

## **Tanker Management Self Assessment (TMSA) - 2 years on.**

### **London Branch**

The 'Full House' signs were up on board HQS Wellington, with an audience in excess of 100, for the November technical meeting organised by the London Branch. Chaired by Commodore David Squire, editor of 'Alert', the panel of three speakers presented their reflections and experience of two years of TMSA.

Iain Chadwick, acting for Oil Companies International Maritime Forum (OCIMF), was first up, and gave the background and scope of TMSA as being a tool for ship operators to measure the effectiveness of their management systems and a 'best practices' guide for ship operators. OCIMF wrote the first document to be a universal benefit to the industry. TMSA is only a tool; it is not an additional safety management system. Time has shown some inconsistencies, but it was a fairly good first stab and most of the shipping industry agrees. An OCIMF working group has been revising the document, including changes to the software, to make it more user-friendly and to reflect the concerns and comments raised from other industry bodies. TMSA version 2 should be available in July 2008.

Howard Wright, Vetting Superintendent for BP, presented an oil major's perspective. BP fully supported TMSA and believed it gave a greater assurance than ISM. They had aligned their ship owner assessment questionnaire with TMSA and all time charter partners and contract of affreightment operators have already completed TMSAs. Companies supplying vessels for spot charter must have completed TMSA or vessel is rejected. Problems encountered include: no supporting evidence to some answers, companies marking themselves too highly, no cross referencing to SMS and some not understanding the questions fully. However, feedback from owner assessments has been most encouraging and positive and companies have improved their systems accordingly.

Finally, George Milburn, of Novoship, presented a tanker owners perspective. Shipowners need employment for their vessels, so have to follow the requirements of the oil majors and TMSA is a working reality - owners have to live with it. However, they have taken TMSA and used it to their own advantage wherever possible. It can be used as a tracking, monitoring and recording tool to help update day-to-day procedures and general implementation of systems. It can be used as a gap analysis tool, identifying deficiencies or shortfalls, cross reference the multiple standards used in the company management system, guide them towards standards, helps to monitor progress and maintains a dynamic system to fit future needs. In short, two years down the line, TMSA is a wonderful programme.

During the lively question and answer session following the presentations, some of the points made included - TMSA has helped better operators get better and it is clarifying the perception of the company as compared to SIRE (Ship Inspection Report). It has provided a vehicle for improvement which most quality companies will use as a 'benchmarking' tool, reformatting and reorganising their systems. TMSA is an owners' tool giving guidance to 'have you got everything in your system ready?' Is the evidence of TMSA leading to safer ships, cleaner seas? It is too early to say after only 2 years of operation, however, the overall safety record of tankers is better than other types of ships. Summing up, Commodore Squire reflected on the questions he posed at the beginning of the evening and yes, TMSA does improve confidence in quality of tanker operations, although some still treat it as a tick-box exercise; it can be used to the company's own benefit; it complements ISM; it can be improved; but the jury is still out on the question of whether it can evolve to provide other applications.

**Harry Gale MNI**