

# Societies

## Australasian Hydrographic Society

### East Australia Region

It is noteworthy to record that a present member of the East Australia Region (EAR)/AHS and past Hydrographer of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) is now engaged in large-scale maritime security operations in the Persian Gulf. As Task Force 158 Commander, Commodore Bruce Kafer RAN now has the responsibility – in addition to other aspects of his mission – of ensuring the security of ships, personnel and equipment engaged in large-scale energy infrastructure development work in the Northern Arabian Gulf. These operations will extend well into 2010. Informed sources put the value of these developments in the order of USD6 billion. That is a lot of money – and a lot of responsibility. Well done, Bruce!

Commander John Maschke RAN, former Chair of the EAR, has decided to take up the position of Chair, South West Pacific (SWP) Region. He will establish this region during his new position as part of Defence Attaché South Pacific from 15 December 2008 in Suva (Fiji). John has also relinquished his position on the Spatial Sciences Institute (SSI) Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Regional Committee and handed over to Commander Gareth Cann. More exciting news: John will also be promoted to the rank of Captain from 1 December 2008. Congratulations, John!

### West Australia Region

The West Australia Region in co-operation with the Society for Underwater Technology (SUT) held their 4th Joint Technical Seminar and Exhibition for Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs) at the Parmelia Hilton, Perth, on 30 October 2008.

Almost 90 registrations were received and on the day they were treated to a range of presentations from international distributors, researchers and academics. With such a wide range of people in attendance, intercessional breaks were used to maximum advantage and the feedback from participants was that both the formal and networking sessions were most beneficial.

Clearly, since the 3rd combined seminar, the intervening 12 months has produced some exciting developments, applications and sound consolidation for this now-proven technology across a wide range of domains from oil and gas to port security and environmental.

It was clear from the presentations at the seminar that the increase in both the fidelity of information and associated knowledge of adopting current AUV technology with both existing and proposed capabilities means that the AUV will have clear and distinct advantages as a common 'tool of the trade'. Just as the single-beam echosounder revolutionised how mainstream sounding data were collected, the use of AUVs will no doubt have the same revolutionary effect not only for bathymetric data collection but, importantly at the same time of deployment, other types of valuable information.

At the conclusion of the seminar, it was apparent (via a public show of hands) that all those in attendance would leave with new and/or enhanced AUV knowledge from the day which, from an organisers point of view, can only mean the aim of the seminar was well and truly achieved.

Sponsors included Woodside Petroleum, Fugro and Kongsberg, and their combined contribution to the day was greatly appreciated. The West Australia Region looks forward to further co-operative seminars with the SUT in the future.

### Australia on the Map Division

Mr Roger Harvey, Hydrographic Surveyor, has been able to find and provide a print of the results of a survey of the Hawkesbury River (done in 1872) extending from Sackville Reach wharf to the ocean at Broken Bay. The survey was carried out by Navigating Lieutenant Gowlland assisted by John Loxton LS.

Bruttour International has acquired two handsome prints to hang in their training room. The originals were painted in oil by S. Francis Smitheman ATD, BA, FRSA, in 1994. One painting shows HMS Victory leading the line at the battle of Trafalgar in 1805. The second painting shows HMS Victory being towed in to dry dock in Portsmouth in 1922. As an historical note, it is understood that HMS Victory is still in commission.

## Hydrographic Society Benelux

On 29 September the Hydrographic Society Benelux held its autumn workshop in Dordrecht (The Netherlands). The theme of the workshop was 'Hydrographic and Geophysical Techniques' and three speakers discussed the progress in this field from different perspectives.

First, Mirjam Snellen from Delft University presented the research of the Acoustic Remote Sensing group of the university. A method was presented for sediment classification using multi-beam echosounders and the results from four different areas were shown. The method is able to differentiate between a number of sediment types, which match very well with ground truths. The method is robust to cope with quite different areas, such as the Cleaver Bank in the North Sea, the Eastern Scheldt area, the river Waal and a coastal area. The final goal is to obtain an absolute classification of sediment parameters from echosounder data.

The second speaker was Robert Girault from the IXSEA development centre in La Ciotat (France). He discussed the principles of the SHADOWS system, a synthetic aperture side-scan sonar (SAS). The advantages of SAS are a better signal-to-noise ratio, a higher resolution and a range-independent footprint. Effectively, the length of the transducer is increased synthetically. To do this, a very accurate positioning is needed. High-end INS technology is used in SHADOWS in combination with massive computing.

The last speaker, Ronald Koomans from Medusa Exploration, placed the technology (radiometric sediment classification) in the context of a recent Dutch policy report on the measures needed to handle climate change. He gave three examples:

- for effective sand suppletions on the coast, the distribution of grain sizes in the coastal zone can be measured
- the influx of fine sand in the Wadden Sea should be monitored to protect the valuable ecosystem
- the effect of high river discharges on dunes in the river bed and the sediment distribution can be researched.

The lively discussion after the three presentations proved that the topic generated a great deal of interest in the audience.

As usual, the social aspects of the workshop were not neglected – with a dinner beforehand and drinks following the technical presentations.

The presentations will be made available on the HSB website.

## Hydrographic Society Russia

### [‘Mess Mate’ Reunion](#)

The majority of Russian naval hydrographers are graduates of the St Petersburg Naval Institute. As is probably the case with graduates of hydrographic educational institutions in other countries, they have a long tradition of annual reunions. As a rule, the reunions of Naval Institute graduates take place in St Petersburg, where many hydro-graphers serve, work or live. One of these reunions was held recently on 13 October, which Russian naval hydrographers mark as the profession's holiday. Veteran hydrographers, the graduates of 1953, gathered together in a café. Unfortunately, only six people could attend, as some of the others live in different cities and countries, some were not in a sufficient state of health, and some were already deceased. The 'mess mates' living in other cities and countries did, however, send letters, which were read out and listened to with great interest. During their conversations, the attending 1953 graduates once more confirmed their satisfaction in having chosen the profession of naval hydrographer.

### [New Sites for Hydrographers](#)

In the spring of 2008, HSR member Vladislav Ustinov created and placed on the internet the interactive magazines The Hydrographer (website 2) and Lighthouse Keeper (website 3), intended to be a place for news in the field of hydrography and in lighthouse affairs, respectively. Both sites are, of course, in Russian.

The news pages for hydrographers contain the following sections: Shipbuilding, Hydrology, Cartography, Satellite systems, the History of hydrography and International events in hydrographic business.

The news pages for lighthouse experts includes: Construction of lighthouses, Manufacture of beacons, marks and leading beacons, Lighting equipment, Modern power supplies, the History of lighthouses and International events in the lighthouse business.

Everyone wishing to place new information in these magazines can enter the interactive mode of the sites. To do this, it is necessary to be registered. The instructions for registration are in the Menu in the section 'Catalogue of documents'. Questions may be addressed to the manager of the sites Vladislav Ustinov at [Vlad...@yandex.ru](mailto:Vlad...@yandex.ru).