Director’s Overview

The year in brief

2004 has been a busy year for most of those involved in shipping and it was a busy year at SIRC. In 2004 we launched two new and very exciting collaborative programmes of work. In March, the Nippon Foundation fellowship programme was officially launched and the first cohort of fellows began at the Centre in October. In early August, SIRC enjoyed another happy day, as the Lloyd’s Register Research Unit (LRRU) was publicly ‘floated’. The first research project to be undertaken, as part of the programme of work it encompasses, was also initiated and is now in full-swing. All this excitement had barely died down, when we had the opportunity for another celebration in hosting a visit from the President of the Nippon Foundation. As a highly eminent guest Mr Yohei Sasakawa’s visit attracted considerable attention and we were very pleased that the First Minister of the Welsh Assembly, Rhodri Morgan, was able to take time out of his busy schedule to join the party at lunch. The University Vice-Chancellor also met with Mr Sasakawa and we were honoured to have The Rt Hon The Lord Mayor of the City and County of Cardiff, Councillor Jacqui Gasson with us for the proceedings. From the outset, however, Mr Sasakawa made it known that his priority was to meet with the Nippon Foundation-funded fellows and this was undoubtedly the highlight of the day.

2004 was also an important year for teaching and contributions to international workshops and seminars. SIRC staff were invited to contribute to in-house training programmes, and Maritime Education and Training (MET) courses, as well as giving their more usual input to academic and industry conferences. In addition funding from the EU-ASEAN project backed courses on quantitative research methods (SPSS) and teaching skills for MET lecturers. These courses were organised by SIRC and run by Cardiff University School of Social Sciences and the Information Services department. The EU project also funded a series of research-led workshops conducted by SIRC staff in partner METs in the Philippines, Spain, and Singapore. These workshops focused on leadership, women seafarers and multinational crews, and have resulted in consideration by partner organisations of refinements and additions to existing curricula for cadets and more senior officers.

Mr Sasakawa and the Nippon Fellows
Mixed in with the excitement associated with the year’s activities, there was inevitably some sadness as we finally said goodbye to Tony Lane who officially retired from institutional academic life in September. Tony had retired as Director of SIRC in September 2003, however he had continued to work in the University on a part-time basis for a brief period. We do not anticipate losing touch with him altogether (despite persistent problems with telecommunications in Carmarthenshire!) and we hope that friends and colleagues will have an opportunity to catch up with him again at the SIRC biennial symposium to be held in July 2005.

New Projects

In 2004 a number of new projects were begun. Amongst the most significant were:

- **Participation in the EC-funded Maritime Transport Co-ordination Platform (MTCP):** SIRC is a partner in the EC-funded Maritime Transport Co-ordination Platform (MTCP) and has a leading role in the group of ‘experts’ responsible for human resource related issues and ‘quality’. This Platform acts as an advisory body to the EC in policy formulation and conducts some small-scale studies to facilitate this process.

- **An MTCP co-ordinated study of Port-State control:** This collaborative work extended an earlier, ground-breaking study undertaken by Michael Bloor and colleagues, whilst he was at SIRC, by investigating the arrangements for Port-State control inspections in Norway, Sweden/Denmark, Greece, Spain and France. The study is small-scale and has the aim of informing the EC’s DGTREN about current practices and the need for more detailed research into this area.

- **An MTCP co-ordinated study of the European labour market and the supply and demand for EU seafarers:** The Centre is participating in a short study which began in August 2004 and is due to finish in January 2005. The study will identify the information that is available from different EU maritime administrations regarding numbers of EU and non-EU seafarer certificates and endorsements, numbers of EU and non-EU seafarers employed on-board EU vessels, and the number of graduates from EU maritime colleges. This information is fundamental to any future attempts to standardise such data across the 25 EU member States. Additionally, information about the criteria currently being used by the EU maritime administrations when issuing minimum manning certificates is being collected. Finally, the study is gathering data about the shore-based employment of ex-seafarers in EU countries.
A Leonardo-funded project on Stress Prevention Activities (SPA): SIRC has been invited to participate in a Leonardo project aimed at developing a syllabus for seafarer training on stress prevention activities in the workplace. The project was initiated by the Greek Trade Union of Masters and Mates and is co-ordinated by the Greek company IDEC. It includes partners in Greece, Italy, Finland and the UK. The role of SIRC is to adapt a general syllabus for training on stress prevention activities to the requirements and environment of the shipping industry. The project started in November 2004 and is due to finish in November 2006.

