

# AMERC NEWS

Incorporates Circular 232

January 2008

ISSUE TWENTY-SIX - READ INSIDE

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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

It is rare to roll straight from one Editorial to the next as we do today. It is helped by the fact that this Issue follows quickly on the last to allow for early advice of various matters. But even if we were rather further down the calendar, last Issue's theme 'change of faces, change of places' would have to continue.

We are making preparations for the AGM to be held this year in Italy, near to AMERC Members TST Taranto and THESI. This is something of a return to the principle of moving the venue around the Membership and Eric will be sending out the AGM invitations and details by direct mailing in February. We cannot follow the Singaporean suggestion of hiring one of Mr. Boeing's aeroplanes but Eric's mailings will give hints and tips on how to get to the venue.

This year the questions and formats for the 2009/2010 Examination Series will be decided and so it is vital that every Centre is represented at the AGM and Panel. As you can see inside, Eric is expecting to have proposals back to him no later than 25 April. This is a critical year for the GMDSS training and certification processes. There are serious matters to consider – such as how the technologies will drive the syllabus; scenario based OPT examinations and changes to SOLAS and Regulations papers and formats. All these, if adopted, will affect the delivery of courses and the conduct of examinations, so it will be vital for Members to engage in the debate.

In this Issue we welcome Keith Watkins as Deputy Chief Examiner and Francis Rodrigues as the Assistant Chief Examiner (Overseas) and in thanking them for taking on these roles to wish them every success. The article on page 5 tells you something of what those roles are and about the individuals on page 6.

At the same time we welcome Jackie King her role as the AMERC NAC Coordinator and you can read something about her on that same page. We met Jackie when she attended the last AMERC Maritime Consultancy Group meeting in December. This was Sue Jones' last meeting with us and we were able to combine paying tribute to Sue with expressing our good wishes to Jackie for her new role.

The Executive Committee has an interesting proposal for members to attend the Executive Committee or Maritime Consultancy Group to see more of the work of the Association in action. You can do this on the basis of curiosity or with a view to making up your mind whether you want to take part. This is an innovative idea of the Executive Committee and one that deserves to be taken seriously.

Old friends of the Association have come back onto the scene with this Issue. Kim Fisher has kindly volunteered another interesting article on the World Radiocommunication Conference 2007. It has been good to chat over old times and new developments with Keith Waudby and David Heffer.

*Brian Cotton*

## AGM 2008 EARLY ADVICE

The Association's Annual General Meeting will be held in Italy on 21 and 22 May 2008, with departure on the 23rd. The venue will be the Hotel San Michele, Via Carella 9, in Martina Franca, Puglia.

In February, you will be receiving a letter, details and a booking form from Eric Lamb. In the meantime Eric advises:

- The nearest airports to Martina Franca are Brindisi and Bari
- It is hoped that the hotel will arrange courtesy transport
- There are direct flights from many UK airports
- Flights from overseas are probably best to Rome or Milan with connecting flights to Brindisi and Bari
- As usual members and guests will be able to stay longer at their own expense.

You can take an early peek at the hotel on: [www.parkhotelsm.it](http://www.parkhotelsm.it).

The statutory advice will be published as a separate AMERC Circular by the Hon. Secretary in due course.

## EXAMINERS' PANEL 2008 ACTIONS REQUIRED

The day selected for the AGM will also see the Examiners' Panel being held. This Panel will determine the content of the 2009/2010 series of examination papers and all Centres are expected to send representatives.

REC Coordinators are required to call meetings of their GMDSS examiners without delay. The agendas for the meetings should be drawn up to discuss and agree proposed questions and formats for the 2009/2010 Examination Series. They will be needed for the GOC, ROC and LRC Examinations.

Special attention will be given to the format of the LRC Examination at this year's Panel.

