

AMERC NEWS

Incorporating Circular 220

February 2005

Issue Seventeen —Read Inside

EARLY ADVICE OF AGM

NEW GMDSS EXMINERS' HANDBOOK
EXAMINER'S LISTS OVERSEAS CENTRES
COURSE APPROVALS

BRITISH MARINE ELECTRONICS TECHNICIAN SCHEME

OFCOM CONSULTATION – SHIP RADIO LICENSING

THE CITY & GUILDS IN 2004

M-NOTICES AND THE LIKE

MODERN PIRACY
An Article by Willie Williamson

REVALIDATING A GMDSS IN NORWAY

MARCONI MUSEUMS FALKLANDS ISLANDS MEMORIAL

JRC OFFER

SOUTHAMPTON INSTITUTE BECOMES A UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

NEW EXPENSES FORM

TECH UPDATE 022

AMERC NEWS is the Journal of the Association of Marine Electronics and Radio Colleges.

It is distributed to all Members, Associates and Affiliates of the Association.

AMERC Ltd encourages the copying and wider distribution of AMERC NEWS

EDITORIAL

There are all those sayings about the changes Spring brings although I must say that writing this Editorial in freezing cold weather it seems a long way off. In calendar terms it is approaching rapidly. It seems but a blink in the eye since we had our last AGM and as Eric reminds us we are already required to send back our booking forms. We shall have to cope with change at AGM when David Heffer who has held the reins with such skill and dedication for so many years will step down as our Chairman, anticipating his retirement from Southampton Institute. At the very least a new Chairman will need to be voted in but other changes are likely also. In many ways this will be a critical AGM in the life of the Association and you are being urged to attend and express your views.

In technical matters we hear of many changes in prospect. Ofcom's Spectrum Framework Review has been criticised for its suggested 'liberalisation' of spectrum management and licensing. Nevertheless it is right to point out that radiocommunication is evolving at an unprecedented rate and all the buzz words you will want to hear are there in the Review. Maritime communications will not be immune from any of this judging by what is appearing in what passes for the marine technical press these days. There is much comment on AIS, S-VDR, global navigation systems, new services and position fixing systems.

The major fault underneath all these systems is the human factor. So we read in Maritime Feedback* of a bearing having 40 degrees of error on a hand held compass being deviated by the owner's metal framed spectacles. The same publication has a whole page on the interference of ship manoeuvring by mobile telephones. This ranges from distractions to a call actuating fire alarms. That need hardly surprise anyone who has been trampled on in a shopping centre, sliced up on the road or even watched in astonishment as telephones are switched on in a theatre interval. But you can still be alarmed.

Light touch regulation and social attitudes will contribute to dangerous behaviour on the navigation bridge but training is the answer, would you not agree? So back to AMERC needing to have a powerful voice – see you at AGM!!

Brian Cotton

*The Newsletter of the Confidential Hazardous Incident Reporting Programme (CHIRPS).

2005 AGM

By the time you have this Issue you will have heard from Eric Lamb regarding the 2005 AMERC AGM. It will be held between 25th and 27th May at the Carlton Highland Hotel, Edinburgh. Eric stresses you must send back the returns at the earliest possible date.

MARITIME BOARD

The AMERC Maritime Board met in the Wray Castle premises in December last with a very full agenda. A number of the items discussed are yet to come to a conclusion and have been held over until the next Issue but the following needs your attention.

EXAMINERS' HANDBOOK

The Sixth Edition of the Examination Administration Handbook has now been published and all REC should have received the CD containing the text. The Handbook has also been placed on the AMERC website, (www.amerc.ac.uk).

REC Coordinators are reminded of their responsibility to ensure that each of their Examiners has a copy of this important publication.

It is professionally turned out and it is something of which the Association can be proud as well as being useful.

OVERSEAS CENTRE

The Maritime Board has agreed to Viareggio being set up as an Overseas Examination Centre for courses delivered by Ian Waugh's organisation.

CURRENT EXAMINERS

The Maritime Board is asking REC Coordinators to update with the NAC their lists of 'Active Examiners.'

ENEM

It is anticipated that by the end of the current academic session there will be twenty candidates for each of the ENEM and Radio Maintenance Examinations.

