



Editorial

Every five years the International Hydrographic Organisation holds its International Conference. There is debate these days whether five years between conferences in this fast moving world is sufficiently often. However, although there may be a wish to shorten the period, the IHO is impeded in making such change by the lack of flexibility of its Convention. Moves to provide greater flexibility will be just one of the items of the International Hydrographic Conference that will be held in Monaco this April. This volume of the Review includes a major article by the President of the Directing Committee of the IH Bureau, outlining how it promotes the activities of national Hydrographic Offices. In the final pages there are some notes outlining the main matters to be discussed during the Conference and also some information on the candidates for election to the next Directing Committee – always a matter of considerable interest to the community.

Readers will find a strong Law of the Sea emphasis in this issue, with interest mainly directed at the very topical matter of defining the limits of the Continental Shelf. At the back of all this is the interpretation of the highly complex Article 76 of the LOS Convention. The stimulus for the inclusion of these papers arose from the ABLOS (Advisory Board on LOS) Conference held in Monaco last year. One of these papers discussing the adequacy of the IHO's Accuracy specifications for hydrographic surveys, raises the matter of a broadening of hydrography beyond its navigational information mission.

As always, electronic charts are not forgotten and two papers touch on this subject. Both these papers look into the future development of the charts and systems. The first discusses the Australian approach to 'Data-rich' ENC's. The second of these looks at technological development of display screens, which will undoubtedly have a bearing on how the navigator will see the presentation of information in the future. A paper on quality and how it is being achieved in Canada, completes the technical discussions.

Touching finally on what will by custom be first, we include yet another historical article, but this time we move our attention to another bicentenary, this time of the French Hydrographer Baudin, who crossed paths with Mathew Flinders, those many years ago in Australian waters.

Adam J. Kerr
Editor