

STAKEHOLDER REPORT FROM GHT

MAY 2014



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PORT MARINE SAFETY CODE

All harbour authorities are required to achieve and maintain nationally agreed standards for safe marine operations within their waters as set out in the Port Marine Safety Code and its associated Guide to Good Practice. In line with this, GHT has developed a Safety Management Plan which sets out the procedures which GHT follows to comply with these criteria. This is regularly reviewed and updated as required. Earlier this year it was audited by an independent assessor and verified by GHT's Designated Person before being presented to the Board for formal approval at the meeting on 21 March. The latest edition is available to download from GHT's website.

We are pleased to report that there have been no incidents or emergencies in the Gloucester Harbour in the last twelve months.

NAVIGATION

The quarterly PANAR reports to Trinity House on the availability of aids to navigation either maintained by GHT or by third parties within the GHT area continue to show 100% compliance.

The cabin at Severn Beach housing the pilot watch radar equipment, which had deteriorated badly since its original installation in 1994, has now been replaced with a more modern and robust structure

The rain in January/February led to higher than usual winter fresh water flows in the river giving some distinct but temporary changes to the height of some sandbanks in the estuary. Ships navigating in the main channel had to take additional care when approaching Sharpness. However, the very high tides in January which led to extensive flooding in some parts of the Severn Valley did not cause a problem for commercial shipping. Nevertheless, a powerful tidal surge left Lydney Pier and the entrance to Lydney Docks submerged and the North and South Piers at Sharpness nearly disappeared beneath the water. The exceptionally high winds later in February, which reached more than 60 knots at the height of the storm, caused delays to a number of ships as they sought shelter from the storms.

SEVERN BORE

We have been disappointed to learn once again of inconsiderate behaviour by a small number of power boat users on the widely advertised large Bores in March. Guidance on appropriate conduct is widely available on our website and elsewhere, but is flouted by a small minority of users. Their antics put surfers and kayakers in danger and spoil the spectacle for those watching on the banks of the river. We continue to press organisations which publicise the thrills of Bore riding to include proper safety advice as well. Reports identifying specific boats or individuals are very welcome as we can then take matters further

PILOTAGE

Our new pilot is continuing his pilotage training and has been authorised as a probationary pilot licensed to pilot ships within his level of expertise. He will be authorised for increasingly larger ships as his experience grows over the next few years.

Ships pay for pilotage according to the size of vessel and the level of trade has exceeded the level predicted at the beginning of our financial year. Cargoes have included cement, fertiliser, scrap metal, grain and a number of 'heavy lifts' which have generated local interest.

From time to time heavy equipment is transported by sea via Sharpness. The weight of the machinery and the size of the ships which may be needed to carry it can present particular logistical problems and careful passage planning.

The first operation came with the arrival of the newly launched Arctic Dawn. With a beam of just over 17m, she was one of the widest vessels to visit the port in recent years and close co-operation between the local Canal & River Trust staff, Sharpness Dock Ltd, the pilots and GHT ensured that she docked safely.

The Arctic Dawn used her own lifting gear, which towered above the dock while she was in port, to load two skid mounted shipments of gas metering systems, each weighing in excess of 36 tonnes. These had been manufactured locally by Alderley and were being shipped direct to South Korea where they are destined for the floating liquefied natural gas facility, Prelude. This is now the largest floating vessel in the world at 1,601 feet long – 150 feet longer than the Empire State Building is high. When completed in 2017, the Prelude will operate off Western Australia.

Just a few weeks later, the River Trader brought a massive transformer weighing 170 tonnes into Sharpness on the last leg of its journey from South Korea to an electricity sub-station on the outskirts of Gloucester. It was off-loaded on to specialist haulage transport and driven in a slow convoy to its final destination.

A third operation was the export of another piece of machinery manufactured by Alderley which was loaded on to the Abis Bordeaux. Alderley is a locally based company specialising in the design and manufacture of metering and control system for the oil and gas industry and frequently uses Sharpness Dock to transport equipment to customers all over the world.

Piloted vessel movements to and from Sharpness Dock
for the financial years 2012/2013 and 2013/14

| 2012/13 | | | 2013/14 | | |
|------------------|--------------|------------|------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Month | Ship Numbers | DWT | Month | Ship Numbers | DWT |
| April | 28 | 93,584 | April | 30 | 86,465 |
| May | 40 | 139,907 | May | 37 | 106,484 |
| June | 16 | 58,732 | June | 33 | 111,293 |
| July | 23 | 75,777 | July | 33 | 98,960 |
| August | 24 | 81,218 | August | 23 | 85,269 |
| September | 31 | 87,189 | September | 26 | 83,998 |
| October | 33 | 101,032 | October | 25 | 88,693 |
| November | 32 | 82,138 | November | 35 | 116,361 |
| December | 18 | 53,480 | December | 24 | 73,226 |
| January | 26 | 82,754 | January | 38 | 126,747 |
| February | 31 | 94,795 | February | 31 | 114,417 |
| March | 34 | 106,456 | March | 32 | 114,835 |
| Monthly Average: | 28 ships: | 88,089 dwt | Monthly average: | 31 ship: | 101,267 dwt |

FINANCE

Details of GHT's finances can find annual reports and accounts going back to the financial year 2000/2001 on GHT's website. We hope to make the Report and Accounts for 2013/14 available after the Trustees' meeting in July.

We aim to break-even each year but anticipate that we shall have made a small operating surplus this year. The increased level of trade plus the small increase in the level of harbour dues which we introduced at the beginning of the financial year mean that our finances are currently in a healthy state. However, our income is almost entirely dependent on the level of shipping coming to Sharpness and we tend to err on the side of caution when forecasting our income and expenditure for the coming year. However, we feel reasonably confident about the anticipated level of shipping for 2014/15 and have retained our harbour dues at the same level for another year, though the situation is always kept under careful review.

PILOTS' NATIONAL PENSION FUND (PNPF)

This is an issue which has caused GHT much anxiety and a considerable amount of work for a number of years. However, to resolve this issue in the short term, last year we offered make affordable annual payments of £30,000 to the PNPF over a five year period without admitting any liability for the deficit in the pension fund. This payment is mainly funded by a levy of 2p per dwt on the harbour dues charged to ships using the port of Sharpness. Payments have been made on a monthly basis throughout the year without incident.

TRAINING

The Marine Officer has recently been awarded his Harbour Master Certificate. This certificate is the first professional maritime qualification for Harbour Masters in the UK. The course, a pilot study set up by the UK Harbour Masters' Association and Port Skills and Safety, endorsed by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, demanded considerable time and effort by candidates. They were required to provide evidence of the required competencies by completing a number of approved assessments in compliance with the National Occupational Standards for Harbour Masters. Mike Johnson thoroughly deserves this formal recognition of his expertise.

In addition, the Harbour Master and one of the relief harbour masters have attended courses to revalidate their MCA 4p qualification in line with the requirements of GHT's Oil Spill Contingency Plan. This means that they are able to take charge as on-scene commander in the event of a major incident.

CANAL & RIVER TRUST (CRT)

GHT's Harbour Master continues to provide advice and support to the CRT on navigational matters at Sharpness when required. He reports regularly to the Waterways Manager on relevant issues.



The Arctic Dawn preparing to leave Sharpness en route to South Korea

Further information about GHT is available on www.gloucesterharbourtrustees.org.uk