COURSE APPROVALS

MCA has agreed that AMERC will carry out both course approvals and inspections. It has been stipulated that the local MCA Office will have to be given prior notice of any inspections.

REC Coordinators should note that it is their responsibility to inform the local MCA Office and *not* the NAC's or the Chief Examiner's.

GMDSS STATISTICS

The quarterly report of the GMDSS Examinations Statistics for the period 01 July 2004 to 30 September 2004.

EXAMINATIONS	ENTERED	PASSED
UK GOC	127	109
ALL GOC	242	202
UK ROC	30	27
ALL ROC	30	27
LRC	100	91

BRI TISH MARI NE ELECTRONI CS TECHNICIAN SCHEME

A NEW JOINT VENTURE

The British Marine Electronics Technician Scheme launched at the Schroder's Boat Show held in London's Docklands in January has been established to provide common levels of training for marine electronics technicians. It aims to give everyone in the marine electronics industry from dealers, distributors and manufacturers though to consumers a common standard of certification to ensure quality installation and service of small craft marine electronics equipment.

We have reported in several Issues of AMERC NEWS about how the Association was approached by the British Marine Electronics Association (BMEA) to see if we could help with such a scheme. AMERC provided drafts for the syllabus and examination papers for both an Intermediate and an Advanced Level of qualification. These were agreed as was a proposal that the Association act as the administrative authority for the Scheme. Hence notifications of performance in the examinations will be provided by the AMERC NAC.

The Intermediate Certificate is available immediately for those who have one year's experience working as a marine technician (post apprenticeship). The Advanced Certificate will be available in September and caters for those with over five years' relevant experience.

Tim Christie, Chairman of the BMEA, said when he launched the Scheme that "this Scheme is a great addition to the marine electronics industry. It is vital to ensure a high level of quality and service and this standard will guarantee that. I am sure this will prove invaluable to the industry."

John Clarke, Chief Executive of the British Marine Federation (BMF) which jointly launched the scheme added: "The BMF welcomes this great new addition to the marine electronics industry by ensuring quality is maintained. We hope it will be well received by all involved in marine electronics."

Employers will be asked to endorse a pro forma which has been developed to highlight the practical tasks that will be expected at each level. The certification process will be kept under review, being upgraded and improved to reflect the latest advances in the marine electronics industry.

Phil Davies of Lairdside Maritime Centre represented the Association at the Launch. Phil has kindly provided AMERC NEWS with some good pictures taken on the day. Unfortunately they will not reproduce well for the kind of reprographic processes used in AMERC Centres. You will find them on the AMERC Website (www.amerc.ac.uk)

OFCOM CONSULTATION SHIP RADIO LICENSING

Ofcom, the UK regulatory body for telecommunications, has announced that it is undertaking a public consultation over possible changes to the radio licensing rules for marine radio users. The current thinking of Ofcom is that annual renewal of the ship's licence is inconsistent with the 'light touch regulation' it favours. The case Ofcom makes is to be found on its website (www.ofcom.gov.org).

It all makes interesting reading but what it comes down to is that Ofcom suggests it could:

- Remove the requirement to purchase a new licence each year. Instead the licence would be valid for the life of the vessel unless amendment to the licence details were required.
- Provide a web-based licensing service free of charges.
- Issue electronic licences free of charge

If this is agreed, Ofcom would continue as now to provide MCA and ITU with the radio licensing information. It would be the responsibility of the owners to maintain the accuracy of their licence details. (Of note is that Ofcom estimates that even now that 20% of maritime radio equipment is unlicensed).

There is some speculation in the documentation Ofcom provides that it could transfer its licensing responsibility to MCA, although the Agency's views are not made known.

The closing date for responses is 3 May 2005

Editor's Note:

This is only one of the consultations being undertaken presently by Ofcom. Its proposals for change to use of the spectrum have caused something of a stir elsewhere, including the radio amateur community. There is a general view that Ofcom has grasped the trends in modern communications but is failing to appreciate the consequences of lightening its regulatory grip. The RSGB response to the broader proposals can be found on its website (www.rsgb.org) and make for interesting reading.

