

# AMERC NEWS

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Incorporates Circular 227

November 2006

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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.  
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## ***EDITORIAL***

An important edition of the NEWS, this, as you will find when you read it. Far from sitting in my study glumly staring out of the window for inspiration as I sometimes do, the articles have flooded in. Kim Fisher has kindly volunteered us an article on preparations for the ITU 2007 World Radiocommunication Congress. From this you can see that there are major changes ahead and there is an even better picture in Kim's complementary papers. Keeping with the regulatory theme there is an important article on ship security written by Phil Davies. We first acknowledged what a factor piracy is to business on the high seas with Willie Williamson's article in Issue seventeen. Since then the professional press has been ever more frequently commenting on aspects of communications when dealing with this menace. Phil's paper may become a driver for an AMERC policy position since it is the Executive Committee's intention to consider this at its next meeting. It is there that your input will be important and welcome.

Steve Brett has been busy again, volunteering us some projects this time with a dip into history and right up-to-date we have an article on the Transas GMDSS Tutor incorporating an F77 package which the Association has decided to approve.

\* \*\*\* \*\* \*

Change to AMERC's organisation are about to be brought into effect and Mike Webster, our Chairman, has a page to himself to spell that out. As you can see, the measure of re-organisation now under way will add to the Association's functionality. You can expect that any consequential amendments and adjustments to procedures will be communicated to you by various means, including the newsletter.

\* \*\*\* \*\* \*

Today an organisation's website is its shop window. The present AMERC website was designed some time ago for an organisation that has been superseded and in any event is about to change again. From that point of view it needs to be revised. But as we all know with the major changes that have taken place in the quality of presentations, an organisation will be judged on this as much as on the content. So it is time for change. The Executive Committee has decided to run a prize competition amongst students for redesign of the website and you will have details in due course. In the meantime you could be giving this some thought. (I am hoping to put the NEWS on the website in PDF format, so wish me luck!)

\* \*\*\* \*\* \*

Christmas seems a long way off as I write although others on the distaff side tell me this is not so. Whoever is right this is my last opportunity to wish you a very Happy Christmas and to send you the hope for the best of New Years. Oh, and if Santa brings you a pc or even just a pen how about making a Resolution that you will send me an article? I don't want to be looking glumly out of the window too often in 2007.

***Brian Cotton***

## ***A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN***

### ***COMMITTEE AND BOARD STRUCTURE***

*We lead with a statement from the Association Chairman, Mike Webster, setting out new organisational arrangements. Mike also reminds us that the Association has a project fund which will be used for revisions and improvements to the website.*

During the hectic days when GMDSS was being introduced, the Maritime and Electronic and Communications Boards of AMERC were set up to ease the workload of the Executive Committee. Following the retirement of a number of its active members, the Electronic and Communications Board has ceased meeting. The Maritime Board has continued to meet, but has recently met on the same day and at the same venue as the Executive Committee. This has produced more rapid decision processes for matters where the Maritime Board has needed Executive Committee approval. It has also resulted in considerable savings for the AMERC Budget.

The majority of the Executive Committee's recent business has been fed from the Maritime Board and has resulted in almost identical agenda for the Maritime Board and Executive Committee. The Executive Committee, recognising this duplication of effort and possible blurring of roles between the Maritime Board and Executive Committee, has decided to disband the Maritime Board and replace it with an open session of the Executive Committee.

In future the Executive Committee will hold two sessions. The first will be a closed session consisting only of the elected members and officers of the Association. This session will continue to discuss the business of the Association including financial matters. The second session will be an open session, to which the present members of the Maritime Board will be invited to join the members of the Executive Committee. During this session the Association's Maritime business will be discussed.

This new structure will require modification of a number of the association's procedures, particularly for quality assurance. These new procedures will be discussed at the first open session of the Executive Committee and when agreed will be published in a revised version of the handbook. It is envisaged that the new procedures will lead to a more active role for members of the examiners' panel, particularly when breaches of quality assurance procedures have to be considered.