EU-ASEAN – Improving the Quality of Maritime Education in Europe and Asia-Pacific: SIRC is the lead partner in an EC Europe-Aid-funded project supporting the development of curricula and human resources in maritime colleges in Spain, Singapore and the Philippines. This project will complete in 2006. It involves the organisation of dedicated training courses on SPSS and teaching skills in Cardiff, a series of workshops in the three partner countries, and a small-scale research study.

EU-ASEAN research into Computer-based training (CBT) at sea: This collaborative project being undertaken by the EU-ASEAN partners (SIRC, MAAP, PMMA, UPC, SMA) has been designed to assess the usefulness of CBT on-board from a seafarer’s perspective. A structured interview is being administered in at least four countries and the results will be reported in late 2005.

A study of the transformation of the Chinese seafarer labour market: This project has been jointly funded by SIRC, Cardiff University China Studies Centre and the School of Social Sciences. It considers the impact of globalisation and economic transition on the employment and career development of Chinese seafarers. The project started in October 2004 and intensive fieldwork has already been undertaken in China involving approximately 400 active seafarers as well as a number of crew managers employed by both Chinese and foreign companies. The project will be completed in 2005 and will produce a series of outputs including the establishment of a database for Chinese ‘free seafarers’.

Perceptions of Risk: The first project to be undertaken in the Lloyd’s Register Research Unit focuses on perceptions of risk amongst personnel working for ship operators. The overall aim of the project is to consider the extent to which there is variance across land and sea-based occupational hierarchies in terms of employee opinions of risk and hazardous work-related activities. In the course of the study the cohesiveness and comprehensiveness of company-based ‘safety cultures’ will be considered as will the ‘fit’ between employee perceptions of risk and available accident statistics.
AIS (Automatic Identification System): As part of the Lloyd’s Register Research Unit’s programme of work a project on training and new technology, focusing on the introduction of AIS, is planned for the period 2005-6. In 2004 this project was initiated with a preparatory week of fieldwork based in Dover’s Channel Navigation Information Service (CNIS). The data that this pre-pilot work yielded was sufficiently rich to be reported upon in its own right and findings will be presented in 2005.

Completed Projects

A number of projects were also completed in 2004. These included:

- An ESRC-funded study of Port-State control and ILO conventions led by Michael Bloor (undertaken in collaboration with the Russian Academy of Sciences, The Tata Institute of Social Sciences, and the International Labour Office). A SIRC report is now available online (see www.sirc.cf.ac.uk).

- An ESRC/SIRC-funded study of work and organisation in the Maritime Car-Carrier Industry. Findings will be presented in various formats including a SIRC report that will be available online by late 2005/early 2006.

Ongoing Projects

A number of existing projects were also progressed in 2004. These included:

- An MCA-commissioned study of unlawful practices associated with certificates of competency and other certificates in the UK. This study is due to report in 2005.

- Regional labour market studies have been undertaken in India, Philippines, Turkey, China, Mexico, Panama, Honduras, Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela. These are near completion and will appear as a series of reports in 2005.

- The ‘Global Labour Market Database’ project is ongoing and data for 2003 will be published in an interactive web-based form in mid-2005.

- A study of abandoned seafarers is complete and a report will be available online in 2005.

- A study of the recruitment and retention of cadets in Portugal and Spain that is part-funded by SIRC is due to complete in 2005.
MPhil/PhD studies are currently being undertaken in the Centre on the following topics:

- Risk behaviour and collision avoidance (Phillip Belcher).
- A study of the impact of emotional health on cadet recruitment and retention in the UK (Liz Gould).
- Why do safety systems fail? - an ESRC-funded (CASE award) study in collaboration with the Standard P&I Club (Aline de Bievre).

Nippon Foundation fellows are planning research on the following topics (to commence in 2005):

- The international labour market (questions of whether declining numbers of seafarers in economically developed societies result from issues of demand or supply).
- A study of regulatory standards as operationalised by second registers.
- The impact of the internet on seafarers and their families.
- Safe navigation and collision avoidance.
- The implementation of the ISM Code in relation to shore-side occupational health and safety management systems.