2004 - A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF CITY & GUILDS
COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES QUALIFICATIONS
by
PAMELA BYRNE

We are grateful to Pamela Byrne, Product Manager for Communication Technologies at City & Guilds for providing us with the following article. AMERC has had a very positive relationship with the City & Guilds over many years to mutual benefit. Something to thank Stuart Tomlinson and others for.

UK qualifications

This has been a very hectic year for the Communication Technologies (CT) (nee Telecommunications) industry. New National Occupational Standards (NOS) were introduced in February 2004, and a frenzy of development started. These have now come to a pause and it seems an appropriate time to let the world know what the CT product year has been like at City & Guilds.

In development terms, **everything** in our CT portfolio changed! Development started last year, and was completed this year and launched. Among these early starters, we had the level 2 Certificate in Communications Cabling (3666) and the level 3 Diploma in Communications Systems (3662).

3666 – level 2 Certificate in Communications Cabling

This qualification makes sure there's an able in your cable! The qualification 3666 was accredited in September 2003 and we launched it on 15 January 2004. At the launch, the product was endorsed by John Colton of The Fibreoptic Industry Association with Stuart Tomlinson of AMERC providing the "science bit"!

The 3666 qualification was updated from the old 3466 which, after long and faithful service, saw its final demise on 30th September.

The 3666 has 4 units, 1 core and 3 options. With new on-line testing, the 3666 has been brought kicking into the 21st century.

The qualification is accepted as part of the Joint Industry Board for the Electrical Contracting Industry which runs a registration scheme for competent operators in the UK construction industry. The Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) will become mandatory for operators who want to work in the construction industry from January 2005. SmartScreen support also became available from September and this is well worth having in your portfolio!

3662 – level 3 Diploma in Communications Systems

The level 3 Diploma in Communications Systems (3662) is also accepted as the Technical Certificate for Telecommunications Advanced Modern Apprenticeship. It was accredited in March 2004.

The qualification made its accredited maiden appearance at the Telecoms Skills Action Group (a forum for the major telecommunications employers that meets every two months) meeting on 2nd March and formally launched to a mixed group of employers, training providers and FE colleges on 29th March in Birmingham. Stuart Tomlinson again provided the science bits.

At the AMERC conference in May, City & Guilds was invited to spend a few minutes outlining the qualification. For those of you who were unable to attend, details of the December 2004 qualification can be found on the City & Guilds website.

The qualification has 10 units, 3 core, 6 option and 1 mathematics unit for candidates intending to go on to HE. The guided learning hours are 60 per unit so it is a small focussed qualification with just enough mathematics for learners to cover the content. It is assessed twice yearly in June and December and the first tests were scheduled to be held on 7th December 2004.

SmartScreen support became available with effect from 30 November with good tutor support materials, sample papers and lesson plans, plus, plus, plus!

The qualification is currently being re-mapped to the new NOS.

3661 – NVQ for Communication Technologies

City & Guilds has been out of the NVQ for Communication Technologies market for a few years since the demise of the 2700, but now we're back! Even before development started, we were getting enquiries for the qualification after a successful maiden announcement at the Enterprise Networks Exhibition in July where, guess who was providing the science bits? – that was too easy, Stuart Tomlinson!!

Level 2 NVQ for Communication Technologies Practitioners and Levels 3 and 4 for Communication Technologies Professionals were accredited on 8 November by QCA. These are the new kids on the block and are based on the new National Occupational Standards from e-skills UK that were approved on 24th February 2004!

These new qualifications have a very different look and feel with new rules of how learners can combine units to reflect their spiky profile of working, ie not all at one level, learners can now select a minimum of 60% of the units at the level of the qualification, the remaining percentage of units needed to make up the award can be either from above or below. City & Guilds will be running a series of workshops in conjunction with the regional offices to educate centres, EVs, employers and anyone else who is interested.

International qualifications

City & Guilds didn't just stop with their UK qualifications. We also overhauled our international awards and even though these were unaffected by the UK NOS, e-skills UK endorsed the 2730, so it is very suitable for employers with an international workforce.