Although the Electronics and Communications Board has also been disbanded, the Executive Committee would like to remind members that the Association should still be active in this area and if anyone has any projects or other ideas requiring support, to forward them to the Executive Committee via the Hon. Sec. As an example of such a project, the Executive Committee has agreed to fund a competition for students wishing to take on the revision of the Association's website as a project. There will be a £500 first prize and £250 runner up prize. The competition will be open to any student studying at an AMERC centre and full details will be published shortly.

***Mike Webster***  
***Chairman, AMERC Executive Committee***

# MARITIME BOARD

*The final meeting of the Maritime Board was held at the NAC in Kendal in late September. We reproduce below for your attention or interest some of the matters that were dealt with.*

## COURSE APPROVALS

The MCA will continue to provide Course Approval Certificates on receipt of confirmation of process by AMERC. In this the Executive Committee relies upon the Chief Examiner's reports of inspections and audits of the examination processes. As a matter of courtesy, Centres should advise the local MCA Office and its Surveyor of the Chief Examiner's visit.

Following such advice to one of the Offices a local Surveyor asked the Chief Examiner whether he could sit in on the GMDSS examinations. The request was agreed to. However, there is an expectation that the local Surveyor would not make such a request. AMERC acts under MCA approved devolved arrangements in the matter of Course Approvals.

## CD ROMS & EXAMINATIONS

The Chief Examiner advised the meeting that the Examiner's Panel had agreed CD ROM versions of the examination papers and that production was in hand.

## ENEM

Twenty-one ENEM and Radio Maintenance Examinations are scheduled in the period to July 2007. Specific details will appear in due course

## OFCOM

Following an Ofcom inspection at the Aberdeen REC, a Licence was refused on the grounds that live transmissions were not permitted. AMERC has written to Ofcom to explain why this is inappropriate, supporting Aberdeen's appeal.

## MNTB

Phil Davies now represents AMERC on the MNTB Technical Committee. He told the Board that he had given the MNTB revisions for the GOC approval documentation. He is about to undertake a similar process with the ROC.

Phil Davies also reported that a major cruise company has asked the Board to grant recognition of its ETO training record.

## REVALIDATION

To retain validity of an STCW '95 GMDSS Certificate, a holder has to meet the MCA sea time requirement of at least one year out of the past five. If this is not the case then revalidation has to be secured by taking the whole examination again. There is no formal requirement for such a candidate to take a relevant course. The MCA recommends that a course should be undertaken in the majority of cases and the college would advise on that.

This was first reported in Issue 19 (page six) published in October 2005.

## MARITIME BOARD (2)

### LRC

*If your institution conducts LRC examinations, you will need to note that a modification has been agreed by the Maritime Board. Specifically it is to allow Class-E DSC controllers to be used for the examination. You will find details through the normal channels.*

### PIRACY ALERT

Following discussion at AGM and in other places Phil Davies raised the matter of using DSC Alerting in the event of attack by pirates. It was agreed that Phil would raise awareness of the issues involved by writing a paper for AMERC NEWS. Members are urged to read Phil's paper which appears on page nine of this Issue. The Association's Executive Committee will take a policy decision on this matter at its December meeting and your input is requested.

### TRANSAS SIMULATOR

At the meeting of the Maritime Board, Transas Ltd. gave a Powerpoint demonstration of the company's GMDSS Tutor package including the Fleet 77 facility. Its functionality and relevance to GMDSS training was sufficient to persuade the Executive Committee that the package should be approved by the Association. Members should know that the TGS4000 of which the F77 Simulator forms a part already has AMERC approval.

Billy Bean of Transas Ltd. has written a description of the Tutor Package and this appears on page six of this Issue. AMERC has negotiated for its Members a 10% discount on the company's purchase price and details appear at the end of the article.

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## GMDSS EXAMINATION STATISTICS

The NAC has provided the following GMDSS Examination Statistics for the period 01 April 2006 to 30 June 2006.