REC Coordinators are to send proposals to Eric Lamb by **25 April 2008 at the latest.**

## MARITIME CONSULTANCY GROUP (MCG)

*The MCG met in Kendal in late December and considered its usual mix of operational matters. Here is a report of some of those discussed at the meeting which may merit your attention or action*

### EXAMINERS' HANDBOOK

Revisions to the GMDSS Examiners' Handbook have now been completed and it is currently being examined by members of the Maritime Consultancy Group. The final version will be available at the AGM and your copy will be given to you as in the form of a CD.

The Association's thanks go to Willie Williamson and Phil Davies of the Lairdsie Maritime Centre for their many hours of work in this exercise.

### SAT-B & F77 OPT EXAMINATION

The Examiners' Panel will have opportunity to discuss the use of Sat-B and Fleet 77 methods and procedures in the OPT Examinations

The Maritime Consultancy Group foresees no problems for the use of the Transas Tutor with the system of choice.

### AMERC WEBSITE

Development of the new website is nearing completion and commercial web hosting for the arrangement has now been obtained.

The current website has been hosted for many years by City College, Plymouth (formerly Plymouth College of FE), an arrangement that has served us well. We are grateful to staff there for their assistance and cooperation.

### SCENARIO BASED OPT

A further trial has been held at TS Rahaman and another will be taking place at South Tyneside College. A full report is expected to be presented during the AGM proceedings.

### NEW EXAMINER

Nicolo Bovini has successfully completed his probationary period as GMDSS Examiner at TST Taranto. We congratulate Nicolo and welcome him to the ranks of the Examiners.

### CONVERSION OF RESTRICTED R/T TO LRC TO BE DISCONTINUED

Members will be aware that holders of a Restricted R/T Certificate may qualify for the issue of an LRC if they successfully complete the DSC module. This facility is to be withdrawn on 01 January 2009.

## ROLES OF THE CHIEF EXAMINER, DEPUTY AND ASSISTANT

*Given the increased amount of work for the Chief Examiner, the Association has established and now filled the posts of Deputy Chief Examiner and Assistant Chief Examiner (Overseas) – see page 6 of this Issue. It is worth reminding ourselves of their duties.*

In paragraph 2.4.5, The Examiners' Handbook describes a framework for the Chief Examiner, the Deputy Chief Examiner and the Assistant Chief Examiner (Overseas). In essence it says:

The Chief Examiner is responsible to the Executive Committee for the question bank and overseeing the maintenance of common examination standards amongst REC. The Deputy and the Assistant Chief Examiner (Overseas) are to assist the Chief Examiner in the monitoring of examination standards and procedures in all examinations for which AMERC has responsibility.

The Chief, Deputy and Assistant Examiners will visit each Examination Centre on a scheduled, rotational basis. They will also, if instructed by the AMERC Executive Committee, conduct Centre visits to investigate anomalies or complaints regarding the conduct of examinations.

The Chief Examiner, with the agreement of the Executive Committee Chairman or Honorary Secretary, has the authority to suspend an examiner with immediate effect if there has been a failure to adhere to examination standards.

Where a candidate has lodged an appeal based on the standard, conduct or result of an examination, the Chief Examiner or the Deputy will be required to conduct an investigation and take remedial action if that is appropriate. A report of the appeal and the ensuing action will be made to the Executive Committee and the Maritime Consultation Group.

A summary of the key tasks of the Deputy and Assistant are:

- Reviewing the performance of the Courses and Examinations in a Regional Examination Centres, Outreach and Examination Centres overseas.
- Providing technical support to new and existing Centres where there have been Quality Assurance issues and an action plan is being implemented.
- Running the Chief Examiner's 'Course for New Examiners' as required.
- Providing a report to the Chief Examiner following a visit to a Centre.
- Representing AMERC at meetings and on committees.

The Deputy Chief Examiner and the Assistant Chief Examiner (Overseas) will both assist the Chief Examiner with the Annual Scripts Survey.

Both these posts are subject to annual renewal at the Examiners' Panel of the AGM. With these appointments being so recent, exceptionally they will not be open to competition until the 2009 Examiners' Panel

## WELCOMES

### DEPUTY CHIEF EXAMINER *KEITH WATKINS*

This post has now been filled by Keith Watkins.