2720 – Telecommunications and Electronics Engineering

After many years and notifications of withdrawal, the last examinations for the Technician Certificate in Telecommunications and Electronics Engineering complex 01, was May 2003. The last exams for complex 02 Technician Diploma were June 2004 and the final examinations for the Advanced Technician Diploma in Telecommunications and Electronics Engineering are scheduled for June 2005 – **RIP!**

2730 - Telecommunication Systems

Out of the starting blocks and replacing the 2720 is this new baby! This award is smaller and more up to date than its predecessor, it still has 3 levels. The 2730 Technician Certificate (complex 01) will have on-line testing with effect from December 2004. SmartScreen support is scheduled for end January 2005.

What else did we get up to??

Enterprise Networks exhibition – 5-6 July 2004, Olympia 2

We promoted our suite of Communication Technologies qualifications at this event supported by Stephen Priestman of e-skills UK, the Sector Skills Council for IT, Telecoms and Contact Centres on the 5th and Lee Funnell of The Fibreoptic Industry Association on 6th. Centres registered for the 3662 and 3666 were invited to provide us with copies of their qualifications information sheets to be displayed on the stand. Key employers and Centres were also invited to stop by for refreshments.

Working with partners

FIA

We endorsed the FIA's CPD scheme which was launched on 28 October 2004. This is a scheme for members who wish to focus on and develop specifically in the Fibreoptic industry. The cornerstone of the qualification is the City & Guilds level 2 Certificate in Communications Cabling.

What's on the Horizon

City & Guilds will be running a programme of workshops aimed at Centres and Employers who are keen to understand the new CT NVQ. These will be run in conjunction with our Regional offices, notice of the workshops will be posted on the City & Guilds websites.

M-NOTICES

For this Issue there are a some MCGA M-Notices of interest to Members. We also make some comments on the use of AIS and some recent statements from the General Lighthouse Authorities of the UK and Ireland.

MIN 181 IMO DECISIONS

This Information Note sets out recent decisions at IMO that impact on internationally agreed regulations and codes.

MGN 269 RADIO SURVEYS

This Note refers to Marconi Selenia Communications carrying out surveys of ship radio equipment and issuing the Cargo Ship Safety Radio Certificate. This Guidance Note, which supersedes MGN 206, details the survey and certification processes, listing addresses and telephone numbers for the Company's offices.

MGN 277 AIS

This Note gives operational guidance for Automatic Identification Systems (AIS). With the adoption of AIS onboard now being heavily advanced, this Note offers guidance on correct usage. A rather important publication we believe. The Nautical Institute has been highlighting problems arising from inaccurate AIS data such as inaccurate headings and poor installation – see www.nautinst.org/ais. Despite this most seafarers regard the system as beneficial to situation awareness and navigation.

MGN 272 VDR

This Guidance Note reviews procedures for the performance testing of Voyage Data Recorders (VDR) and the recording of results.

IMO has approved the use of simplified VDR (S-VDR) on ships of 3000 gt and above. There is some concern in the technical press that some owners are not prepared for the introduction of the carriage rules.

USCG

The USCG site currently has nothing of interest that is new.

LIGHTHOUSE AUTHORITIES

The general Lighthouse Authorities (GLA) has suggested the use of AIS for wreck marking and the broadcast of hydrological data.

Indeed the GLA has been making some interesting comments about the future of navigation aids (published in “2020 The Vision”). It has the view that lighthouses can be used as platforms for DGPS and RACONS. The GLA has concerns about the vulnerability of Global Navigation Systems and suggests that the use of LORAN-C for back-up is worthy of further investigation.

MODERN PIRACY

by

WILLIE WILLIAMSON

The general public perception of pirates is a romantic one nurtured by fictional books with tales of derring-do, tropical islands, hidden treasure and bashing the Spaniards. Films too have played their part with the swashbuckling antics of Errol Flynn and the recent Johnny Depp film "Pirates of the Caribbean" does nothing to dispel this view.

Pirates in history were considered a fairly lawless bunch, murdering and plundering without regard for human life. Modern pirates seem to have adopted these undesirable attributes. Buccaneers were slightly less bloodthirsty and being more interested in booty fought the Spanish under more or less defined rules and generally treated captives in a reasonable manner. The modern reality is not in the least romantic and in fact is deadly serious and potentially lethal to ships and crew. Piracy and armed robbery attacks on merchant ships have steadily increased over the last decade.

The situation has become so serious that the Maritime Coastguard Agency has issued a number of Marine Guidance Notices over the last number of years about armed robbery attack and piracy attacks. Generally, an armed robbery attack is defined as being an attack on a vessel at anchor, or within a maritime state's territorial waters. Piracy on the other hand occurs on the high seas in international waters. The distinction between the two types of attack is important from a legal point of view. Armed robbery attacks are normally dealt with by the relevant security services of the maritime state in which the attack took place. Piracy on the high seas can be dealt with by security services of any maritime state. In any event both types of attack can be very violent as firearms are commonly used and numerous deaths of merchant seamen have been reported in such attacks.

A favoured method of attack is to approach a vessel from astern at high speed and use grappling irons to hook onto the intended victim and climb onboard. This is not without risk to the pirates but while they are doing this other pirates on the attacking vessel cover their mates by rifle or machine guns. Vessels with low freeboard, tugs towing barges etc are particularly vulnerable to this type of attack. As attacks mainly occur at night and by vessels that are difficult to spot due to their dark colouring and low profile the advantage seems to always be with the pirates.

In some cases crews of merchant ships have been tied up leaving the ship completely unattended while the ship's safe and the crew's personal effects are ransacked. Potentially highly dangerous and major navigation problems have been reported with ships steaming at full speed on automatic pilot and bridge personnel held immobile under armed pirates. Even once the pirates have left the vessel, crews have been left too traumatised to react fast enough to these navigation dangers. Last year 21 seafarers are known to have been killed in these types of incidents with 71 crew and passengers officially listed as missing presumably taken as hostages for ransom.

A number of practical steps that can be taken to minimise risks to ships and their crews. Masters are warned to ensure that all access to bridge and accommodation areas are securely locked especially when in known danger areas for piracy. Keeping fire hoses on standby to use against pirates climbing onboard, the use of CCTV cameras in vulnerable areas of the ship and the need for great vigilance by navigators in known danger areas. Lookouts can be doubled and in particular it is recommended to keep a good radar watch on targets approaching from the stern. The IMO guidance to Masters is to immediately contact other ships or shore authorities by radio if a pirate attack is detected. However the safety of the crew is paramount, thus if the ship has been boarded and transmitting radio signals could lead to violence or death to crew members it should not be attempted. Similarly, if the pirates have boarded and demanded the ship maintain radio silence then this demand should be obeyed.

As Radio Officers are no longer employed under the GMDSS system the recommendation is that the “Radio Operator” should be on duty when the ship is in areas known to be prone to attacks. In some cases the Radio Operator may be the Master himself, and this raises concerns about priorities when in difficult situations.

DSC and satellite communication equipment have been modified to provide a “piracy” designation that can be quickly selected when sending a distress message. The recommendations include a reference to checking transmitting equipment thoroughly and familiarity with its operation. It is suggested that a draft standard attack message be typed up and stored in the memory ready for instant transmission.

One of the disadvantages of transmitting a DSC piracy distress alert is that it is broadcast to all stations. Modern pirates in some areas are known to use very sophisticated high speed craft fully equipped with the most modern communication equipment and can therefore monitor DSC transmissions. Transmitting an alert by satellite does not suffer this disadvantage and therefore is a more secure method of alerting shore authorities of the attack.

Masters are encouraged to report all suspicious incidents which may result in an imminent attack to the appropriate Maritime Rescue Centres ashore. In situations where the attacks can compromise safety of navigation the Master can transmit an “All Ships” danger message on DSC using safety priority. This would be followed up on RT security message on Ch16 VHF or on 2182 kHz detailing the situation. If a piracy attack takes place a distress message would be transmitted but there can be qualifications as shown in the initial message – piracy attack alert shown below.

Vessel's name and call sign or Inmarsat identification number (plus the ocean region code).

Mayday*

Piracy attack

Vessel's position and time.

Nature of the event.

* It is expected that this message will be a Distress Message because the vessel or persons will be in grave or imminent danger when under attack. Where this is not the case the word Mayday may be omitted.