People at SIRC

In 2004 SIRC said goodbye to a number of members of staff. Tony Lane retired formally coming to the end of a long and active career. Michael Bloor left for a job with the Centre for the Misuse of Drugs Research at Glasgow University and is sadly missed. The secondment of Ramesh Datta (from the Tata Institute – Mumbai) was completed, and the contracts’ of Minghua Zhao and Phillip Belcher came to an end. Minghua has been fortunate in finding alternative employment at Greenwich Maritime University, and Phillip is completing his PhD whilst working part-time for the Honourable Company of Master Mariners. As well as saying farewell to some staff we were fortunate to welcome Professor David Walters who is kindly being seconded to SIRC on a part-time basis from
In 2005 a series of SIRC reports will be published online. These represent the output from a series of studies that have completed in the last year. They include reports on the abandonment of seafarers and the cruise sector labour market. They will be available, free of charge, in pdf format.

Future Plans
In a new development, results from the SIRC global labour market survey will be made available in an interactive web-based format by Clarksons publishers. Access will be subject to charges by Clarksons and it is hoped that the SIRC share of the proceeds will enable the study to become self-funding and thus guarantee that the survey is updated on an annual basis. If this ambition is realised, it will provide the industry with the most reliable time-series data available, to date, on the composition of active crews at sea.

In late 2005/early 2006 Clarksons will also be publishing a series of SIRC commissioned and edited regional global labour market studies covering India, China, Philippines, Turkey, Honduras, Panama, Venezuela, Ecuador and Colombia. These studies consider the demographic profile of the relevant supply nations’ labour forces, as well as other aspects of the seafaring labour market such as terms and conditions of employment and training provision.

Research on China, family life, food and nutrition, and regulation are all planned for the period 2005-6 subject to access to suitable funding. Research funding is urgently needed to allow SIRC to continue to produce independent research of interest to the broader maritime sector relating to seafarers and to health and safety in the shipping industry. Happily the Centre was approached by a number of new potential commissioning bodies (largely private companies of different sorts) in 2004 and it is hoped that some of the research ideas floated at such meetings will be consolidated in 2005.

Finally the SIRC biennial symposium is due to be held in July 2005. Invitations will be sent to all those organisations and individuals who have provided the assistance and collaboration so vital to the research conducted at SIRC over the last ten years. These people have played a vital and continuing role in the success of the research carried out at SIRC and we owe them a considerable debt of gratitude. As a result of the feedback received from the last SIRC symposium, the 2005 event has been scheduled to run over two days and it is hoped that this will provide guests with increased opportunity for fruitful discussion.

Publications

Books / Academic Journal Articles


1 CVCP Categories I and II


Short Works/Reports


2 CVCP Category 14
Refereed Conference Contributions3


Non-refereed Conference Contributions4

http://www2.umist.ac.uk/management/ewerc/wes2004/papers/kahveci.pdf


http://www2.umist.ac.uk/management/ewerc/wes2004/abstracts/W/winchester.htm


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3 CVCP Category 4
4 CVCP Category 5
Contributions to Edited Works


Professional/Popular Journal Papers


5 CVCP Category 7
6 CVCP Categories 12 and 13

Wu, B., (2004) ‘Village-level development initiatives depend on social networking’, a summary of research findings, People, Land Management and Ecological Conservation, No. 41, September, the United Nations University (UNU) and the Australian National University, online: http://c3.unu.edu/plec/.

Other Research Publications


Lectures, workshops, seminars


7 CVCP Categoriy 17


Forthcoming


Abbreviations and Acronyms

CASE: Collaborative Awards for Science and Engineering
DGTREN: Directorate-General of Energy and Transport
EC: European Community
ESRC: Economic & Social Research Council
EU: European Union
EU-ASEAN: European Union – Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ISM: International Safety Management
MAAP: Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific
P&I: Protection and Indemnity
PMMA: Philippine Merchant Marine Academy
SMA: Singapore Maritime Academy
SPSS: Statistical Packages for Social Sciences
UPC: Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya