

GHT CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE ADVISORY BODY

Financial Position

Sharpness Dock is weathering the economic downturn rather better than other ports in the Severn Estuary. The freight market in general is very depressed but the situation at Sharpness, where the port operator Sharpness Dock Ltd has a number of fixed contracts, is favourable and predicted to remain so in future. The cement and scrap trades are currently very buoyant, with other cargoes such as fertiliser doing well. GHT's income benefits from this increase in trade.

After the major investment in GHT's navigation aids last year, no major work is planned for this year and GHT will enjoy a period of consolidation. However, minor improvements are made as and when there is a need. For instance, GHT's website has recently been upgraded and AB members will *shortly be able to / can now* watch ships entering and leaving Sharpness Dock through a new web cam.

BPA Conference

I recently attended the British Ports Association Conference which this year was held in Orkney. Though the conference programme itself had very little direct relevant for GHT, the networking opportunities are very useful and I was able to meet representatives from a number of other ports and discuss matters of mutual interest, as well as a representative from the Department for Transport.

GHT Chairmanship

I have decided to stand down as Chairman at the end of my term of office in December. John Beevor, a semi-retired commercial lawyer working part-time for BPE in Cheltenham, who has been a Trustee for the past three years, will be taking over from me in January. I hope to keep in touch with what is happening at GHT and give any support and advice I can, if asked.

Review of Advisory Body

As agreed, we contacted most of the representatives on the circulation list for the AB. Most indicated that they wished to continue receiving minutes, though could not generally attend meetings. Some confirmed that they no longer wished to be involved and a few did not reply so we have assumed that they, too, no longer have any interest. This means that we now have a hard core of committed members, plus a mechanism for keeping other interested stakeholders in touch with GHT's activities.

Edmund Dorman