In forwarding messages of this type the details concerning the nature of the event include such things as method of attack, description of suspect craft, number and brief description of pirates, injuries to crew, damage to ship and brief details of stolen property or cargo. Under the traumatic conditions that these attacks take place it seems to me to be unlikely that anyone would have time to transmit all this information. However to be fair to the authorities this information is really more useful to maritime security forces in the form of "after action reports" and Masters are strongly advised to send these ashore once the attack is over.

GMDSS satellite equipment is used to receive piracy warnings originated by the Southeast Asia Regional Piracy Countermeasure Centre. These warnings are transmitted daily to appropriate Navareas using Inmarsat's EGC "SafetyNET" system. Similar warnings will be broadcast by the MF NAVTEX service in the future.

The officers' union NUMAST has expressed concern about the piracy situation and regularly comment in their journal "Telegraph" on this subject. A recent report outlined the disturbing increase in the number of seafarer killed relating to such incidents. As many as thirty deaths were reported in the first six months of this year alone. This is despite an actual decrease in the number of attacks (182) compared with the same period in 2003 (234).

Currently piracy occurs worldwide but particular areas are prone to attack. Southeast Asia is a hot spot with the Malacca Straits (28 attacks in 2003 alone) and other Straits being particularly dangerous. The South China Sea especially round Indonesian waters have seen much recent piracy activity. However the attacks while under way are not exclusively limited to these areas. Armed robbery attacks have been reported in Brazil, Venezuela and Colombia in South America and incidents have also been prevalent in West African ports with Nigeria featuring prominently as a hot spot.

Statistics of piracy incidents and armed attacks in 2003 are as follows:

Bangladesh 58 attacks
Indonesian waters 121 incidents
Nigeria 39 attacks

Piracy attacks in Malaysian waters had been a problem for some years. However, since The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) of the International Chamber of Commerce has established a Piracy Countermeasure Centre at Kuala Lumpur, the situation has improved and no attacks were reported last year. Also the vigorous action taken by the Malaysian authorities by increasing patrol operations by units of the Royal Malaysian Marine Police has had a desirable affect. With better reporting procedures (the countermeasure centre receiving reports from vessels about piracy attacks within this region), all these measures have assisted in combating piracy.

It is interesting to read the weekly piracy reports that can be found at www.icc-ccs.org

To conclude, piracy instead of being a thing of the past is still a very real threat to seafarers. No type of vessel is immune to attack and passengers and crews are at risk from death, injury and kidnap from any number of groups from the purely criminal to the ultra terrorists whose demands range over a wide political spectrum.

GMDSS REVALIDATION IN NORWAY

Ted Hackett of Fleetwood has been in contact with Sergei Asynov of the Admiral Makarov University. Some of you will remember that Sergei was the 2003 AGM in Dublin. He has provided the following information about revalidation arrangements in Norway.

Prior to revalidation course an applicant takes an entrance test which includes:

- A test in the theory of the GMDSS consisting of 60 questions. The duration of the test is one hour and is drawn down from a computer programme specially developed by MTC instructors.
- Four questions answered in writing on SAR communications, procedures and cancellation of false alerts.
- A practical skills test gauging ability to use GMDSS equipment. This is carried out on the Sailor 2000 and 4000 equipment and consists of:
DSC tests (internal and external).
INMARSAT A/B/C VHF/HF/MF DSC distress alerts transmission
Transmission of messages by means of INMARSAT special access codes
Execution and cancellation of distress alert by INMARSAT-C & VHF/HF/MF DSC

Training is performed on the GMDSS Sailor-4100 and Sailor-4000 equipment and the following techniques are studied during the course:

VHF/HF/MF DSC internal and external tests, transmission of all types of emergencies and different types of further communication, transmission of safety and urgency calls

INMARSAT-A: switching, antenna positioning, internal and external (91) tests of the station, transmission of the distress messages to RCC, transmission of messages by means of special access codes INMARSAT (32,38,39,42)

INMARSAT-C: switching, registration of the station, transmission of the distress messages to RCC, transmission of messages by means of INMARSAT special access codes (32,38,39,42), transmission of distress alert and its cancellation in compliance with the requirements of Radio Regulations

Daily tests in compliance with the STCW Convention

Emphasis is laid on the use of the equipment during search and rescue communications. The procedures used after receiving VHF/HF/MF DSC call recommended by the IMO circular 125 (published on 15 March 2001) and actions on transmission of unapproved distress alerts are studied. SAR procedures and message formats are revised and simulated. New communication technologies such as transmission of messages from INMARSAT-C SES to the email and Global Wireless are studied during the course.

