



The work of the EMH Safety Council:

Aiming at mutual acceptance of safety regulations on European level

by Capt. Hendrik Boland

As Mr. Anders Berg stated in his president's report (Newsletter 5, July 1999) the Safety Council is a strong leg of EMH. The aim of this council is to influence authorities so that ships can be exploited as cultural heritage without being bordered by modern and impractical rules.

The ships themselves are the most visible part of our European Maritime Heritage. The preservation of existing ships, the restoration of old ships and the building of replicas means that there are now several thousand ships of this heritage present in European countries.

Another part of this maritime heritage is the seamanship and the craftsmanship: the knowledge how to sail those ships: the knowledge of sailing, steam-engineering and manoeuvring this fleet is only kept alive when ships are available for practice.

All these reasons make it necessary that ships can be exploited one way or the other:

Financing restoration, preservation and constructing replicas ask for a new function of old ships. For smaller ships it is possible to sail them as

recreational craft: owners of the ships make dreams come true with private means. Maybe with some help on the basis of being a monument they keep heritage afloat. Not being a modern yacht but living monuments it is very important to keep traditional ships out of the European rules for pleasure yachts.

Of course some ships can be preserved as stationary museumships to show the public our history and to study it. The huge amount of ships worth restoring makes it impossible to rely on museums only. And as so for public purposes they encounter the same problems with regulations as mentioned hereafter.

A third option, mostly for bigger ships, is to use them for housing. An owner who decides to live on a monument can use the costs of normal housing for his boat. And this should be made possible in spite of modern building and environmental regulations.

The most wellknown use is to sail with people, who participate in the actual sailing and who pay for being on board. In the tradition of sailtraining a

lot of sailors have paid to serve their time to become licensed mates.

Cultural interests to keep the fleet sailing are in conflict with laws and regulations regularly in every European country. Especially when sailing with more than 12 guests on board most countries consider such ships as passenger vessels which should comply with rules for their home waters only. Although it is a start it also makes international voyages very difficult. Other countries are still hesitating how to solve the problems.

The Safety Council of EMH has discussed this matter thoroughly and has made an inventory of all national rules. It appears quite clear that the differences between the approach of all concerning countries is enormous, and on top of that the regional differences of types of ships and sailing areas is even bigger. Therefore the council believes that we shouldn't try to establish a European regulation for traditional ships, but realize mutual acceptance of equivalent safety as defined in international regulations. This means that all ships should of course be safe to navigate with people

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on board, but the safety can be achieved by other means than existing laws and regulations.

The first step will be a conference in Wilhelms-haven on the 8th of September 2000, where European countries - as many as

possible - will sign a memorandum of understanding, declaring the mutual acceptance of national regulations.

Accepting such a memorandum of understanding means that governments have to accept the need for special regulations. At the same time shipowners can realise living history for

their ships and will be able to sail in their home waters and abroad.

We all hope that the conference in Wilhelms-haven will be a success, and every shipowner can contribute by being present with his ship to show the variety of all ships and the need for solutions.

Portuguese Umbrella under construction

Mr. João Filipe Galvão de Carvalho reports:

Following the Gathering of Traditional Boats - joined by 50 vessels from all over Portugal and Galiza - the Festival of the Oceans organized the 1st Conference of Traditional Portuguese Boats.

The attendance ranged from museum curators, to boat owners, to ordinary people interested in the subjects.

The No. 1 topic in the debate was the EU rules

regarding the destruction of small fishing crafts which - in the Portuguese case - almost all are built of wood, and have not changed for the past 40 years, and which - in most cases - are the motorised evolution of old sailing vessels.

Also debated were the lack of interest from the agencies that look after our heritage in the maritime patrimony.

Furthermore there were two

speakers telling their stories of saving and operating traditional boats for educational purposes.

At the end of the conference the participants voted for the creation of a National Association for the Protection of the Portuguese Maritime Heritage. This organisation is supposed to be up and running by the end of this year.



Historical ships and boats: How dangerous are they?

by Mr. Daniel Charles

Ancient navigation had a terrible safety record. In XVIth century, crossing the Atlantic was so dangerous that three ships out of five did not come back. As recently as 1881, the sea killed 3781 Britons; this was 311 deaths per million. To put such statistics in perspective, while in XIXth century few people went to sea (most workers didn't leave their farms or industrial towns),

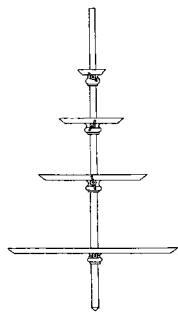
today everybody uses a car - and still the road only causes 136 deaths par million; however unacceptable such number may still be, it's already three times less than the death rate of transportation by sea a century ago. If one supposes that 5% of the British population went to sea in 1881, this would make for an real death rate of 6220 par million, 46 times higher that the road is today!

Navigation used to be a horrendously dangerous business.

What made it so dangerous? The sea, or the boats, or both? And why was it so much safer thirty years later, despite an increase in the number of ships? This last well known fact is is amazing, because the technological improvement of the turn of the century
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concerned only capital ships or ocean liners, not the small fishing boats, the sailing tramps or the coastal steamers. For example, until WW1, sextants and chronometres weren't found on smaller ships; indeed, to know where they were, the North Sea fishermen dropped a lead with tallow on the bottom; this would pick sand, the lead was then hoisted, and the fishermen felt the sand with their



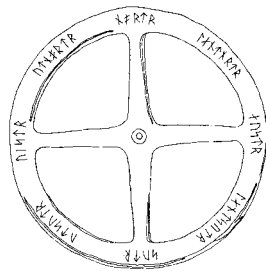
tongue, and recognized that this sand belonged to this particular bank, and they were there! Compared to today's, this was a truly prehistoric way of localisation. Still, while the navigation technology was not improved, nor the technology onboard most ships, the safety record improved. Why? Because, during this period, a tremendous effort was made to buoy channels, and to build lights; during this period, most dangers became advertised, visible. Navigation was dangerous not because of the boats, but because of the sea (or of the approaches of the ground).

Today, with GPS, and its connection to electronic maps, it requires an effort NOT to know where one is. The major cause of shipwrecks has disappeared, making historical ships - as well as all other ships - that

much safer. The reverse is also true: how safe would be the modern ships, if they had to sail without sextants and chronometres, without radio, radar, sounder and GPS, without weather forecasts, without most buoys and lights, etc...?

Indeed, boats of the past are much safer than the safety record of their time shows.

Of course, this does not mean that, from an architectural and structural point of view, historical ships are as safe as modern ones: they are not - but this is a moot point. However, the question is not "how safe is the ship", but "how safe are the



operations of the ship"; here, historical ships have a very different safety perspective than today's.

Today, there is no limitation in technology provided it brings a diminution of manpower; a century ago (and less), manpower was no object. Therefore, operating safely historical ships requires a level of competent manning which would be uneconomical today. These ancient boats are not expected to compete economically with the modern ones. Their function has changed: they still sail as a floating patrimony, as buds out of our historical sea-roots, to refresh our

memories and our love of the sea. As such, they are necessary, because they motivate people; they accomplish a public service in reviving a needed sensitivity to the sea and its environment. To fulfill this new function, historical ships must be allowed to earn their keep, with adapted administrative and legal structures.

Historical ships do more than transmitting the sea lore; they maintain and communicate skills. In their times, not only was manning plentiful, but practical training was more extensive and longer (would it be only because the hours were longer). Proficiency was deemed more important than instruction.

This will be better illustrated by an example outside the realm of historical ships'



operation. Polynesians were able, from miles and miles offshore, to locate an invisible island by the changes in the swell, and other impalpable clues. They could not use contemporary European localisation means, but they compensated such lack of instruction by observing the

waves fifteen hours a day. We could learn their ways and their techniques, but could we learn their patience?

Operating safely a historical ship requires a much more exacting level of proficiency than modern ships' operations, because the crews of historical ships are much less protected than on modern ones, and crews may be pounded by elements into taking the wrong decision. In adverse or unexpected conditions, a head full of learnings is not enough, if it's not a cool one. Actually, extreme situations are not the major cause of human error; unexpected or alien situations are, as a study on accidents in French yachting has shown. What was the major cause for sailboats to call for help? Engine failure (on sailboats)! And when did they call for help? In calms or light airs, out of frustration, out of their mind and, generally, out of danger! Practice is the key to safety. Limiting, under pretence of safety, the operations of historical ships would come down to limit the possibility of their crews to practice, and this would reduce the safety of operations.

Daniel Charles, 50, a Belgian established in France, is one of the two experts in maritime patrimony recognized by the French Ministry of Culture. A writer specialized in yachting history, three of his seventeen books (including the latest two) have been awarded the title of Best Maritime Book of the Year (in 1980, 1995 and 1998).



A Unique Spanish Lady

by Mr. Ole Vistrup

The »Rafael Verdera« is a traditional Spanish packet boat launched in 1841 by one of the (at the time) many boatyards of the Balearics. Being the last surviving out of a large fleet of small packet boats, she is probably the oldest active sailing vessel in Spain.

She was built in Ibiza from iroko, pine and oak, and she was intended to carry cargo - mainly salt - between the Balearic Islands and the Spanish mainland. However her operational area also covered the French Mediterranean ports and the north African coast.

She was built with a "tartana" (traditional lateen) rig which is said to have been introduced to the Balearics by the Vandals, when they occupied the islands in 426AD. Though in this way born with a rig respecting the local traditions, she was updated around 1900 to a more handy gaff-rig., and with this she worked her way through the Mediterranean as a cargo

vessel until 1985, when her present owner and captain, Miguel Arizmendi, bought her and began her restoration. Now the tartana rig is back.

The tartana rig is normally a single mast with a flying jib attached to a short bowsprit, and with no stays - only running rigging - which in view of the large sail area could be very dangerous to handle.

Today - being a passenger vessel - her owner has installed fixed stays for safety reasons, but handling the sails is still done by hand. Due to the wish for easy handling of sails most Mediterranean sailing ships today are gaff-rigged, and this fact probably makes the »Rafael Verdera« unique.

Nowadays »Rafael Verdera« is available for charter out of Palma de Mallorca, and apart from day- and longer sail cruises Cpt. Arizmendi has specialized in whale watching and diving excursions.



»Rafael Verdera«

Year Launched: 1841

Length: 22,25 metres

Beam: 5,79 metres

Draft: 2,74 metres

Mast: 22,56 metres

GRT: 52,9

Engine: Cummings 200 HP

More information on:
www.rafaelverdera.com



Discussions per E-mail

UK: The National Register of Historic Vessels (NRHV) has set up an electronic discussion list. In "Scantlings" - the newsletter of the NRHV - we found the following text:

As an ever-increasing number of owners and practitioners have electronic-mail, we have developed an electronic discussion list which allows people who share a common interest, such as the conservation of historic craft, to communicate by e-mail. You will be able to discuss on-going restoration work with like-minded people, share news, announce regattas and other events, collaborate on projects or just keep in touch with owners of similar craft. Any message sent to the list will be received by everyone who belongs to the list. Belonging to the list is like sitting in on a discussion. You can join in the talk by sending an e-mail, or you can just listen by receiving the messages.

To join the historic-vessels discussion list, all you need to do is send an e-mail message to: mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk. The body of the message should read 'join historic-vessels your name'. See example below:

Example:

To: mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk
Subject: test (or you may leave blank)
Body of message: join historic-vessels John Smith

Advertisement of loss:

Figurehead missing

A figurehead disappeared 78 years ago from a garden in the Danish provincial town of Marstal. The figurehead was originally found drifting in the North Sea the night before New Year's day 1863, and it was salvaged by a Marstal schooner. The figurehead was put in a garden in Marstal and remained there until some day in 1921, when a man came and presented himself as a conservator of the Danish Maritime Museum. He took the figurehead with him, and since then no one has seen it.

The question is, if it is possible to find this figurehead, and if it still exists

after all these years.

All information will be received with gratitude by *Marstal Søfartsmuseum Prinsensgade 1 DK-5960 Marstal Denmark*
Tel/Fax: +45 6253 2331
E-mail: marmus@post5.tele.dk



Winter is coming...

And for a lot of people that means a decrease in activities on board their ship (at least they are not away every day sailing).

You might consider to use the spare time (ha ha) to write an article for the EMH Newsletter.

In order to be able to make an interesting newsletter and to be well-informed with what goes on in the maritime heritage world we are very dependent on contributions from our readers.

Please mail, fax or e-mail your material to

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And send us your own newsletters

Please put us on the mailing list for your own newsletters, and send us a quick note, in which you allow us to use material from these - of course with reference to the source.

Newsletters in other languages than English are just as appreciated as English ones. Between this, that and the other we will be able to translate most European languages.

Deadlines for future newsletters:

Deadline:

20 December 1999
20 March 2000
20 June 2000
20 September 2000

Publishing date:

7 January 2000
7 April 2000
7 July 2000
7 October 2000

The festival of boats and crews

(2000 traditional boats expected)

All the traditional sailing boats built of wood, but also sailing ships inspired by classic forms built singly or in small series are invited :

- International Tall Ships
- Maritime Heritage boats from the world over
- Traditional Sailing boats from European Coasts
- Classic Pleasure Yachts and Sailboats dating before the 60's
- Sailboats for pleasure or cruise races from the 60's
- Sail/oar craft
- Sculling skiffs, Kayaks and Canoes
- Classic launches and Runabouts

The cultural festival of maritime traditions

The events and exhibits on the quays reflect the diversity of international fleets and the specificity of each maritime region through all sorts of crafts, products and artistic expression : wooden shipyards, model builders, sail and "objets de marine" makers, arts and craftsmen, "marine" painters and photographers, music and shanties, etc.

In 2000, the festival site on the quays will be divided into several spaces, with as many well identified "villages". Each Village will be devoted to a major theme, grouping the stands and selected exhibitors : The British Isles Village, Northern Europe Village, Southern Europe Village, French Coasts' Heritage Village, Professional seafarers Village, etc.



Traditional Boat Owners, Exhibitors or Musicians,

Join us!

Owner of a traditional boat

Name of the Boat :

Type of the Boat : LOA :

Exhibitor (maritime field)

Musician

Journalist

Name

Address

Post Code Town

Tel Fax