EXAMINATION	ENTERED	PASSED
UK GOC	254	213
ALL GOC	470	395
UK ROC	69	60
ALL ROC	85	76
LRC	119	118

# THE TRANSAS GMDSS TUTOR

*At the last Maritime Board meeting in Kendal, Billy Bean and Ron Toghill of Transas Ltd gave a demonstration of their GMDSS Tutor Package incorporating Fleet 77. The complete package is a unique Computer Based Training product designed for a single PC/laptop. It incorporates GOC and ROC facilities together with a variety of simulation for training purposes*

*The Maritime Board was impressed with the facilities demonstrated and AMERC NEWS has arranged for Billy to provide a summary of the features of the package. We suggest you read his article below and then go to the box at the end to see the discount offer Transas has kindly made to AMERC members.*

Transas Radio Communication simulators based on PCs, software and hardware facilities have been developed for training and examining ship specialists following courses for the General Operator's Certificate (GOC) or Restricted Operator's Certificate (ROC). The program implemented in the full mission simulator is in full compliance with IMO Resolution A.703 (17) and the latest requirements of the STCW Convention. It ensures correct and efficient operation of all the GMDSS equipment subsystems in the scope specified in IMO Model Course 1.25.

Among the Tutor's capabilities can be found:

- Control of all the GMDSS radio station instruments;
- Imitation of radio communication in the telex and DSC modes taking into account radio wave propagation;
- Self education program (Tutor);
- Running of the prepared scenarios;
- Built in HELP system on all the instruments;
- Reference materials on the GMDSS theory and some ITU publications;
- Printing of received information on both simulated and connected external printers;
- Availability of an electronic chart with a coast station database and indication of the current ship position;
- Information on the GMDSS Sea Areas and SAR on an electronic chart;
- Availability to make a rough estimate of the radio wave propagation in the selected frequency band;
- Connection of active external loudspeakers.

Tutor equipments include (but not limited to):

- VHF Radio Station with DSC SAILOR RT4822
- MF/HF Radiotelex Terminal SAILOR Program4000
- VHF Radio Station SAILOR RT2048

# THE TRANSAS GMDSS TUTOR

- MF/HF DSC Modem and Distress Frequency Scanning Receiver SAILOR RM2150
- MF/HF DSC and Telex Modem, Scanning Receiver and Telex Terminal SAILOR RM2151/H2098B
- INMARSAT-B Ship Earth Station SAILOR SP4400
- INMARSAT-C Ship Earth Station with EGC Receiver SAILOR H2095B
- INMARSAT Fleet 77 Ship Earth Station T&T TT-3084A
- Radar (for basic operation and SART presentation)
- MF/HF Radio Station with DSC SAILOR HC4500
- DSC Modem with Channel 70 Receiver SAILOR RM2042
- MF/HF Radio Station SAILOR RE2100
- Watch Receiver 2182 kHz SAILOR R501
- NAVTEX Receiver NX-700 (FURUNO)
- NAVTEX Receiver NT900 (JMC)
- INMARSAT-A Ship Earth Station JUE-45 (JRC)
- COSPAS-SARSAT System EPIRB E3 (McMurdo)
- COSPAS-SARSAT System EPIRB RT-260M (Graseby Nova)
- Inmarsat-E EPIRB "Global-3" (Navtec GmbH)
- Radar Transponder RT9 (McMurdo)
- Portable VHF Radio Station SAILOR SP3110
- GPS Receiver Furuno GP-90
- Direction Finder

*Interested parties should contact Billy Bean, The Transas Simulation Sales Manager on +44 (0) 2392 674000 or +44 (0) 07711 and 071841 or by using the email address [billy.bean@transas.com](mailto:billy.bean@transas.com). Billy will be happy to answer any questions you may have.*

## *ASSOCIATION MEMBERS TO NOTE*

**AMERC approves this GMDSS Tutor Package. It is part of the TGS4000 system which already carries the Association's endorsement.**

**Transas offers a 10% discount on all GMDSS products to Full and Associate Members of AMERC. This results in the TGS Tutor retailing at £360.00 for these Members.**