The final examination has a format similar to the entrance test and includes preparation for work and sundry elements including the use of email.

MI SCELLANY

INTERNATIONAL MARI TIME!

Ian Waugh (GMDSS4ALL) tells us that in a recent course held at Freedom Yachting in Antibes the ten students were from nine countries. Chris Harrison from Lowestoft examined candidates from Australia, Belgium, Croatia, France, New Zealand, the Seychelles, Slovakia and South Africa. One claimed to be British, the French candidate had been born in Canada and two had dual nationality

This may be a record. Ian wants to know if anyone can beat it.

TSUNAMI

Eric Lamb tells us that after December's disastrous events in the Indian Ocean he contacted AMERC Member Colleges in the Region. The facilities at CINEC Colombo and AMET Chennai are still intact and more to the point there were no casualties among the staff. This is of relief to all of us, their friends in the Association.

That is not to say all passed without incident, AMET had to move their cadets out of the hostel to a temporary location in the city. Some CINEC staff members have lost property. In both places all know of suffering families.

JRC EQUIPMENT

Roger Taylor of Northwest Kent College has asked us to publicise that he has for disposal a full pre-GMDSS JRC main radio station. All enquiries to Roger.

MARCONI MUSEUMS

We hear that after years of delay the Marconi Company archives are to be placed at Oxford University. When we have details we shall publicise them. The Chelmsford and District Industrial Museum has a display of Marconi marine radio equipment donated by the Radio Officers' Association. This will be formally opened on Sunday 17th April when all visitors will be made welcome. Details may be had from the Editor.

FALKLAND ISLANDS TRUST

The Trust set up to commission a Memorial to the Merchant Seamen lost in the Falkland Isles Conflict in 1982 has raised the incredible sum of £37,000. The Trust expresses its gratitude to all who have contributed. The Memorial will be unveiled by the First Sea Lord at the Tower Hill MN Service on Sunday 4th September. Again details can be provided by the Editor.

FAREWELLS

We regret to announce the death after a long illness of Bill Curry, onetime Radio Superintendent of Cunard-Brocklebank, and a good friend and supporter of this Association.

As we go to press we hear of another death. This time of Brian Fletcher one time member of staff at Liverpool Community College (Riversdale College) and previously manager of the Marconi Depot in Singapore.

BACK PAGE

SOUTHAMPTON INSTITUTE

Southampton Institute has been awarded taught degree awarding powers by the Privy Council. This followed the positive advice given by the DfES and the Quality Assurance Agency and acknowledges the quality of the student experience and the standards of the academic awards. The holding of degree awarding powers means entitles Southampton Institute to call itself a University College. We offer our congratulations to the Institute, its staff and students.

AMERC EXPENSES

The Claim Form is changing again and as always there is a good reason. This time it is a very good reason. The mileage allowance for travel on approved AMERC business is raised to 35 pence per mile. A revised Claim Form is provided with this Issue – please destroy all previous versions.

TECH UPDATES

Steve Brett has kindly provided another Technical Update. This time it describes Sound Technology in the Home. With this Issue you have a copy of this as Tech Update Number 022. This is a popular part of AMERC's service to its Members and we are grateful to Steve for his effort.

As we say elsewhere onward reproduction processes act against the use of colour in AMERC NEWS. The original that Steve has provided is reproduced in some glory on the AMERC NEWS Website.

This Newsletter duals as Circular 220. Check you have a full file. All Issues of AMERC NEWS appear on the AMERC Website and back copies of the Circulars may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary. ***Don't forget to distribute your copies to your colleagues.***

Articles and suggestions for the next Issue of AMERC NEWS can be sent at any time.

Brian Cotton, Editor.

AMERC NEWS
Editor: Professor Brian Cotton
12 Tower Gardens, Bassett, Southampton SO16 7EL
Tel: Ans/Fax 023 80 768 030 Mobile 07802 646 558 Email: cbk@btinternet.com
AMERC Website: <http://www.amerc.ac.uk>