Keith currently lectures in the Marine School of the Faculty of Marine and Mechanical Engineering at South Tyneside College and is a GMDSS Examiner. Keith has had a long experience in marine radio and had been at various times a radio officer, operations manager at Portishead Radio and an MCA Radio Surveyor.

Keith says 'I am looking forward to commencing this new challenge and to working more closely with AMERC personnel.'

### ASSISTANT CHIEF EXAMINER (OVERSEAS) *FRANCIS RODRIGUES*

This post has now been filled by Francis Rodrigues.

Francis is the GMDSS Training Coordinator in the Department of Electronics and Telecommunications at the Training Ship (T.S.) Rahaman. This establishment is at Mumbai in India.

Francis has been at T.S. Rahaman since it started the AMERC GMDSS Course in 1997. He has been a GMDSS examiner since then and for the vast majority of his time there he has been the Training Coordinator.

Francis says 'I look forward to my association with AMERC Centres in maintaining the high Quality Assurance standards of AMERC pertaining to training and examinations.'

### NAC MANAGER *JACKIE HOBBS*

Jackie King has replaced Sue Jones.

Jackie joins us after working for a photographic paper manufacturer for twenty-one years.

Jackie says that she is: 'looking forward to the challenge of maintaining the high standards set by her predecessor at NAC and working with all members of AMERC and with the MCA who have been so helpful and patient whilst she settles into her new rôle.'

**Jackie's contact details are; TF: +44 (0) 1539 742 745, Fax: +44 (0) 1539 742 746, email: [amerc\\_nac@wraycastle.com](mailto:amerc_nac@wraycastle.com)**

## MARITIME COMMUNICATIONS NEWS

### AIS

We have made many references to AIS over the past two years taking inputs from various sources. We hear now that the MCA has implemented the third phase of the UK AIS Network to give enhanced functionality. You can read about this in various maritime and technical publications which are available using an Internet search.

If you are looking for a good readable account of AIS systems and methods you could head for the US Coastguard (USCG) site and its Navigation Center pages ([www.navcen.uscg.gov](http://www.navcen.uscg.gov)). If you have had trouble accessing the USCG site in the past you will find it much easier to use today.

### IMO LRIT REGULATIONS

New SOLAS regulations for long range identification and tracking of ships (LRIT) came into force on 01 January 2008. The IMO rules allow SOLAS contracting governments only one year to set up and test LRIT systems. Ship operators have been given the same amount of time to fit compatible equipment or upgrade existing installations.

The Regulation in SOLAS Chapter V, Safety of Navigation, introduces LRIT as a mandatory requirement for ships on international voyages, including passenger ships, cargo ships of 300 gt or more, mobile offshore drilling units and high speed craft.

Ships constructed on or after 31 December 2008 must be fitted with a system to automatically transmit ship identity, its position in latitude and longitude and the date and time of the provided position.

Ships constructed before 31 December 2008 and certified for operations in Sea Areas A1 and A2 or A1, A2 and A3 must be fitted with the equipment not later than the first radio installation survey after 31 December 2008. Ships constructed before 31 December 2008 and certified for operations in Sea Areas A1, A2, A3 and A4 must comply not later than the first radio installation survey after 01 July 2009. They must comply earlier if they operate within sea areas A2 and A3.

Ships operating in Sea Area A1 and fitted with AIS will be exempt from the requirement to transmit LRIT information.

Full details are available from the IMO website: [www.imo.org](http://www.imo.org).

### M-NOTICES

As we go to press we can find no MCGA M-Notices of direct relevance to GMDSS and radiocommunications. Monitoring the MCA site ([www.mcga.org](http://www.mcga.org)) for any new Notices between AMERC NEWS Issues is recommended.