## M-NOTICES

*The following M-Notices appear to have some applicability to Members. In a new departure we have put the date of publication which we hope will be helpful. The full lists of current M-notices appear on the MCA website ([www.mcga.gov.uk](http://www.mcga.gov.uk)) to which reference should be made from time to time.*

### MIN 235 (M+F) SAFE PRACTICES

This Note draws attention to changes to the Safe Working Practices codes in the MS Regulations 1998, collectively known as Amendment 06. It includes references to risk assessment and safety signage

(April 2006)

### MGN 8 (M) TRAINING SCHEMES

This Note gives information and guidance on education and training schemes for seafarers wishing to gain certificates of competency using the VQ or traditional examination routes. It cross-references to other relevant Marine Guidance Notes dealing with certification and training.

### MGN 324 (M+F) VHF & AIS

An important Note. It specifies that VHF must be used in accordance with the ITU Regulations. Although VHF maybe used in actions to avoid collision, the relevant Colregs must be kept firmly in mind. There is no provision in the Colregs for the use of AIS and so decisions must be taken in accordance with visual and radar information.

(June 2006)

### MGN 330 (M+F) AERIAL LEAD-INS

This Notice warns of the dangers to personnel from exposed lead-ins when transmissions are being made. It describes measures to reduce those risks. It contains no surprises for AMERC Members but provides useful teaching material.

(Sept 2006)

### MGN 331 (M+F) USE OF EQUIPMENT

This Note provides information on new work equipment regulations that are about to come into force. It provides details of requirements for maintenance, records, surveys and more. It has some applicability to radio-electronics installations.

(September 2006)

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### AFRICAN DEVELOPMENTS

We reported in Issue 19 (October 2005) on plans to extend the GMDSS network in Africa. An MRCC has now been opened in Mombasa with another in Capetown about to come on stream. MRSC are being established in Dar-es-Salaam and the Seychelles.

We hear that MRSC are to be established on the West African coast.



# SHIP SECURITY

A Discussion Paper by Phil Davies

Lairdside Maritime Centre.

*Readers of the professional press will be aware of articles and correspondence regarding the use of DSC Alerting when piracy is threatened or under way. As a contribution to the debate, Phil Davies of the Lairdside Maritime Centre has prepared the following discussion paper. We do urge you to respond to what Phil says. The matter will be on the agenda of the Executive Committee in December when an Association policy position will be determined. In other words your opinions will count.*

Following the introduction of the ISPS Code there has been some debate in certain quarters regarding the use of Ship Security Alert Systems and the existing GMDSS System when a vessel is at the centre of a security incident. This debate has centred on the appropriateness of using a Piracy Designation DSC Alert and the potential risks to responding vessels. I would hope in this paper to dispel some myths.

## BACKGROUND

On 1st July, 2004 the International Ship and Port Facility Code (ISPS) was introduced for SOLAS compliant vessels over 500 gt on international trades. SOLAS Chapter XI-2 and the Code had many implications for the world's shipping in terms of Security. Of interest to AMERC members was the introduction of the Ship Security Alert System (SSAS) which is required under Regulation 6 of SOLAS Chapter XI-2. The provision of SSAS on board ships was phased, but by 1st July, 2007 all required ships must be so fitted.

Regulation 6 describes the requirements of the SSAS. Two key features are that the Alert is sent covertly to a competent authority and that there are two or more activation points on board, one being on the navigating bridge. The purpose of an SSAS is to "initiate and transmit a ship-to-shore security alert to a competent authority designated by the administration, which in the circumstances may include the company". This covert Alert will identify the ship, its location and indicate that the security of the ship is under threat or has been compromised".

Further, SOLAS XI-2 Regulation 1.13 defines a Security Incident as; "any suspicious act or circumstance threatening the security of a ship, including a mobile offshore drilling unit and a high speed craft, or of a port facility or of any ship/port interface or of any ship-to-ship activity". This may pose a dilemma for ships staff in determining which system to use if the vessel suspects it is the subject of an attack, and distinguishing as to whether it is pirates, armed robbers or a major terrorist incident.

## APPROPRIATE USE OF GMDSS AND SSAS

For UK vessels, the Transport Security & Contingencies Directorate (TRANSEC), through the Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA) has published advice on Measures to counter Piracy, Armed Robbery and other Acts of Violence against merchant Shipping in MGN298.

## SHIP SECURITY

Appendix 3 of, MGN298 gives guidance in the use of Ships Communications. It rightly recommends that the Officer of the Watch has practised radio operational procedures, and further recommends the use of the Piracy Designator on DSC. The Appendix in its paragraph A3.8 states: "Should an attack occur and, in the opinion of the Master, the ship or crew are in grave and imminent danger requiring immediate assistance, the Master should immediately authorise the broadcast of a distress message...".

As the use of DSC is part of an overt system (i.e. a broadcast) two questions are posed:

*Will the potential attackers respond in a hostile way given that they may be monitoring the broadcast?*

*How should a vessel receiving a Piracy Distress DSC Alert respond?*

It is this latter question which has become the subject of some discussion. It has been suggested by some that a ship receiving a Piracy Distress alert should not respond and proceed, for to do so would put the responding vessel at risk and that it would be better if the Piracy Designation were removed and the SSAS used. This suggestion is inappropriate for a number of reasons. Firstly the SSAS is not designed for an immediate response; the concept is to alert the authorities that a security incident is taking place. This will involve a number of security authorities and potentially cross government co-operation.

Secondly, the Master of a ship who believes that his ship and crew are in immediate danger has an obligation to summon assistance. If the reason for this belief is a likely Piracy attack, then it is appropriate that other vessels and RCCs are aware of this fact.

As to the risks posed to responding vessels, this has to be at the discretion of the Master(s) of the responding vessel(s). SOLAS V Regulation 33, places an obligation on the Master of a ship receiving a distress signal and who is in a position to provide assistance to proceed with all speed to assist. However this Regulation provides the Master of the receiving station some protection if in the special circumstances of the case he considers it unreasonable to proceed. A piracy attack may be just one such special circumstance. SOLAS XI-2 Regulation 8(2) further protects a Master of a receiving ship as it clearly states: "If in the professional judgement of the Master, a conflict between any safety and security requirements applicable to the ship arises during its operations, the Master shall give effect to those requirements necessary to maintain the safety of the ship".

An assumption is made here that when a vessel is the subject of a Piracy attack, other vessels approaching the scene would be putting themselves at risk. This is possible, but conversely other ships proceeding to the scene may well act as a deterrent.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it remains the case that a Piracy Designation will be maintained in the GMDSS System and should be used appropriately. The circumstances of an individual case must always be considered and common sense applied. The guidance given in MGN298 should be fully considered and applied, recalling that the responding RCC is there to offer advice to Masters who are in doubt.

# WORLD RADIOCOMMUNICATION CONFERENCE 2007

## Kim Fisher's Update on Preparations

*From time to time matters of importance to AMERC and maritime communications in general come on the ITU Agenda. Kim Fisher faithfully provides AMERC NEWS with a summary of what is on the horizon at that organisation and we are very much in his debt for this. The following article has been provided by Kim and it gives us early warning of some interesting and important developments that will merit our attention.*

The dates for the 2007 World Radiocommunication Conference have now been agreed as 22 October to 16 November 2007 and the Conference will be held in Geneva. WRC 2007, as it is being called, will be significant as it will be the last conference that plans to have the topic of GMDSS procedures on its agenda. WRC 2007 therefore has to decide what to do with the pre-GMDSS procedures which are currently in Appendix 13 of the Radio Regulations.

Preparations for WRCs are in two stages. Administrations (often through regional groupings such as CEPT) input proposals to the Conference but the Conference is preceded by a Conference Preparatory Meeting (CPM) which produces a report giving the technical bases for the agenda items. The CPM report suggests methods to satisfy the agenda items which are technically correct and practicable.

The CPM will meet from 19 February to 2 March 2007 in Geneva. The draft text for the report has now been completed following meetings of the ITU-R Working Parties in September.

The agenda item concerning the GMDSS is agenda item 1.14. The proposals that have been developed are:

- To suppress Appendix 13 whilst transferring the VHF radiotelephony procedures into chapter VII and the radiotelephony procedures for 2182 kHz into a new Resolution for use by Administrations having domestic requirements for distress communications with non-SOLAS vessels outside of VHF coverage areas.
- To substantially revise Article 30 (General provisions), Article 31 (Frequencies for the GMDSS), Article 32 (Distress communications) and Article 33 (Urgency and Safety communications) of chapter VII.

# WORLD RADIOCOMMUNICATION CONFERENCE 2007

- To revise Article 5 (Frequency allocations) with a view to providing protection for VHF channel 70.
- To retain arrangements for some coast station watch on VHF channel 16 in Resolution 331.
- To revise Appendix 16 (Documents on board ships) to update the requirements to meet operational needs.
- To revise Appendix 18 (Table of VHF frequencies) to add further flexibility of the use of simplex channels, 12.5 kHz channelling and wideband channelling.
- To make regulatory changes as a consequence of the discontinuation of the 121.5 MHz satellite alerting function of EPIRBs from 1 February 2009 and the discontinuation of the Inmarsat-E EPIRB service from 1 December 2006.

There are two further agenda items of interest. Agenda item 1.13 deals with HF issues. The proposals here are to facilitate the introduction of maritime HF e-mail services by revising Appendix 17 (HF frequencies and channelling) to allow re-use of the under-used voice and Morse channels whilst retaining enough NBDP for SOLAS requirements and transmission of maritime safety information. This agenda item requires more work as broadcasters are making a case for more spectrum to be used for HF broadcasting.

Agenda item 1.16 deals with MMSIs for equipment other than shipborne mobile equipment. The proposals here are to modify Article 19 (Identification of stations) to introduce new sub-sets of MMSI for aircraft, Aids to Navigation and daughter craft.

This year incidentally marks the 100th anniversary of the Radio Regulations. In 1906, the first International Radiotelegraph Conference gathered 29 maritime states in Berlin to sign the “International Radiotelegraph Convention” establishing the principle of compulsory intercommunication between vessels at sea and the land. The annex to that Convention contained the first regulations governing wireless telegraphy which have since been expanded and revised by numerous radio conferences and are now known as the Radio Regulations. The anniversary was celebrated at the ITU on October 30th.

**Kim has made the ITU base documents available for AMERC Members. You can access them from the website or on application to the Editor of AMERC NEWS.**

## MARITIME MISCELLANY

### STAFFING UK SHIPS

The Department for Transport has published its UK Seafarers Analysis 2005. It shows that the number of UK seafarers employed at sea fell by 4% last year and the number of new entrant officers by 11%. The raw figures for new entrants are respectively 26500 and 610. Interestingly the number of UK technical officers has increased by 54% since 2002.

Commentators point to the need for new staff and suggest that manning difficulties will worsen. As many as 58% of those at sea are over forty-five years of age. Concerns about the effect on shipping and its shore services and functions can be seen in the professional press. The number of ships registered under the UK flag rose from 187 in 2000 to 825 last year.

The MNTB has launched a new website for those contemplating a career at sea:

[www.careersatsea.org](http://www.careersatsea.org)

### VETERAN'S BADGE

The Ministry of Defence has produced a new veteran's badge intended to honour contributions made by British merchant seafarers. The badge is similar to the Armed Forces' Veteran's Badge of which 250,000 have been issued but it has the red ensign engraved on the back. There are presently some 5,000 applications. It can be claimed by British merchant seafarers who served up to the end of 1959 supporting the military.

Your Editor has further details of the criteria and how to claim.

### LONG RANGE TRACKING

Under the 2008 SOLAS requirements, ships of more than 300 gt trading in international waters will be required to transmit their identity, location and date and time to all those authorised to receive such information. There is to be no interface with the AIS because of confidentiality concerns. The information will be shared for SAR and security purposes. You will find articles in the professional press referring to this system as LRIT.

