Dock](#) area, which houses (among other things) The Beatles Story (facing the big wheel); the Liverpool Tate gallery; Merseyside Maritime Museum; and the International Slavery Museum. Alternatively – for those who prefer shopping (?) – when heading towards Albert Dock turn left into James Street (becomes Lord Street) and you'll find yourself in the '[Liverpool One](#)' shopping precinct. For other suggestions see the [Visit Liverpool](#) website.

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**GMDSS Criss-Crossword Number 52** - all answers should be researched and/or confirmed by reference to ALRS, *where appropriate*



**Down**

- 2. (4,3) Forecast area to the south-west of 4-across.
- 3. Scotland's largest container port and UK's largest feeder port.
- 5. S.E. Asia Republic and sovereign island country in consisting of more than 7100 islands.
- 6. Firth of ..... - estuary on which 3-down located.
- 8. MRCC, and NAVTEX/MF DSC Station serving 4-across.

**Across**

- 1. Continental-European SRR directly east of 7-across.
- 4. Port city - capital of the province of Albay in 5-down.
- 7. MRCC to the south of 6-down.
- 9. MRCC to the north of 6-down.
- 10. NAVTEX station serving 6-down.

**Issue 51 answers – with hyperlinks:**

**DOWN:** 1. [Thirteen](#); 2. [Twelve](#); 3. [Kodiak](#); 6. [Chukchi](#).

**ACROSS:** 3. [Kuskokwim](#); 4. [Anadyr](#); 5. [Lawrence](#); 7. [January](#); 8. [Bering](#); 9. [Bethel](#).

## 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:** Glasgow College of Nautical Studies - June 1976  
**Time:** During written examination – some time in  
**Frequency:** Annual examination round – Marine Radio General Certificate (MRGC).

We'd started the written exam where, in the first section of the paper, we were required to answer all (3? – memory lacking here!) questions; and in the second section we could choose which to answer (as long as we reached the required total).

One question on our paper was on the 'Auto Alarm' and we were provided with one-half of the Auto Alarm diagram (which was apparently considered enough to allow us to answer the question). At that stage, after two years in class and 'cabin', I could have drawn the complete diagram from memory – and it seemed clear to me that, if I was reading the question correctly, we'd been given the wrong half of the diagram for the question asked. I broke the silence of the session to tell this to the invigilating examiner and, without another word he collected my half-diagram and left the room – at which point I started to worry that I'd mis-read the question, but tried to concentrate on another question meanwhile.

The examiner returned about 20 minutes later (during which time not a single word was spoken in class - nobody took advantage of his absence) and presented us all with the full diagram. I was VERY relieved to see that I'd been correct, and hadn't mis-read the question. And was further pleased when the final results came through many weeks later with a 'pass' on all subjects for me ☺

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**Dateline:** Club de Mar (Palma de Mallorca) - function room – Winter 1999/2000?  
**Time:** Introduction to written (GMDSS GOC) exam  
**Frequency:** Examiner-modulated serious-voice frequency.

*'And finally – be aware – the person sitting next to you is PROB-ably wrong ...'*

[and for those of you who think you recognise the style and feel that you know who that might have been - yes – it was Denis ☺ ]

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