## WORLD RADIOCOMMUNICATION CONFERENCE 2007

### Kim Fisher's Update on the Outcomes

*As regular readers of AMERC NEWS know, Kim Fisher has been sending us reports of the developing agenda for the ITU World Radiocommunication Conference scheduled for 2007. In his latest despatch, Kim writes to tell us about the relevant outcomes of the Conference which was held in the latter part of 2007.*

WRC-07 ran for four weeks between 22 October and 16 November 2007 in Geneva. There were some 3000 registered delegates, 600 Conference documents producing 500 pages of Final Acts for a budget of £2.5m. The Conference had been preceded by a Conference Preparatory Meeting (CPM) which had produced the technical bases for the Conference in the CPM Report which was available as a Conference document.

The outcome of the Conference was much in line with the preparation that had been made in the CPM which in turn had derived from the work of an IMO/ITU joint experts group.

It was agreed to delete Appendix 13 which describes the distress and safety communications for non-GMDSS use. This includes the operational procedures using Morse on 500 kHz and telephony on 2 182 kHz, the HF bands and VHF channel 16. It was agreed that the VHF channel 16 procedures should be moved into Chapter VII (Distress and Safety communications) but that there was no need to retain the other procedures, with the possible exception of those for 2 182 kHz which may be still in use in some parts of the world. These were moved into a new Resolution.

### Chapter VII

Chapter VII which comprises Articles 30 to 34 was extensively revised. Article 30 which contains the general provisions was revised to reflect the above in its pre-ambule and to add a permission enabling search and rescue aircraft to use VHF channel 70 (DSC) and the AIS channels.

Article 31 which contains the frequencies for the GMDSS (by reference to Appendix 15) and watchkeeping was modified to remove the previous requirement to maintain a watch, where practicable, on VHF channel 13 and replace it with a similar requirement for VHF channel 16. This then aligns with current IMO requirements. Appendix 15 was expanded to include the AIS frequencies which are now called up for the SOLAS AIS-SART.

Article 32 which contained the operational procedures for distress and safety communications in the GMDSS was extensively modified. Firstly the title of the article was changed to remove "safety" as this is considered in Article 33. Definitions were added for what is meant by a distress alert (i.e. by DSC) and a distress call (i.e. by voice). Thenceforth in general it was necessary in the Chapter to refer to "alert and call". The sections dealing with the transmission of alerts, relays and



## WORLD RADIOCOMMUNICATION CONFERENCE 2007 (2)

acknowledgements were expanded to include the voice procedures for ships not equipped with DSC which may also be used additionally by ships with DSC. The optional alternative of using the telegraph acronyms (CQ, DE, RRR etc) in the voice calls was removed as not reflecting current practice.

Article 33 containing operational procedures for urgency and safety communications in the GMDSS similarly was expanded by definitions and voice procedures. The section on transmission of maritime safety information was modified to make it clear that this activity derived from coast stations via NAVTEX or whatever and not ships as hitherto. This is in line with IMO definitions. The article was expanded to note that other frequency bands outside of Appendix 15 may be used for safety communications such as those for public correspondence.

Article 34 dealing with alerting signals was modified to remove references to the VHF channel 70 EPIRB, which has never been used, and the Inmarsat L band EPIRB for which the service has been withdrawn.

In support of Chapter VII, the Conference revised Article 47 dealing with operator's certificates to include the Long Range Certificate and the Short Range Certificate in the list of the categories of certificates, retaining the syllabus contained in the existing Resolution 343. Appendix 18 (VHF maritime mobile band) was modified to give further flexibility in single frequency operation and wideband use of the channels and to reflect changes made which provide a guard band for channel 70 and permit use of the AIS channels in the mobile satellite service.

### Service Publications

Article 20 dealing with the Service publications was modified to reduce the number of lists by two by combining the publications into two publications to be known as the *List of Ship Stations and Maritime Mobile Service Identity Assignments* and the *List of Coast Stations and Special Service Stations*. Their content however still needs to be determined and a new Resolution was raised to invite the ITU-R to study this. Appendix 16 (Carriage of documents) was modified to reflect these changes and an exemption arrangement added to permit ships to carry equivalent information.