### UK AIS

It has been announced that the UK Automatic Identification System (AIS) for monitoring coastal shipping is now fully operational. It is installed at the RCCs and at a number of remote sites. There is also a service management site and training centre.

### WARSASH

The maritime facilities and dedicated campus at Southampton Solent University have been renamed as the Warsash Maritime Academy. This is part of the rebranding of what was Southampton Institute.

### NEW RADAR SYSTEM

Kelvin Hughes has just announced an innovative new radar which does away with the familiar magnetron and its high voltage modulator. The system is based on a Doppler solid state transreceiver and uses a monostatic pulse.

# HERE & THERE

## JAMMER JAILED

A radio jammer in the USA has been jailed for seven years and fined more than \$15000. He was found to have caused malicious interference to US Coastguard SAR operations among other misdemeanours. And on the other side of the Atlantic, a youth in Oban was sentenced to community service following a hoax call to the Clyde Coastguard.

## USB BATTERY

Here is an interesting idea – an NiMH battery that fits into a USB socket for recharging. As it only draws power it does not interfere with a PC operating system. The launch of the AAA battery is expected soon with other types to follow.

## TIME SIGNALS

From April 2007 the National Physical Laboratory's Radio Frequency Time Signal Service will be provided by an VT Communications. Transmissions will be made from its transmitter at Anthorn in Cumbria. This would account for recent interruptions to the MSF signal on 60 kHz.

## RAIL BROADBAND

Ofcom is to make available licences for systems of broadband access from railway trains by satellite. SES on the trains will be able to provide faster and more reliable access than the current wi-fi systems.

## TV SWITCHOVER

AMERC participated in the devising of networked training schemes for television aerial installers. It is interesting to see that work has begun on the first transmitter sites ahead of the planned switchover. A 337m high mast is being installed in Cumbria and it will be the third tallest structure in the UK. Paired with new equipment at Selkirk it will serve the Border region when it switches to digital television in 2008.

## SPECTRUM AUCTION

Ofcom has published proposals for release of radio spectrum that could be used for broadband and broadcast services. It intends to auction licences for frequencies in the 10, 28 and 32 GHz bands in about a year's time. You can find details on the Ofcom website.

[www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk)

## TECHNICAL UPDATES

Steve Brett has been busy for us again with technical updates. He has produced some stripboard projects which feature in an annex to this Issue and on the website. In future editions of AMERC NEWS, Steve will be dealing with modern practices such as digital replacements for single sideband transmissions.

## BACK PAGE

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### **WORLD MARITIME UNIVERSITY**

It has been sad to hear of the death in May of Günther Zade, Vice Rector of the World Maritime University at Malmö in Sweden. I remember meeting Günther at the University, spending an interesting afternoon with him and his colleagues. I came away impressed with his views on marine radio and how disposed he was to our profession.

On a happier note I see that Professor Malek Pourzanjani is leaving the World Maritime University to take up the post of Principal at the Australian Maritime College. Malek was Dean of Maritime Studies at Southampton Institute and was a highly respected colleague of David Heffer and myself.

### **FORT PERCH ROCK MUSEUM**

The Round Tower at Fort Perch Rock on the Mersey houses the Liverpool Marine Radio & Electronics Society's marine radio exhibition. It was formally opened in October at a Ceremony performed by Captain Robin Woodall, onetime master of the QE2. The main exhibit is a replica of the Wireless Room of the Isle of Man Steam Packet vessel "Lady of Mann" and includes some of her equipment. Society member Bill Harrison, onetime Radio Officer of the "Lady," designed the exhibits. The Fort, privately owned but open to the public, has a number of historical displays in other rooms. I was pleased to be invited to the Ceremony and will be happy to provide details of the exhibits. The Fort by the way had interesting type testing when first built. The strength of its sandstone walls were tested by firing of cannonballs at it! The scars are still there today.

### **AGM - EARLY ADVICE**

The Executive Committee has decided that the 2007 AGM will be held in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and further details will be communicated to you subsequently.

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This Newsletter duals as Circular 227. 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 copies to your colleagues.***

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

***Brian Cotton, Editor.***

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