### 500 kHz

The Conference modified the allocation in Article 5 for the band 495-505 kHz from MOBILE (distress and calling) to simply MOBILE. Two footnotes were added to the effect that the use of the band is to be limited to radiotelegraphy and that any non maritime use shall insure that no harmful interference is caused to the maritime mobile service. An agenda item for the next Conference was agreed to consider a secondary allocation of 15 kHz in the band 415-526.5 kHz to the amateur service.

## WORLD RADIOCOMMUNICATION CONFERENCE 2007 (3)

### MMSI

Article 19 (Identification of stations) was revised to remove the detail of the structure of MMSIs and refer instead to Annexes 1 to 5 of Recommendation ITU-R M.585-4. This in turn introduces three new kinds of MMSI:

111MIDxxx for aircraft  
99MIDxxxx for aids to navigation  
98MIDxxxx for crafts associated with a parent ship.

### HF Bands

Although extensive preparation had been made to revise Appendix 17 (frequencies and channelling arrangements in the HF bands) to convert many of the 500 Hz Morse and radiotelex channels into 3 kHz channels, this was not accepted by the Conference and the issue put back to the next Conference. This maritime issue became associated with a proposal to increase the amount of broadcasting spectrum at HF which was also rejected.

All these changes will be included in a new edition of the Radio Regulations which will be published on 1 January 2009. The ITU plan to hold another World Radiocommunication Conference in 2011 and of interest the agenda will include the new amateur allocation in the 500 kHz band, the revision of the HF channelling, a new topic dealing with enhanced safety systems for ships and ports and HF and VHF radars.

*We are immensely grateful to Kim for providing us with this Update. If you wish to see earlier articles on this subject, you can find them in Issues 22 and 20. -Ed*

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### INTERESTED IN THE WORK OF THE EC?

Are you are interested in observing the work of the Executive Committee and Maritime Consultancy Group? If so, contact the Hon. Secretary to seek an invitation to attend. The Executive Committee has agreed that up to three invitations can be made. Reasonable out of pocket expenses will be paid for attendance.

**AMERC NEWS**  
**SELECTED INDEX**  
(Updated each Issue)

January 2005 - November 2007

TOPIC	DETAIL	AN	DATE	Pp
Admiralty	Charts to common datum (MIN 272)	24	Jul 07	13
ADRS	Admiralty Digital Radio Signals Vol 6	23	Mar 7	9
Aerials	Dangers from lead-ins (MGN 330)	22	Nov 06	8
	Ditto (MGN 303)	20	Feb 06	8
African Centres	MRCC & MRSC established	22	Nov 06	8
	Capetown MRCC operational	24	Jul 07	12
AIS	Accuracy of Transmission (MIN 290)	25	Nov 07	7
	Accuracy of transmission (MIN 231)	21	Jun 06	8
	Carriage requirements (MSN 1795)	21	Jun 06	8
	Class B UK trails (MIN 268)	23	Mar 07	6
	Double ended ferries (MGN 321)	21	Jun 06	8
	Monitoring coastal shipping – UK	22	Nov 06	13
	Navigation aids systems	21	Jun 06	10
	Operational guidance (MGN 277)	17	Feb 05	9
	Performance Standards	23	Mar 07	8
	RCC Network – UK	19	Oct 05	9
	Safety of Navigation (MIN 298)	25	Nov 07	7
	Small craft Class B (MIN 199)	19	Oct 05	7
	UK chain operational	22	Nov 06	8
	USCG space based AIS	24	Jul 07	13
	VHF use & ITU Regulations (MGN 324)	22	Nov 06	8
AMERC Address	Registered Office in Kendal	21	Jun 06	4
	Hon. Secretary address change	24	Jul 07	4
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	Digital Photography allowed	23	Mar 07	4
	Dyslexic Candidates	20	Feb 06	4
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	Payment Methods	21	Jun 06	5
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	Retention of Scripts	20	Feb 06	6
	Scenario based OPT trial agreed	21	Jun 06	6
	Scenario-based OPT working party	24	Jul 07	8

Examiners	Active Lists	25	Nov 07	4
	Active Lists	21	Jun 06	7
	Active Lists	19	Oct 05	6
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	Deputy Chief Examiner appointed	25	Nov 07	4
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	EPIRB	Registration (MSN 1816)	25	Nov 07
Registration required (MGN 302)		20	Feb 06	8
Non SOLAS vessels (MSN 1810)		24	Jul 07	13
Expenses	New Claim Form	25	Nov 07	14
	New Claim Form	20	Feb 06	11
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	Critique of structure – Willie Williamson	24	Jul 07	9
HMCG	AMERC recognition of CSOC	23	Mar 07	4
	CSOC & RCSOC recognition finalised	24	Jul 07	4
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ITU WARC	Preparations for 2007 – Kim Fisher	20	Feb 06	11
	Ditto	22	Nov 06	11
	Ditto	24	Jul 07	11
INMARSAT	Barring & Safetynet (MGN 305)	20	Feb 06	8
Licences	Ofcom reforms to ship radio licences	23	Mar 07	7
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Loran C	Trial transmissions from Rugby	19	Oct 05	8
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MNTB	GMDSS Guideline Revised	21	Jun 06	7
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Perth LES	Close down	23	Mar 07	9
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	Ditto	19	Oct 05	6
Revalidation	Surveyors and pilots	24	Jul 07	10
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Radar	Performance standards(MIN 246)	21	Jun 06	7
	Corrigendum (MGN 298)	20	Feb 06	7
	Mobiles' Interference (MIN 290)	19	Oct 05	7
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SAR	Signals in distress & SAR (MGN 304)	20	Feb 06	8
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	Requirements (MGN 350)	25	Nov 07	6
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	Radiocommunications (MSN 1810)	23	Mar 07	6
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	Live receiver & work station requirements	25	Nov 07	4
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Website	Ideas needed	24	Jul 07	12
W/T Act 2006	Consolidation of Acts post-1949	23	Mar 07	10
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**NOTES:**

- (i) **This is a selective index and only records items to which reference is likely to be needed. It is updated with each Issue of AMERC NEWS.**
- (ii) **Issues 22 to 26 are in pdf format and are fully searchable.**
- (iii) **Quarterly GMDSS Statistics provided by the NAC appear in each Issue.**
- (iv) **Technical Update supplements in pdf format together with an index can be found on the AMERC Website: [www.amerc.ac.uk](http://www.amerc.ac.uk).**

**Editor's Note:**

The paper copy of the last Issue of AMERC NEWS (25) had the Technical Update provided by Steve Brett incorporated and not, as is usual, as a supplement. For various logistical reasons, it was easier to not disengage that Update and put it in its separate list. When the new AMERC Website is up and running it will be extracted and transferred to the new Technical Update Page.

## BACK PAGE

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### KEITH WAUDBY

I happened across Keith Waudby just before Christmas. Many members will remember Keith and his positive contributions to our Electronics and Communications Board. He sends his best wishes to us all and says that he is still engaged with the digital aerial scheme that AMERC helped launch. We hope to have an article on this in a future Issue.

### DAVID HEFFER

David Heffer and I don't often meet despite living in the same city. In recent days we had lunch together and yarned over old times. David, too, sends his best wishes to his many friends in the Association. We have agreed to compile a history of marine electronics training and education in Southampton. If any members would like to help we would be glad to be approached.

### NORTH FORELAND AIS

Trinity House (UK) has issued a Notice to Mariners, advising that AIS signals will be transmitted as an Aid to Navigation at the North Foreland Lighthouse station. The signals will not be coming from the old GNF site. We understand that is beneath a supermarket car park.

### HULL COLLEGE

Steve Brett advises that Hull College now has permission for a roof-top wind turbine for its Construction Centre of Excellence. It is planned to generate 10 MW of electricity annually. The turbine will have three small s-shaped blades rotating like a helicopter.

*Best Wishes  
Brian Cotton*

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This Newsletter duals as Circular 232. Check you have a full file. All Issues of AMERC NEWS appear on the AMERC Website and are fully searchable from Issue 22 onwards. Copies of the Circulars may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary. ***Do not 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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AMERC NEWS  
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